

CHARLES UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
Institute of Political Studies
Department of Security Studies

**Authoritarian Alliances - Understanding
the Russia-Turkey Relationship:
Exploring the Link Between Political
Regime and Peace**

Master's Thesis

Author: Lea Merkel

Study programme: International Security Studies

Supervisor: PhDr. JUDr. Tomáš Karásek, Ph.D.

Year of the defence: 2020

Declaration

1. I hereby declare that I have compiled this thesis using the listed literature and resources only.
2. I hereby declare that my thesis has not been used to gain any other academic title.
3. I fully agree to my work being used for study and scientific purposes.

In Prague on

31.07.2020

Lea Merkel



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lea Merkel', is written over a horizontal dotted line.

Abstract

The thesis analyses Turkey's and Russia's foreign relations with each other based on the theoretical premise that democratic peace can explain similar behaviour among authoritarian regimes as well. The thesis explores Russia's and Turkey's distinct forms of authoritarianism, before employing a detailed qualitative content analysis on official documents from Russia's and Turkey's presidents and foreign ministries. The readers will attain a broader understanding of democratic theory and the link between political regimes and peaceful relations.

Keywords

Democratic Theory; Russia; Turkey; Political Regime; Quantitative Content Analysis; MAXQDA

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1. Introduction

“The sincere and close dialogue between Turkey and Russia is fed by the two countries’ long-established and multidimensional cooperation built upon a rich historical past...” – Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, President of Turkey (Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, 2019c, p. 2)

In recent years, Turkey and Russia have strengthened their ties and stepped up their cooperation in almost every aspect. The most recent joint project of a purchase of S-400 missiles from Russia or the long-standing projects like the TurkStream pipeline or the Akkuyu nuclear power plant have catapulted the relationship forward, using “significant military and energy initiatives of enormous strategic magnitude” (Đidić & Kösebalaban, 2019, p. 123). Economic relations are thriving, the year 2019 marked the year of Culture and Tourism between both countries and regional cooperation in conflict resolution is advancing - not without difficulties, but advancing, nonetheless.

Just four years ago, Russia-Turkey relations were plagued by the incident of an SU-24 fighter aircraft being shot down after entering Turkish airspace. The reluctance of Turkey to apologize and Russia’s determination to wait for the proper response to what they called an act of war, led to a sudden rupture in ties (Erşen & Köstem, 2019, p. 5). While the respective governments and the presidents kept ensuring that economic and energy related projects wouldn’t be politicised and friendly relations between the two peoples could remain intact, the projects implementation slowed down significantly and in particular the people of Russia were advised not to visit Turkey.

Russia and Turkey are neighbours in an increasingly disruptive and conflict-ridden region. Bringing peace to the region is a task both countries have taken upon themselves. The big conflict linking the two countries together is the Syrian conflict. Even though at the beginning, both found themselves on opposing sides, the resolution of the governments to strengthen ties and keep communication channels open, has led to a regular and thorough exchange on finding a solution for the Syrian crisis. In contrast to other countries engaging in the peace process, the Astana Format (Russia, Turkey, Iran) attempts to bring “together the

oppositional figures fighting on the ground, rather than actors from outside the area who are detached from the realities in the country” (Cengiz, 2020, p. 11). The countries have vehemently supported the Astana Format and highlighted this mechanism as the only, truly effective one to date.

The relations of the two countries have always been reduced to the economic dependencies both (but Turkey more strongly) encounter with each other. While Russia has always been one of Turkey’s most important trading partners, Turkey has only recently been given more attention from Russia, when the ongoing sanctions regime left Russia no choice but to expand there. There is an abundance of literature on the economy, the energy cooperation as well as the international triangle of Russia, Turkey and NATO. Where literature is more limited is in the deeper assessment of Russia-Turkey relations assumed from “the commonalities between their regimes” (White & Herzog, 2016, p. 551).

Turkey and Russia relations have become increasingly important and not just for the two of them, but for the neighbouring states of the region, as well as for the international community. This thesis aims to address this particular gap in the literature by systematically studying the interaction between Russia and Turkey.

1.1. Thesis Goal and Research Question

The thesis’ goal is to analyse Turkey’s and Russia’s relationship based on similarities of the countries’ regime types to understand more profoundly the depth of their interaction, the implications for regional stability and the acknowledgement of having either as a security partner. The analysis illuminates the complexities of the Russia-Turkey relationship and its increasing influence on global politics. By looking at the official speeches, statements, and the verbal presentation of the other, I would like to seek answer to the following questions:

- (1). To what extent has ‘New Authoritarianism’ contributed to increased cooperation between Turkey and Russia in the time frame between 2014 and 2019?
- (2). How does Turkey interact and connect with Russia militarily, politically, and economically? Has there been rapprochement between the two countries in the analysed period?

(3). What do these findings say about Turkey's and Russia's role regarding regional security? How has this relationship affected conflict resolution in the region and in security structures such as NATO?

Question 1 is inarguably the most significant in terms of the research in this thesis on the progress, stability, and harmony of Turkey-US-Russia relations. The focus lies on the possibility of developing a theory of 'authoritarian peace' that can help further the understanding of peaceful relations and strengthening alliances between authoritarian states.

Question 2 will review the findings from the analysis by looking at the bilateral relations with the underlying theoretical framework. The emphasis lies on the countries' approach to their regional partner. Because the concept of 'regime type' is not directly represented in official documents from either country, the data is considered under different aspects of how the rapprochement could be interpreted as a partnership based on authoritarian traits of states.

Question 3 finally examines the conclusions from the previous questions to connect the findings to the conceptual understanding of Turkey's and Russia's relations. The countries' relations cannot be successfully examined without paying attention to the foreign policies and the international issues that unites or divides them. The objective is to explore how the strengthening partnership between the two countries affects the regional and international environment, especially concerning conflicts with the involvement of multiple actors such as Syria or the Ukraine. The position of Turkey in this sense is interesting, because of the alleged 'choice' they are expected to make between Russia and the West. In conclusion, the importance of Russia-Turkey relations and the consequences for regional and international security will be ascertained.

1.2. Literature Assessment

This part features how my work contributes to the existing research regarding Turkey-Russia relations and the international behaviour of neo-authoritarian states. Following the contribution is the literature review, where I will examine existing literature on the topic to provide a basis before advancing to the analysis. After outlining important trends and giving an overview of current research, I will recap the findings before introducing the theoretical framework.

1.2.1. Literature Contribution

My thesis is meant to increase and elevate the discourse on democratic theory, the connection between regime type and peace, as well as the relationship between Russia and Turkey. Existing research on the two countries' relations reports mainly on economy, trade, or energy cooperation. With the growing positive interaction between the two countries, a wide selection of literature encompasses the struggle of Turkey balancing NATO and Russia within its political, economic, and social structures. While some literature does not specifically concern itself with the Russia-Turkey relationship, a lot of the conflict literature on Libya, the Ukraine, or Syria encompasses the communication between the two as some of the most important actors in the region.

The connection between the regime type and peaceful behaviour is not as common, at least the qualitative analysis of the two regimes in Turkey and Russia. The larger part of the literature that does focus on this correlation, is quantitative and mainly featuring the contrast between democratic regimes and the 'non-democratic other'. The thesis' framework and spectrum set themselves apart from previous publication on the topic.

The following literature review considers different journals, books, research analysis, and scholarly articles from the early 2000s until 2019. This review aims to give a starting point for the ensuing analysis of Turkey's and Russia's relationship and to provide context for the theoretical framework.

1.2.2. Literature Review: Russia-Turkey Rapprochement

As noted above, literature directly examining this question is extremely limited and has started to emerge mainly within the context of Turkey's and Russia's growing cooperation in trade, energy, and conflict resolution. This thesis will focus predominantly on the more recent history of the two, when cooperation started to recommence and grow more resilient in terms of choosing political means instead of violence to solve disagreements. The relations between Russia and Turkey are multidimensional namely in the economic, socio-cultural, military, and political realm. The growing tie between the two countries could be considered unexpected, "given a history of imperial competition and frequent wars between the Russian and Ottoman Empires since the eighteenth century, Cold War rivalry,

and perceptions of competition in post-Soviet Eurasia” (Hill & Taspinar, 2006, p. 84). The relationship that can be observed today however, is far better than at any point in the recent history of the two states. The connection between the two countries is by no means news in academic literature. Despite the historical rivalry, both are connected through their involvement in regional disputes, joint international organizations, economic projects, and two like-minded leaders. Turkey-Russia research often singles out the two heads-of-state as influential determinants. The political cultures of Russia and Turkey have been inspired and built upon “strong and authoritarian leaderships” (Çancı, 2017, p. 463). These professional interactions between Vladimir Putin and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan seem neighbourly and amiable, where authors White and Herzog suggest a direct connection between the friendly relations and the “commonalities between their regimes” (White & Herzog, 2016, p. 551). Both countries share a number of similarities in the “political administration, governance and leadership styles of Presidents Putin and Erdoğan” (White & Herzog, 2016, p. 552). This could be an answer to a common question among the discourse of Russia-Turkey relations and their improvement, despite their having different views on several issues. Özertem argues that the interaction is not advancing “via institutional links, but rather are being steered by the political leaders in Russia and Turkey” (2017, 133f.). The flourishing of Russian-Turkish bilateral relations can therefore be described as more ‘actor-driven’, seeing that after the November 2015 incident the two leaders have repeatedly chosen communication over conflict. A good example for the growing use of diplomacy between the two countries is the assassination of Russian ambassador to Turkey Andrei Karlov on 19 December 2016. Instead of assigning blame, criticising, and ultimately worsening relations, Moscow and Ankara addressed the situation. Both countries felt they were presented with the proper conduct and immediately joined forces for the investigation of Karlov’s murder (Özertem, 2017, 133f.). Back in 2006, Hill and Taspinar argued that the “rapprochement has not extended much beyond the persons of Erdogan and Putin” (Hill & Taspinar, 2006, p. 90). Now, the two countries have established multiple mechanisms across the full spectrum of political, economic, and social spheres to increase efficiency and trust among the two states.

Even though there are parallels when looking at the two countries' political systems, academic research on a comparison between Turkey and Russia remains proportionately infrequent and in short supply. Both countries have developed "electoral authoritarian regimes at the expense of democratic consolidation" (White & Herzog, 2016, p. 552). In the same manner, both leaders have drawn from and relied on "'great nation' rhetoric and a vilification of the West" in order to build up and consolidate their regimes (White & Herzog, 2016, p. 552). There are a number of distinctly perceivable similarities among both countries' management, for example in the way both silence internal disputes and have "emphasized the importance of national sovereignty, often accusing foreign countries of domestic interference" (White & Herzog, 2016, p. 552). These authoritarian features have been establishing themselves within Turkish politics, giving both Turkey and Russia more common ground for their understanding and partnership. Goren describes one of these authoritarian traits as both regimes showing "high degrees of suspicion about the political motivations of Western countries" (2018, p. 6). The regimes becoming more authoritarian and the emerging friendly relations between the two leaders uncover plenty of shared political components related to the regime which will be further elaborated on below.

An important argument in Turkey-Russia literature is the contention that the alliance is based on common interest of the two and most authors examined here have referenced this element. The countries' relationship is described as a union motivated by a sense of practicality (see for example Park, 2015; Hill & Taspinar, 2006; Özertem, 2017). It is no secret that the two countries did not see eye to eye on an abundance of issues, but both still chose to cooperate based on whether it would benefit both countries. While economic relations provided great momentum to the progress and can be seen as the incentive to strengthen the cooperating mechanisms, many authors argue that the "[c]hanging political dynamics and energy" approaches were also of consequence in the increase of mutual understandings between Russia and Turkey (Özertem, 2017, p. 128). The Western states, most prominently the US and those European states favouring Turkey membership within the Western bloc, have mostly been uneasy regarding "Turkey's flirtation with Russia" (Park, 2015, p. 590). While the relations have been

steadily evolving since the 2015 incident of a Russian bomber being shot down by Turkish air force, many scholars still limit the relationship to being purely based on convenience and lacking fundamental depth, most commonly citing the ongoing inconsistencies over the approach on Syria. Hill and Taspinar argue in a similar manner. Despite both Turkey and Russia's history with "conflict, deep structural differences and divergent views", both actors opted for a deeper involvement and extensive cooperation across multiple spheres "more out of frustration with the United States than a new strategic vision of world affairs" (Hill & Taspinar, 2006, p. 81). Bechev calls attention to the two countries success in constructing a mutually beneficial relationship in more than a few policy areas. For both countries, dismissing their differences and choosing to "coexist and advance common interests" has advanced bilateral relations as well as their cooperation on the international stage (Bechev, 2015, p. 1). Even in such sensitive fields as defence, the mutual interest has initiated multiple projects and joint military activity. From another perspective, authors argue that Turkey and Russia are linked by more than their bilateral connections, meaning that regional circumstances in their shared neighbourhood have brought the countries closer. In the 1990s/early 2000s, both countries were preoccupied with other regional and international concerns. Russia concentrated on its economic, business, and political connections to the US and its European neighbours. Turkey on the other hand, while also dealing with the US on its own terms, had to focus mainly on manoeuvring growing tensions with Cyprus and Greece in addition to addressing its EU membership procedure (Hill & Taspinar, 2006, 83f.). Both countries are bordering the Black Sea, which is "essential for Russia's security and geopolitical interests" (Bechev, 2015, p. 2). Turkey is one of the signatory countries and guarantors of the Montreux Convention (1936), "which governs the status of the Straits and limits the access of non-littoral countries" (Bechev, 2015, p. 2). Both countries value their connection to the Black Sea region and to ensure both satisfy their needs in this regard, closer cooperation with each other can assist both countries to remain in a position of power. Turkey and Russia view the Black Sea as territory they have a monopoly position on (Hill & Taspinar, 2006, p. 88). In order to enhance cooperation and bring the countries of the region together, Turkey and Russia have been using their resources to establish "multilateral Black

Sea initiatives such as Blackseafor or Black Sea Harmony” (Balcer, 2014, p. 32). While this is an incentive for an increase in bilateral military cooperation, the two countries still struggle with a lack of trust and caution regarding the partnerships in the Black Sea. Russia’s actions towards Ukraine have shaken the cooperation within the Black Sea Format even further. It is not just cooperation in peaceful areas that bring both countries together, but also Russia’s and Turkey’s viewpoints on regional and international issues. These considerations are starting to come together, especially concerning hostilities in the Middle East, such as Iran and Syria (Hill & Taspinar, 2006, p. 82). The literature in one way or another references the countries’ involvement in regional conflicts such as Syria, Ukraine or Libya (see Özertem, 2017; Hossein & Mostafa, 2015;), suggesting that the growing intensity in cooperation emerging between the two countries stems in part from the joint challenges faced in their common neighbourhood.

Connected to the often-hostile behaviour of Putin and Erdogan towards its Western partners are the increasing clashes between the West and the other two parties, respectively. This prominent argument in the literature insists that the West has little to no understanding of the region that Russia and Turkey are a part of. Both countries have an eager interest in maintaining stability in their neighbourhood and neither country, especially not Russia, agrees with the West and the idea of a “potentially chaotic regime change” within those countries suffering from conflict (Hill & Taspinar, 2006, p. 82). The most common example cited is Libya, where the blame falls onto NATO and their mission to install a democratic government there, which led to unrest and plunged the country into conflict. In the case of Syria, we can see Russia’s influence plus the American and European mistakes led Turkey to amend their official stance on certain matters. Before their growing rapprochement with Russia, they argued that a political future for Syria cannot include the current leader Assad. With growing Russia-Turkey relations and the Astana Format with Iran, Turkey now supports a political settlement, without needing the international community specifically to remove the leader of Syria. This divisive issue of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad’s remaining in power, implementing a political settlement between opposition and government, and letting the people of Syria decide for themselves through elections and other political reforms, has been cited as one of the key reasons for

the stalling process of peace in Syria. But authors have argued that, while there has not yet been a solution, Ankara and Moscow have come together and discussed this issue and consider a compromise on it much more viable than their Western partners (Hill & Taspinar, 2006, p. 87). Additionally, Hill and Taspinar find that a majority of the Turkish population “do not support US policies in the Middle East with the United States” (Hill & Taspinar, 2006, 83f.). This growing distance between Turkey and its US allies led to a resurgence in mutual support between Russia and Turkey. The latest climax in these relations came in 2016, after the 2015 incident once again halted the Russia-Turkey rapprochement process quite fundamentally. The incident on 24 November 2015, where the Turkish air-force shot down a Russian Su-24 bomber, “resulted in the abrupt fracture of the long-standing fragile relations between Turkey and Russia” (Özertem, 2017, p. 122). The deterioration of relations lasted for seven months and only started to improve when president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan issued an indisputable apology for the incident and how it was handled. Both countries suffered from the severed contact, so when Turkey sought “to do everything possible to restore friendly ties”, Russia obliged gladly (Hammargren, 2018, p. 7).

The growing disparity between the West and Turkey and Russia is visible in other instances as well. Russia and Turkey are experiencing growing trust and friendliness, as evident from the failed coup attempt in Turkey on 15 July 2016. Russia immediately supported and endorsed the president and the legitimately elected government in Turkey. The reason this had a profound impact on the rapport is because according to the Turkish official statements, “the West did not respond quickly enough in condemning the coup and supporting the democratically elected government” (Özertem, 2017, 127f.). The West’s hesitation or reluctance to support Erdoğan and his government have cost them, at least momentarily, the constructive cooperation with their southern partner. Turkey’s approach to joining the EU have ironically had the exact opposite effect of what this membership was intended to have. The long, wavering process has unified Russia’s and Turkey’s positions on a lot of matters. Regardless of Turkey’s continuing relationship with the EU, the stalling process of accession has left Turkey “feeling rejected or treated like a second-tier state” (Hill & Taspinar, 2006, 84f.). Erdoğan expanding his cooperation with Russia removed the perceived

“geographical limits of Turkish political involvement” with the possible expansion towards Russia’s neighbourhood (Goren, 2018, p. 6). An example for this would be Turkey’s interest in closer relations with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), as opposed to a European Union membership, which has not worked out for Turkey so far. Due to these turbulent circumstances surrounding the choice of international playground, Turkey has managed to keep one foot in the door through the continuous alliance with the West by cooperating with the EU and maintaining its NATO membership. Despite this long-standing connection with its Western partners, Turkey chooses to select “unilateralism to secure what it sees as national interest” (Bechev, 2015, p. 1). Russia can use Turkey’s stance, as well as recent deteriorating relations between Turkey and its allies, as an opportunity for economic relief “amidst tightening Western sanctions and an economic downturn” (Bechev, 2015, p. 1). The literature on Turkey has an especially strong focus on its shortcomings in connection with the EU accession negotiations. As already touched upon above, both countries have come to view US policies “as an expansionist policy that will further damage their interests by encouraging even more chaos on their southern tiers” (Hill & Taspinar, 2006, p. 87). Russia and Turkey not only feel they have a much better grasp of each other’s needs and interests, but also demand their region not to be destabilized by foreign powers with their own interests. This is noticeable in their growing frustrations of not having their interests considered when deciding the fate and future of ‘their neighbourhoods’. Both countries want the US to take their perspectives, interests, and concerns into consideration when enacting their foreign policy within the region. Here again, the Russian-Turkish collaboration, viewed by some as a more unusual pair, rests on “a sense of exclusion by the United States, not mutual interest” (Hill & Taspinar, 2006, p. 90). Because of its position in the international community, there is an abundance of literature about Turkey. The focus here lies on either the connection to the European Union (EU) or the relationship to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). In recent years, criticism from both organizations towards Turkey and their foreign policy decisions has been growing. Before Turkey’s relationship with Russia suffered due to the incident with a Russian plane in 2015, the West still considered Turkey an important and strategic partner. After dealings with the

Russian Federation started to gain momentum again and Turkey struggled with a coup, the situation specifically in the Middle East, Northern Africa, and the Black Sea Region changed Turkey's perception of its Western allies. Hill and Taspinar reveal yet another aspect that is complicating Turkey's relationship with the West, which is that "they no longer have a common enemy", which until the end of the Cold War they found in the Soviet Union. Turkey's perspective on the USSR's successor state Russia is now increasingly friendly (Hill & Taspinar, 2006, p. 83). The part of Turkey that is still striving towards a fruitful and constructive cooperation with Europe is wearing away, at least considering the patience for Europe's ceaseless demands. The idea of 'the West' and its perceived benefits are starting to be outweighed by other formats, regional organizations, and partners more in unison on issues of great consequence. Turkey is focusing its foreign policy on its own national interest, especially in matters concerning "Iraq, the Kurdish question and stability in neighbouring countries such as Syria and Iran are concerned" (Hill & Taspinar, 2006, p. 85). In such matters the two states agree, as both try to realize their respective independent interests. When Russia supported Turkey amidst tensions surrounding the coup, they similarly acknowledged Turkey's security interests in another area. Any foreign policy developments in the direction of Kurdish independence and in consequence leading to the "dismemberment of Turkey with the loss of Kurdish territories in Anatolia to a new Kurdish state" is not an option for Turkey (Hill & Taspinar, 2006, p. 87). Fears and concerns are not understood by its Western partners, whereas Russia has frequently stated its recognition of Turkey's unease toward its security. Russia's position in the international sphere is crucial when considering Russia's position within the UN Security Council, its historical as well as current relevance in European affairs, and its continuous counterbalance to US foreign policy and NATO's strategy. NATO's interest in expanding the alliance with Turkey's membership, as well as further possible enlargement to the East, is provoking Russia, which most recently seems to have led to the incident in Ukraine. Putin sees in Turkey not only an important strategic partner, but also an opportunity to weaken NATO's unified position. On top of the growing interaction on the political, economic, and cultural spheres, Turkey's purchase of a Russian S-400 anti-missile defence system threw off NATO and had great geopolitical advantages for

Russia. The continuing collaboration among the militaries of the two countries and the growing interest in military partnership has driven a wedge between the Turkey-NATO coalition (Hammargren, 2018, p. 7). The worsening understanding with NATO and the European States and the simultaneously increasing interaction with Russia are mainly attributed to the conflicts, in which those organizations and states are involved. A lot of the literature exposes Russian actions as methods “aimed at counter-balancing or even resisting the United States in key regions or policy areas” (Hill & Taspinar, 2006, p. 81). Turkey is presented as an important tool in implementing Russia’s policy. As mention in detail above, the alliance between the two countries have caused the West distress countless times. When the literature mentions Moscow’s position towards Turkey, it is described as an opportunistic relationship, where Russia is merely “trying to exploit Turkish dissatisfaction with the United States to its own advantage” (Hill & Taspinar, 2006, p. 90). In the same sense, Turkey uses Russia as “a balancing actor against the West” (Özertem, 2017, p. 130). When the West is hesitant in its policies towards Turkey, Erdogan is quick to acknowledge friendship, trust, and support coming from his Russian counterpart, Putin. For Turkey, the relationship with the West has become more of a nuisance, especially with recently expanding criticism towards Turkey’s declining democracy and its line of action regarding human rights. Turkey’s preference lies clearly with the approach of “neutrality from Moscow vis-à-vis Turkey’s domestic affairs” (Özertem, 2017, p. 130). Even though the Turkish government may be vary of Russia’s modernization in terms of its military, nuclear status, and its foreign policy concerning regional issues, both countries have agreed to a more or less implicit understanding to “compartmentalize their geopolitical disagreements from economic and strategic interests, particularly in energy cooperation” (Goren, 2018, p. 6).

Çancı (2017) argues that the countries have “clashing ideologies and world-views based on Orthodox–Russian Nationalism versus Islamism”, which is why cooperation seems rather unlikely. Nevertheless both Putin and Erdogan have continued to maintain their entente between each other’s countries, largely to accommodate economic and energy requirements (Çancı, 2017, p. 472). The discussions within the literature about cooperation, with a focus on energy and economy, is increasing in correlation to the economic partnership of Russia

and Turkey (see Çancı, 2017; Şimşek et al., 2017; Özdal et al., 2013; Öniş & Yılmaz, 2016;). The favourite theme of Turkey-Russia discourse is the economic benefits on both sides. A bulk of the literature concentrates on the energy interdependence between Russia and Turkey, arguing that while from a political standpoint, the two countries have encountered impasses a number of times, the growing and consistent expansion of the energy sectors “has provided the glue pulling Moscow and Ankara together” (Bechev, 2015, p. 1). Ankara and Moscow continue a relationship based on mutual trade and energy related interests bilaterally “but failed to establish a cooperative modus vivendi on political issues...[and instead] chose to coordinate their positions at the lowest common denominator (Özertem, 2017, p. 122). The relationship would therefore not exist if it were not for the economic dependencies both countries have developed on one another. Despite cooperating in the above-mentioned fields, in case of the further developing conflict between the West and Russia, Turkey might face a much harsher reality than its partner. With their growing confrontational stance, the West has exposed Turkey to comparable sanctions like those enforced on Russia. Because of Turkey’s more fragile economy, these sanctions may do more damage than in Russia’s case. The latter having been able to bypass these measures by cooperating with others economically and taking advantage of other countries’ growing dependence on Russia’s rich natural resources. This obstacle puts Turkey in a difficult position, on the one hand becoming more and more dependent on economic arrangements with Russia, and on the other wanting to continue a relationship with its Western allies (Çancı, 2017, p. 474). Şimşek et al. argue that regardless of the countries’ differing political motives and ideas regarding their foreign policy, the economic collaboration between the two confirms a tendency to expand driven by the desire to fulfil mutual interests. With steady connections in the economic fields, such as mutual trade, tourism, and investments, the interdependency between the two countries has grown as well. The mutual interest in making economic relations more organized and efficient has had positive effects on the political interactions. One of the most mentioned results of this progress is the Turkish-Russian High-Level Cooperation Council (HLCC), which was created in 2010 as a platform headed by the two presidents to examine possible ways to streamline cooperation on regional and international issues.

While some question the HLCC's effectiveness, it has proven to be a vital mechanism for the two countries to boost their bilateral relations on a regular basis and keep routine contact between the countries' top officials (Şimşek et al., 2017, p. 5). The sub-organisms have been praised for furthering the economic relationship between the two states.

Most previous research on the cooperation between authoritarian states has consisted of quantitative studies. Conflicting parties are usually put into categories along the spectrum of democracy, authoritarian regimes, and dictatorships, not always taking into consideration the nuances and divergences of neo-authoritarian states. There are, however, researchers who promote an improved analysis with categories that more accurately represent the countries with a varying degree of democratic or authoritarian structures. One study attempting to feature this more accurate depiction is "Authoritarian Breakdown: Empirical Test of a Game Theoretic Argument" by Barbara Geddes. Geddes recognizes these subtle distinctions and how they take "different forms in different kinds of authoritarian regimes and ... [have] different consequences" (1999, p. 7). Despite the interesting dynamic of the two countries, the literature on Russia's and Turkey's collaboration based on their shared political structures is substantially limited (White and Herzog, 2016;).

1.2.3. The Concept of New Authoritarianism

While literature on the Turkey-Russia regime conformity is limited, literature on 'New Authoritarianism' is plentiful. Thus, various authors have suggested countless terms for these types of regimes, such as "electoral democracies", "semi-democracies", "illiberal democracies", "tutelary democracies", "hybrid regimes", "electoral authoritarianisms", "quasi-democracies", "defective democracies", or "partly free countries" (see Özbudun, 2015, p. 42). These different categories are summarized underneath the 'New Authoritarian' umbrella and aim to classify the fine differences between the main manifestations of regime types. This cluster of terms is often criticized as leading to "conceptual confusion", since some terms classify the same regimes or categorize overlapping characteristics. The concept in the existing literature can often be described as "authoritarianism with adjectives" (Brownlee, 2007, p. 26). Ottaway, 2013 is

introducing 'semi-authoritarianism', whereas Schedler, 2015 mentions 'electoral authoritarianism', and Levitsky & Way, 2010 develop more on 'competitive authoritarianism'.

These mixed regimes incorporate some form of democratic competition and changing levels of authoritarianism. Although competitions, such as elections, are included in official documents, they exhibit unlawfulness and invalidity in most instances, including: "electoral manipulation, unfair media access, abuse of state resources, and varying degrees of harassment and violence skewed the playing field in favour of incumbents" (Levitsky & Way, 2010, p. 3). The research surrounding hybrid or mixed regimes originally focused on democratic transition and on how far away these regimes were from achieving actual democracy. Whenever this "democratizing bias" was applied to these regimes, they were labelled as "flawed, incomplete, or "transitional" democracies" (Levitsky & Way, 2010, 3f.). In Russia's case for instance, the regime's process of democratization was considered slow in its early stages, but eventually portrayed as having failed to reach a full-fledged democracy.

'New Authoritarianism' is a category between authoritarian and democratic, while exhibiting characteristics of both. Brownlee showcases this in-between classification by arguing that these regimes find themselves in a "gray zone [where they] hold elections in manipulated conditions" (2007, p. 26). In the following, I have sorted through the literature on this form of authoritarianism and recorded some of the definitions. The concept of New Authoritarianism deals with hybrid regimes where the electoral system is manipulated, and the power of the state becomes centralized. In many of these growing authoritarian regimes this involved the dismantling of the rule of law, for example by influencing the judiciary and its courts (Wiatr, 2019, p. 7). The main assumption of New Authoritarianism is the general pseudo-democratic appearances of the system overall. These essentially multi-layered structures connect three important aspects of the state with authoritarian attributes: 1) the rhetorical endorsement of the notion of liberal democracy, 2) the presence of no more than formal democratic procedures and practices, and 3) the moderate compliance with a reduced space of societal and political liberties (Ottaway, 2013, p. 3). Authoritarianism and Dictatorships of the past provide a lot of information for the hybrid regimes. These transitioning

regimes can learn from the mistakes of authoritarian leaders who failed to establish their positions of power. Wiener argues there is something like an “authoritarian handbook” (2019, p. 17), where leaders dip into a variety of different measures to strengthen their rule. Some of these strategies include limitations on the freedom of press, faulting outside groups or those voicing different opinions for any contention as well as incriminating minorities, centralizing power by removing constraints on their ability to rule, focusing on strengthening the military, splitting the population into us-and-them settings, and lastly appointing the inner circle regardless of competence (Wiener, 2019, p. 17).

New Authoritarianism distinguishes itself from traditional Authoritarianism by its ability to be flexible and to adapt. When examining the spectrum of autocracy to democracy, researchers do not always share the same opinion when placing the different regime types. These definitions and interpretations of regimes are not the same worldwide, which is why there can be distinctive positions and space for debate (Velikaya, 2019, p. 80). The exact point of transformation, when a flawed democracy descends into an authoritarian state, is not always agreed upon. When and how a country should be classified in what category depends solely on an individual’s assessment and consideration of the criteria (Velikaya, 2019, p. 80).

Juan Linz’s definition of authoritarianism from 1964 already included certain characteristics of the modern forms of authoritarianism, which are established today. Linz suggests that the authoritarian systems maintain a “limited, not responsible, political pluralism...without intensive nor extensive political mobilization...and in which a leader (or occasionally a small group) exercises power within formally ill-defined limits but actually quite predictable ones” (Brownlee, 2007, p. 26). The restriction of opposition, limited possibilities to voice dissention, and the installation of typically suppressive restrictions are attributes visible in the rising number of regimes classified as ‘new authoritarian’ states. This regression on the spectrum from democracy towards authoritarianism is, by the Western standards concerning political regimes, a development for the worse. Levitsky and Ziblatt argue that these authoritarian modifications are “another way to break a democracy...less dramatic but equally destructive” (Wiener, 2019, p. 15). There is not necessarily a military component involved in its dissolution, but the demise of democracy could result from the manipulation by the politicians and

representatives elected to government in the first place. They destabilize and undermine the system and procedures that helped them rise to power. This process can transpire at a fast pace, but more often than not the democratic systems disintegrate steadily and with the general populace never noticing before the changes are nearly irreversible (Wiener, 2019, 14f.).

What makes the new authoritarian systems stronger than their traditional counterparts are the intelligent changes and adaptations. These modifications make the systems unlikely to disintegrate “given their relative flexibility and pragmatism” (Puddington, 2019, p. 31). The rise of Illiberalism and the decrease in democracy is not to be taken as “a temporary problem that can be fixed through an inevitable rotation of power” (Puddington, 2019, p. 31). When authoritarian policies find their way into a system, they cause permanent damage and take great effort to reverse. Initiatives to impede the opposition’s campaigning against or checking the government will reduce proportionate representation in the political sphere, making it an asymmetrical platform. Any visible success could lead to other heads of state with “authoritarian mindsets” to jump on the bandwagon (Puddington, 2019, p. 31). In order to deter outside criticism and divert attention away from the development within the country, some authoritarian states have a tendency to “intensify efforts to influence political choices and government policies of democracies” (Puddington, 2019, p. 31). In Russia, Putin and his loyal associates have mastered the manipulation of democratic processes by manoeuvring democratic features against the institution of democracy. In recent years, the “parties of nationalistic right and anticapitalistic left” have gained prominence in Europe, voicing admiration and support for authoritarian leaders from inside the democratic states, even positioning themselves alongside the authoritarian doctrine (Puddington, 2019, p. 32). Considering the system in Turkey, there has been a rearrangement towards “populist electoral authoritarianism” (Turan, 2019, p. 58), a structure where liberal democratic bodies and conventions still stand, but are used and abused by the ruling sector. This includes restraining the opposition to ensure a durable continuation of the command. With these subtle adaptations towards authoritarianism, a growing number of politicians and government officials across the globe have shown lenience and even voiced support for oppressive, single-party leaders like Vladimir

Putin, Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, and Bashar al-Assad. Aside from the open anti-democratic stance and the various aggression towards democracy itself, there is a growing faction among countries that embrace these leaders and their principles. As an example, during the 2016 US presidential election, there was a small population amongst American citizens respecting Putin's authority, even though the Russian government repeatedly acted against US interests and was suspected in obstructing and tampering with the democratic process of the presidential election. Even members of the US government, specifically President Donald Trump and those affiliated with him, referenced the Russian authoritarian system positively and praised President Putin's style of leadership (Puddington, 2019, p. 32). The main goal of any authoritarian political leader is to remain in office or persevering as the leader in the government. With the intention of retaining power and silencing disapproval, Wiener argues that the ruling authorities "provide the veneer of democracy by holding elections, then subvert those elections through cheating, or even by forbidding formidable political opponents from running" (Wiener, 2019, p. 17). Authors argue that among the more acute challenges of this regime type are economic problems. While economic issues are concerning, states like China and Russia have shown great adaptability and an aptness to overcoming market-related difficulties. Most of the time, such hindrances were overcome without the citizens seriously doubting or resisting the regime, even though it had had an effect on the living standards (Puddington, 2019, p. 31). In addition to the economic struggles, there is one distinct threat to modern authoritarian regimes, namely "civil society as an incubator of reformist ideas and political initiatives" (Puddington, 2019, p. 32). Civil society, where the possibility is much lower that the advocated values are abandoned for corrupt behaviour, bribes, and manipulation by the regime, is a crucial alternative to political parties. In order to reduce the threat of civil society, authoritarian regimes have "effectively defanged the collection of human rights organizations, conservation projects, election monitors, and anticorruption committees" (Puddington, 2019, p. 32). The visible success countries like Russia have had, is an incentive for other authoritarian leaders in a position of power to implement similar orders and attitudes.

1.3. Thesis Outline

Chapter 2 provides the theoretical framework for this thesis and produces general empirical expectations for the analysis. Chapter 3 concerns the methodology, which in this case includes case study and a qualitative content analysis.

Chapter 4 considers Turkey's and Russia's regime type as forms of Electoral Authoritarianism. It includes a thorough look at the regimes in terms of how and why they are classified as neo-authoritarian regimes.

Chapter 5 constitutes the qualitative content analysis with the software program MAXQDA. It analyses how Turkey and Russia relations can be evaluated based on the theoretical expectations. Chapter 6 delivers a conclusion and provides suggestions for further research.

2. Theoretical Framework

“If any of the competing explanations of the democratic peace can also account for similar behavior among specific types of authoritarian regimes, we can have more confidence in the power of that approach for understanding the relationship between political regimes and international peace” (Peceny & Butler, 2004, pp. 565–566).

To determine if the features of states (like power, threat, or national interests) have an influence on the relationship between regime type and peaceful relations, I will be looking more closely at the following features of democratic peace theory: In an article titled ‘Dictatorial Peace’, Peceny, Beer and Sanchez-Terry (2002) isolate three distinct analytical categories for why there is peaceful interaction between democratic regimes: 1) institutional constraints and transparency, 2) fighting capabilities, and 3) shared values. While they conclude that peace between democratic states is far more likely than between either a democratic and authoritarian state or between two authoritarian states, that is not the goal of this thesis. In a later study by Peceny and Butler (2004), they used data set by Barbara Geddes (1999), portraying that “single-party authoritarian regimes tend to be somewhat more peaceful than other types of authoritarian regimes” (Peceny & Butler, 2004, p. 565). This paper focuses on the different forms of authoritarian regimes and how these variations lead to distinguishable conduct internationally. Just as the data set by Geddes has already recognized the divergent conflict behaviour of single-party regimes, Peceny and Butler find that “democracies and/or pure single-party regimes were involved in every dyad that experienced significantly less conflict than the norm for all directed dyads” (Peceny & Butler, 2004, p. 577). Considering that there are consequential variances between different types of authoritarian regimes, further developing frameworks for how democratic peace explanations can be attributed to authoritarian regimes as well, is vital for our understanding of how peace and political regime type relate to one another.

2.1. Institutional Constraints, Transparency, and Checks and Balances

There are those researches, including Peceny et al. (2002)/(2004), that defend the institutional arguments for democratic peace. Examined are three distinct characteristics of democracies which could indicate peaceful behaviour in the international system: transparency, constraints, and accountability (Peceny & Butler, 2004, p. 568).

Concerning the constraints, Peceny et al., 2002 argue that authoritarian regimes could be less constrained than democracies, considering that a smaller group of people holds the power in deciding, governing, and regulating foreign policy. The recourse to different kinds of methods and procedures when asserting the endurance of the status quo. By keeping the essential supporters appeased, they will not have to rely on the entire population to remain in power. Beatriz Magaloni elaborates that, in order to “survive in office, dictators need to establish power-sharing arrangements with their “loyal friends” – those who choose to invest in the existing autocratic institutions rather than in forming subversive coalitions” (2008, p. 715). Electoral Authoritarianism presupposes that the power monopoly lies within one small group of individuals. Those who have the decision-making power can wield it not just on the national level but can also direct it towards international affairs and foreign policy. On the international level, these groups are required to direct the power in collaboration with others. This intergovernmental cooperation constitutes any shared platforms, group mechanisms, or apparatuses in place to ensure a more efficient relationship and increase coherence between countries. Authoritarian regimes should engage in this cooperation with like-minded countries.

The checks and balances can also be conclusive when looking at the amount of “veto players” that are part of the system. It gets decidedly more challenging to push through a “risky and costly foreign policy” when there is no consensus among the relevant parties (Peceny & Butler, 2004, p. 569). Because these checks and balances function differently in other types of authoritarian regimes, leaders of “single-party regimes may face veto players in the party leadership” (Peceny & Butler, 2004, p. 569).

When looking at transparency, the authors come to the conclusion that the added transparency within democratic institutions makes statements, threats and assertions to act a certain way much more credible than communication by other regimes (Peceny & Butler, 2004, p. 569). Even though the discussions among party members in authoritarian regimes should be far less open and transparent than those debates held within democracies, as long as there are other opinions and viewpoints present, this should “lead to substantially better decision-making in single-party regimes (Peceny & Butler, 2004, p. 569).

Concerning accountability, Peceny and Butler argue that “leaders of regimes with a large selectorate (the number of people who theoretically can be a part of the leadership selection process) and a small winning coalition retain power by serving the private interests of their core supporters” (Peceny & Butler, 2004, p. 570). This means that those in power with a very small winning coalition are a lot more unrestrained in their decision-making, leading to those being able to “take greater chances in war, because defeat need not imply their removal from office” (Peceny & Butler, 2004, p. 571).

Based on these criteria, the following additional categories can be derived for the analysis: joint laws and high-level contact. Just like the relationship between government mechanisms, the voluntary or binding laws, resolutions, and statements connecting the two states demonstrate the ability of countries to connect with each other based on common perceptions of rules and regulations. By launching these joint initiatives, both governments found common ground for a combined effort and cooperation. We would expect these mechanisms to not only emerge from joint efforts, but to successfully strengthen the relationship. Because the regimes under examination have strong leaders heading the party in power as well as individuals in positions of influence (such as ministers or ambassadors) looking at the high-level contact reveals the engagement among the official members of government and the level of cooperation between them. This would lead to the assumption that these high-level meetings are regular, effective, and benefitting the overall relationship.

2.2. Fighting Capabilities

In a second aspect, Peceny et al. (2002) contend that autocracies have shown to be extremely successful in the mobilization of people and resources in support of their policies. Especially those countries being led by a single leader or dominated by a single party seem able to create powerful armies and adjust them into an instrument of the political party (Peceny et al. 2002). This ability is important considering that other single-party regimes can then perceive the other as a valid threat, which would in turn lead to compromise and negotiations as opposed to violence.

To reduce the threat perception and increase mutual knowledge of each other's resources, the analysis includes a look at increased military support, joint development, and defence cooperation as important dynamics in the relations between authoritarian states. Based on the theoretical premise, any joint military and defence structures or projects with pledges of military support should lead to peaceful relations among the two countries, rather than aggressive or combative retaliation.

When looking at the fighting capabilities, the regime's involvement in regional conflicts needs to be considered as well. The neighbourhood which both Turkey and Russia share, creates not only shared problems but also room for cooperation. Both countries seek to establish a position of power within the region, making it impossible to ignore the influence of their neighbour. When both countries are involved as either part of the same organisation, a mediator, or a party in a conflict where cooperation is required, it should ultimately lead to the countries' resorting to peaceful means rather than using violence to solve these issues.

Provided both countries have the necessary military resources to expand their fighting capabilities, these assets can be used to ensure the territorial integrity of their own and other states, a concept mentioned frequently by authoritarian countries. The concept of territorial integrity is represented by the idea of respecting another country's sovereignty as necessary and decisive, especially in matters connected to conflict resolution. When Turkey and Russia share common

principles such as this one, they can rally around it, basing further association on these shared standards.

2.3. Shared Values and Norms

Those researchers, supporting the normative argument for democratic peace, argue that shared norms and principles are what generates peace. Transferring the argument onto authoritarian regimes, socialist states often share a common ideology based on “unity and brotherhood”, which is why states sharing this world view are expected not to engage violently (Peceny & Butler, 2004, p. 568).

In this case, Peceny et al., 2002 suggest that often similar ideals or beliefs can have positive effects on cooperation among autocratic states. If two regimes have similar or practically matching perspectives, they could be responsible for finding common ground and motivating the two entities to compromise. This has an even greater effect when the regimes face a joint threat to the party's ideological supremacy, from internal or external sources (Peceny et al., 2002, p. 20). Farber and Gowa (1995) assert that the literature on democratic peace presents the “adherence to peaceful methods of conflict resolution as the product of internalized values” (Farber & Gowa, 1995, p. 125). If states have shared norms regarding global conduct, these values could also influence the routine of conflict resolution between the two states. It can therefore be reasoned, that commonly shared norms provide a legitimate explanation for peace and altogether different international behaviour between single-party regimes.

The theory therefore suggests that shared norms among single-party states may explain the peace among these systems as well. Any kind of development towards a greater Turkey-Russia relationship is interpreted as further increasing their interdependence and steering the relationship towards peace as opposed to conflict. This is visible by any form of encouragement to increase the partnership, even sometimes by simply putting emphasis on the value of the partnership. There are a few instances within the examination, where the countries reference common principles, such sharing a similar world view, similar strategies, similar modes of behaviour or motivating each other to compromise. These principles provide common ground for the countries to engage in cooperation.

In addition to common principles connecting Russia and Turkey, joint threats provide them with shared obstacles to focus on and overcome together. Simultaneously, these common threats lead to putting divisive differences aside. Joint threats to either the ideological concepts of the governments or to the state and its structures from internal or external sources are best represented within the documents by terrorist organizations, other non-state actors or states apart from Russia or Turkey.

Lastly, cultural cooperation is of importance when discussing shared values. Cultural interaction between two authoritarian states can be expressed through articulating common ideals and norms both populations share, as well as encouraging an exchange between the people. While Russia and Turkey do stem from different cultural backgrounds, the continued reinforcement of cultural ties between the two countries again provides a mutual premise for collaboration.

2.4. Hypothesis

International behaviour involving autocratic regimes could therefore be identified by looking at the criteria involving liberal democracies. Based on the approach described above, I want to test the following hypotheses regarding the link between neo-authoritarianism and transnational conduct:

1. The greater the similarities between states in terms of political regime type, the greater is the international cooperation and the peaceful relation between the two.
 - a. The greater the similarities concerning the composition of the institutional apparatus, the operability of the armed forces and the shared values between the regimes, the greater is the expected cooperation between Russia and Turkey.

3. Methodological Approach

In this chapter I will illustrate my research methods, the data collection and other linked challenges. The thesis adopts a comparative case study between Russia and Turkey, as well as a qualitative content analysis using the data analysis software MAXQDA.

3.1. Case Study: Russia and Turkey

Using a case study method is not meant to generalize to populations or universes, but to generalize to theoretical ideas. By applying a case study method, the goal is to “generalize theories (analytical generalization) and not to enumerate frequencies (statistical generalization)” (Kohlbacher, 2006, p. 5). One of the advantages of applying case study research is the variety of sources for collecting data. The possibility to use “a full variety of evidence - documents, artefacts, interviews, and observations” is one of the notable assets of adopting case study research (Yin, 2003, p. 8). Jean Hartley asserts in a similar manner that a case study seeks “to provide an analysis of the context and processes which illuminate the theoretical issues being studied” (Hartley, 2004, p. 323).

Because both Turkey and Russia present with distinctive geopolitical challenges, it’s not possible to directly substitute the countries’ foreign policy onto other countries. With case study research, the issue of representativeness could present a challenge to generalization. John Gerring argues that because “one cannot assume that the behavior of one unit will be indicative of the behavior of other units” (2004, p. 348). One rather unstable point in case study research is usually found in external validity, seeing as causal mechanisms can change and adjust in time and space. Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett argue that by forming so-called “contingent generalizations”, the observed findings could still apply to other cases, in this case countries, which are in a comparable situation (2005, p. 32). With this applicability can decrease and minimize the problem of overgeneralizing the topic. Even though this research only focuses on two countries, the finding’s validity could still be developed and expanded onto similar cases. This necessitates further research and the development of other case studies of countries with characteristics and attributes as Turkey and Russia. The

rise of authoritarian regimes and the further intensification of hybrid regimes towards a more authoritarian perspective poses a certain challenge to the Western democracies and the freedoms of societies within these authoritarian states. Both Turkey and Russia are of great importance in the international sphere, not least of all because of their influence within the region. There are several other countries with similar characteristics of authoritarianism, that could perhaps be analysed within the same framework and compared to the two cases.

Russia has fortified its position within the international arena but is still engaging in the strive for regional power. Turkey illustrates the struggle of a middle-sized power attempting to broaden its security strategies and expand its partnerships to ensure its national security and autonomy. Turkey has long struggled to rise to a power position in its region, as well as on the international level, where Turkey for instance has repeatedly criticised the structure of the UN Security Council. The thesis examines a certain type of country, in this case the neo-authoritarian regimes, within the context of a growing consolidation of authoritarian regimes and a reduction in the US hegemony position towards a more multilateral international structure. The theoretical proposition that there is a connection between a regime's international behaviour and the regime type will be tested by applying the theoretical foundations to the cases of Turkey and Russia.

3.2. Qualitative Content Analysis (MAXQDA)

The qualitative content analysis of the examined data is imperative in answering the research question above. The basic idea of the qualitative content analysis comes from Philipp Mayring (2000), whose research in this area will be examined more closely below. Analysing the legal documents of Turkey and Russia provides us with first-hand testaments, information and indications of the relationship between the two countries. By looking at the secondary sources, such as academic journals, relevant books, newspaper articles and official reports showcase the intricate correlation regarding the regime type. The investigation of the observed documents allows for a comprehensive evaluation of corresponding research through the usage of both primary and secondary sources.

As already briefly mentioned above, in a content analysis different kind of "recorded communication (transcripts of interviews, discourses, protocols of

observations, video tapes, documents...)” can be engaged with and evaluated. Now contrary to what the name suggests, content analysis does not focus only on the mere content of the selected information. In this type of analysis, there are suggested “levels of content” - the primary content revolves around the subject, fundamental wording and basic concepts of the text, whereas latent content would be the details and insights gathered through context (Mayring, 2000, p. 2). This is one of the few properties of qualitative content analysis which aren’t considered or don’t receive enough attention in quantitative studies, namely “the context of text components; latent structures of sense; distinctive individual cases [and] things that do not appear in the text” (Kohlbacher, 2006, p. 13).

The merits of this type of analysis are defined by Cathy Cassell and Gillian Symon as the focus on

“interpretation rather than quantification; an emphasis on subjectivity rather than objectivity; flexibility in the process of conducting research; an orientation towards process rather than outcome; a concern with context—regarding behaviour and situation as inextricably linked in forming experience; and finally, an explicit recognition of the impact of the research process on the research situation” (1994, p. 7).

In light of entrenched criticism and prejudice against qualitative research, the above mentioned conceptions encourage “that qualitative and quantitative methods should be viewed as complementary rather than as rival camps” (Jick, 1979, p. 602).

For defining content analysis, Earl Babbie (2001) characterizes it as "the study of recorded human communications" (2010, p. 333). Essential in content analysis is the feature of coding, where coding functions as "the process of transforming raw data into a standardized form" (Babbie, 2010, p. 338). In order to address these shortcomings of traditional quantitative content analysis, Mayring’s qualitative content analysis applies “a systematic, theory-guided approach to text analysis using a category system” (Kohlbacher, 2006, p. 25). This method permits the researcher to have categories manifest from the data and recognizes the importance for understanding the context, within which the data is considered. The time frame of the analysed period is from January 2014 to December 2019. The documents analysed are statements, speeches, press releases, press

conferences from the Presidents of Turkey and Russia, as well as the Foreign Ministry (ministers, spokespersons, ambassadors etc.). In total, 1730 documents were analysed within the MAXQDA program. Of those, 1185 are from the Russian official government websites, whereas 545 are from the Turkish pages. While there is a discrepancy between the number of documents from the two countries, the overall findings suggest the same trends and the same results for both.

Category	Definition
Foreign relations:	Contact between the countries in foreign policy, especially regarding cooperation mechanisms, contact between official representatives and written agreements
1. Intergovernmental cooperation	Any platform, group or apparatus in place to ensure a more efficient relationship between the two countries
2. Joint laws	Mention of any voluntary or binding laws, resolutions and statements that bind the two countries, created by both states or an international body they are a part of for a common purpose or interest
3. High-level contact	Meetings, summits or engagements among the official members of government and showing cooperation between them
Fighting capabilities:	
1. Mobilization of people and resources	Mention of the ability to create powerful armies and adjust them into an instrument of the political party
2. Greater threat perception	Mention of perceiving the other as a threat, leading to compromise instead of war

3. Military support and joint development	Mention of joint military and defence structures or projects and any pledges of military support
4. Regional opportunities for cooperation (areas of conflict)	Mention of common areas or joint conflicts involving both countries as either part of the same organisation, a mediator or a party to conflict where cooperation is required
Shared values/norms and interactive behaviour	
1. Strengthening partnership	Mention of encouragement to increase partnership, of putting emphasis on the value of the partnership or of focus on trust, cooperation, strengthening ties
2. Common principles	Mention of sharing a similar world view, of similar strategies and modes of behaviour or of finding common ground and motivating each other to compromise
3. Joint threats	Mention of joint threats to the ideological concepts or to the state and its structures from internal or external sources
4. Cultural cooperation	Mention of expressing common values within the populations of the two countries or of furthering an exchange between the people
5. Scapegoating international institutions or singular states	Mention of common motivation against other states and institutions which do not align with own standards or of instances where those institutions have failed or were responsible for failures

6. Territorial integrity of own and other states	Mention of the idea of respecting another country's sovereignty as vital for cooperation, especially in connection to conflict resolution
Overall relationship	
1. Positive	Mention of the other in a positive perspective, of praising them or of productive and effective development
2. Negative	Mention of criticism towards the other, exposing issues or problems within relations or otherwise negatively presenting the other
3. Indifferent/Neutral	Descriptive mention of the other without a positive or negative connotation
Other types of cooperation	
1. Economy/Trade	Mentioning of the importance or of obstacles concerning the economy or trade relations
2. Tourism	Mentioning of the importance or of obstacles concerning tourism and visa procedures
3. Joint projects	Mentioning of the importance or of obstacles concerning joint projects or initiatives with the other

Table 1: Coding System

The coding system based on the theory is divided into five overall categories: 1) institutional and regime-specific determinants, 2) fighting capabilities, 3) shared values and norms, 4) overall relationship, and 5) other types of cooperation. For the full table with examples see the Appendix 1.

The wide-ranging, all-inclusive source application provides the thesis with a proportionally solid reliability and validity. Throughout the analysis, there are references to researchers, analysts and scholars from several regions, but importantly also predominantly from Turkey and Russia, who can provide the most accurate depiction of official statements to eliminate the obstruction posed by language. The overall far-reaching expertise equips the thesis with a wide range of viewpoints and presenting the reader with a more thorough assessment of Russian-Turkish outcomes. Scholars with a similar theme in their research might end up with matching findings. The findings from this analysis can largely be traced, even though a large part of the content necessitated a high degree of subjective interpretation, especially with application of the theoretical framework.

4. Regime Analysis: The Political System of Russia and Turkey

Both Turkey and Russia fit in this category between authoritarian and democratic regimes. This concept, as described above, categorizes both countries' political system with attributes of 'Electoral Authoritarianism'. The scope of the thesis does not allow a complete regime analysis of both, so the following chapters are meant to confirm the classification of both Russia and Turkey within the category of Authoritarianism in providing brief examples of the fulfilled criteria.

4.1. Turkey and Competitive Authoritarianism

There is no longer a debate among scholars, whether Turkey fulfils the minimal provisions of a democracy. Turkey has been classified as an illiberal democracy (see Bechev, 2015), a competitive autocracy (see Esen & Gumuscu, 2016; Özbudun, 2015), and labelled more broadly as a hybrid regime (see Diamond, 2015). While the literature on Turkey's regime type has several different classifications, most commonly, Turkey is categorized as having descended from a stable democracy to Competitive Authoritarianism (CA).

These characteristics of CA in Turkey are evident and unmistakable when looking at the recent history and elections in the country. This thesis does not have the space to include the entire historical development of Turkey, which showed, among other themes, the fundamental characteristic of CA, such as a strong leader at the top of the government. Selçuk argues that not only is strong leadership an attribute of the country's political history, but also the steady and reliable rule of a political party, aspiring "to leave a personal mark in the political system" (Selçuk, 2016, p. 575). In November 2015, when abrupt and hurried elections exposed electoral losses of the AKP, the party's determination to stay in power manifested itself in "increased government pressure on dissent, including censorship in the media and implicit endorsement of violent attacks against the opposition" (Esen & Gumuscu, 2016, p. 1581).

The difference to competition in democracies is that, while it is real in CAs as well, it is also unfair. It can be argued that the incumbent faces favourable circumstances even within liberal systems, but the CA regimes are distinct in the sense that they are "undermining the opposition's capacity to organise and compete in elections" (Esen & Gumuscu, 2016, p. 1582). In these cases, the government appropriates state resources for partisan distribution and packs state institutions systematically with its loyalists. It also controls the media to limit the opposition's access to voters and weaken its political campaigns. Lastly, government critics are threatened, harassed, and, occasionally, prosecuted. As a result of the government's skewed access to resources and institutions, the opposition faces an uneven playing field against the incumbent party (Esen & Gumuscu, 2016, p. 1582). Based on the criteria from Levitsky and Way (2010), Turkey's regime can be classified as CA. According to Çalışkan, since the 2017 referendum all of the eleven qualifications can be identified within Turkey's regime (2018, p. 8).

4.1.1. Uneven Playing Field

The playing field would be considered uneven when "(1) state institutions are widely abused for partisan ends, (2) incumbents are systematically favoured at the expense of the opposition, and (3) the opposition's ability to organize and compete in elections is seriously handicapped" (Levitsky & Way, 2010, p. 10). In order to

determine whether the regime fulfils these qualifications, it is important to look at the access to resources, the media, and the law.

Turkey's constitution and political system have been undergoing changes since the late 1980s, but especially since the early 2000s. In 2001, significant changes were made in line with European standards and then again later in 2004. Nearly every year after that some form of change was made to the constitution. In 2010, another major modification took place with the 2010 constitutional referendum. The AKP produced an amendment package with the aim of lessening "the pressure of the judiciary and bureaucracy" (Özpek, 2012, p. 154). Amendments such as adjustments for the Turkish Constitutional Court, a structure designed to restrict the elected governments' abilities. The obstacles embodied through the Constitutional Court were regarded as inappropriate for the AKP's idea of democracy. In 2014, the AKP tried to establish control over the judiciary branch of the government and their efforts were not in vain. The new laws on the judiciary included a new HSYK Law no. 6524, a Law amending the Turkish Criminal Code No. 6545, and Law no. 6572 for changing certain provisions of the Law on Judges and Public Prosecutors. Some of these laws were benched by the Constitutional Court, described as the "beacon of hope" against Turkey's slippery slope from democracy to authoritarianism (Özbudun, 2015, p. 53). The amendments with the constitutional referendum in 2017 imposed even more questionable parameters for the court, some towards the benefit of the President, for instance with the renewal of article 104 of the constitution, the president is granted the power to "issue ordinary decrees without prior authorization from the parliament" (Aslan, 2019, p. 27). The effects of these reforms implemented by the ruling party show the party's growth in two aspects specifically: 1) they reduced the military's command and placed the elected government's position in the centre instead, and 2) they reconfigured the courts and the judiciary to restrict the control over government officials (Esen & Gumuscu, 2016, p. 1585). The reforms show that state institutions are manipulated through the law and then utilized by those in office "in ways that limit the opposition's ability to compete on reasonably equal footing" (Levitsky & Way, 2010, p. 368, Appendix).

Another indicator of an uneven playing field is the government's influence and control over the media. Long before the coup attempt in 2016, where the media

freedom was massively restricted with the world watching, a report by *Article 19* and *Reporters Without Borders* (RSF) argues that the steady removal of media freedoms in Turkey had already presented itself in a multitude of issues over time: “media ownership, financial pressure, blocking of websites, broadcasting bans on terrorist attacks, criminal defamation, closure of critical media outlets and broad use of anti-terror legislation against journalists” (2016, p. 15). This is also visible through the country’s control over social media. In a report by the University of Oxford, Turkey was evaluated as one of the countries to actively acquire volunteers skilled in IT “to support social media manipulation efforts” (Bradshaw & Howard, 2018, p. 9). The government not only invested in systematically restricting content, but was also involved in steering the media companies, either through influencing state-owned media or bribing private media. In one example, the state-owned Turkish Radio and Television (TRT) station, which actively circulates the governments propaganda, was closely monitored by the ruling party. Esen and Gumuscu support this claim, with an example of the 2015 election campaign. The TRT devoted 46% of its broadcasting to advocacy for the ruling party, “not counting the airtime reserved for President Erdogan, who actively campaigned for the AKP during elections” (2016, p. 1588). The uneven media access according to Levitsky and Way is therefore accounted for as well, as opposition content is limited and state-owned media reported one-sidedly, during but also outside of election cycles.

The uneven access to resources was evident in Turkey, as the ruling party abused the public infrastructure to further their campaign and remain in power. Earlier elections, as well as the latest elections in 2018, showed that the governing AKP used official events and affairs, where the elected officials were responsible or present already, to campaign for the next elections. This would allow them to use the funds for these ceremonial occasions for campaigning activities – money and funds the opposition did not have access to. Prime Minister Davutoglu and President Erdogan were both able to attend these events and incriminate the opposition. Both these officials also had access to so-called “discretionary funds”, which are separate from the campaign budget and conveniently not subject to bureaucratic surveillance and control (Esen & Gumuscu, 2016, p. 1589).

Additionally, the OSCE Report for the most recent elections found that a lack of

substantial laws on party and campaign funding and missing observation of the legitimacy of the financing activity “reduces the transparency, integrity and accountability of political finance” (2018b, p. 17). Turkey’s president and the AKP have exploited the available resources for their political gain, while simultaneously weakening the opposition and eliminating the possibility of fair competition between them.

4.1.2. Violation of Civil Liberties

The authors cite four qualifications, where if even only one of these is present within a regime, it is qualified in violating the civil liberties of its people. Under the AKP rule, the violation of civil liberties has not only become a kind of standard but has also securitised opposition and disaccord. The first qualification is the repeated discrimination and pressure of the media for political reasons. Central to the establishment of control was the instalment of an overwhelmingly AKP-friendly media landscape. But in addition to influencing the media, the governing party has persistently “disciplined the mainstream media via intimidation, mass firings and imprisonment of journalists, and buying off media moguls” (Esen & Gumuscu, 2016, p. 1590). In a report of *freedom house* in 2014, a large amount of arrested and confined journalists are related to “overly broad and aggressively applied antiterrorism laws, combined with a judicial system that too often sees its role as protecting the state, rather than the individual” (Corke et al., 2014, p. 14). The Turkish government often contributes to or permits any measures or behaviour which affects the freedom of political affiliation or speech. The most recent analysis of media freedom confirms consolidation of the AKP’s control over the media. The president of Turkey was cited in his consistent reprimanding of “journalists he disliked both to their faces and in his speeches”, as well as contacting journalists and the networks to order them to modify and amend their reportage (Tali, 2020, p. 6). Additionally, the police have used extensive and disproportionate force against the people in anti-government demonstrations and public protests organised by students, unions, professional associations, and environmentalists (Esen & Gumuscu, 2016, p. 1593).

4.1.3. Unfair Elections

The Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi or AK Party) has been leading the political landscape in Turkey for years and, before Turkey transformed into an authoritarian regime, the party was “a rare example of a predominant party in a competitive democracy” (Carkoglu & Yildirim, 2015, p. 57). In the local, parliamentary, and presidential elections since 2002 the AK Party has steadily increased its vote share. When the global economic crisis hit shortly before the 2009 local elections, electoral support for the AK Party dropped. In 2011, the local elections showed a massive rise in support, a record-breaking voter turnout for the party, and the restoration of previous levels of approval (Carkoglu & Yildirim, 2015, p. 58). With the presidential elections in 2014 came the first popular election for the Turkish president. The political system in Turkey was not prepared for this adjustment, but despite opposition parties’ efforts, Erdogan defeated his counterpart. Carkoglu and Yildirim portray this as “a watershed election that changed the very dynamics of Turkish electoral campaigns” (2015, p. 59). As the entire focus shifted from the party to the individual, the existing conditions and limits of campaigning were amended to the new circumstances. In the June 2015 elections, the AKP did not receive a majority of the votes, which meant a coalition government needed to be formed. Clashes between the opposition parties and discrepancies with the AKP led to a failure to form a government and Erdogan called for repeat elections in November. The climate in 2015, in which the elections were held, grew from intense and dynamic to rather violent, with terrorist attacks plaguing Turkey’s cities and clashes between the Turkish military and the PKK increasing. The changing political climate benefited the AKP, putting the Kurdish question, the fight against terrorism and for security at the top of the agenda. The voting population was able to look at the “reliable past economic performance of the AK Party” and the substantial track record, giving the party credibility and backing for the November elections (Carkoglu & Yildirim, 2015, p. 63). This election cycle clearly demonstrated the shifting political agenda in Turkey. The developments during the elections could be interpreted as a warning sign to the future of Turkey’s competitive democracy. Skipping ahead to 2017, a constitutional referendum changed the political system in Turkey yet again by eliminating the office of the Prime Minister and shifting from a parliamentary

system to a presidential system. The referendum faced a great amount of criticism as it was conducted surrounding some concerning circumstances. For one, the establishment of “a new constitutional agenda introduced under a state of emergency” is problematic, just like the possible consequences this could have on the division of society (Bilgin & Erdoğan, 2018, p. 30). The referendum was also criticized concerning the fairness and objectivity of the procedure. In the OSCE/ODIHR report regarding the observation of the referendum, it was noted that numerous observers were obstructed in fulfilling their mandate by either being limited in their assignment or being denied access. Additionally, there was reported police presence around the ballot stations and in some cases officials were even “checking voter identification documents before granting access” (OSCE/ODIHR, 2017, p. 3). Bilgin and Erdoğan suggested that populist parties, like for example the AKP in Turkey, were steadily expanding the use of referendums to support their positions. They argued that this was required in order to condemn the opposition groups of “elitism and disrespecting the general will” (Bilgin & Erdoğan, 2018, p. 30). The presidential elections in 2018 would, for the first time after the referendum, determine a president who unified both the office of head of state and head of government. Finally, the latest presidential and parliamentary elections in 2018 resulted in Recep Tayyip Erdoğan winning the presidential election (with 52.59% of votes), and his party AKP winning the parliamentary elections (with 42.56% of votes) (Klimek et al., 2018, p. 2). During the 2018 elections as well, the OSCE/ODIHR observers notes some irregularities, divergences, and shortcomings to free, fair, and democratic elections. For instance, the Ballot Box Committee (BBC) oversaw stamping the ballots, but, in several cases, observers confirmed that voters were provided with unstamped ballots. The report also suggested a “large presence of police and security officers (observed in 12 per cent of polling stations)”, who in some cases were found to meddle in or obstruct the process (OSCE/ODIHR, 2018b, p. 24). In the same manner of the 2017 referendum, the observers documented restrictive behaviour from the police or the BBC in situations where the observers were unable to fully realize their mandate. These reports of independent, international mechanisms are one of the qualifications for categorizing the electoral process as fair or unfair.

4.2. Russia and Electoral Authoritarianism

While these same 'New Authoritarianism' attributes are evident in Russia's political system, more authors have chosen to define it more broadly under the term "electoral authoritarianism" (see Gel'man, 2014; White & Herzog, 2016; Golosov, 2018). There are, however, also those who would put the country in the same category as Turkey, classifying both as competitive authoritarian regimes (see Magaloni, 2010; Flikke, 2016). From a purely constitutional perspective, Russia is described as a "democratic federal rule-of-law state with the republican form of government" (Russian Federation, 1993). No one today denies Russia's authoritarian traits, but the discourse is starting to shift and the question becomes whether Russia would still fit the hybrid characterization or whether Russia has already transformed to a full authoritarian regime (see Motyl, 2016).

This characterization of Russia's system stems from the inability to break away from its autocratic past. Russia faces a lot of criticism from its Western partners, but simultaneously functions as "a model to those seeking to establish authoritarian regimes under a rubric of democracy" (Yilmaz, 2012, p. 1). Electoral Authoritarianism is a prominent form of the expansion of authoritarian regimes. An important characteristic of this type is the routine holding of elections. The party in power utilizes "much of its energy to the systematic weakening of political pluralism and the creation of a skewed electoral playing field" (Freedom House, 2019a, p. 62). The regime still makes provisions for parts of the apparatus to function 'normally', as they would in a democracy. Components of a democracy such as technically competitive elections, functioning legislatures, or the continued presence of political parties, even though the system remains fundamentally authoritarian with regards to "power distribution and reproduction" (Golosov, 2018, 231f.). Russia's government, just like Turkey's, benefits from an uneven playing field, with the one-sided use of state institutions, the uneven access to media, and an undistributed ability to obtain resources.

4.2.1. Uneven Playing Field

Exploiting the state's institution and limiting the opportunities of opposition, the Russian governmental landscape is characterized by little to almost no variation in officials in office. The most prominent example would be at the federal level, where

the president of Russia, Vladimir Putin, has been in office for 20 years (as of Spring 2020). But the same is true for the regional level, where, for example, the governor of Lipetsk Oblast, E. Savchenko, has held his office since April 1998 (Velikaya, 2019, p. 81).

The Russian system is affected by extreme (institutional) corruption. The power generated in the economic or public spaces cannot only be put to use for the proposed intent but can be exploited by individuals or groups. Especially in states with an abundance of natural assets allowing the system and profits to be “easily consolidated in the hands of the elite or totalitarian government” (Velikaya, 2019, p. 81). This ‘ideology of corruption’ is what allowed these groups and individuals to secure a steady increase in dividends through the acquisition of governmental contracts and the substantial, reliable partnership with the Kremlin.

Since the law could be an obstacle to fully secure power, the governmental structures in Russia have relied on reforming and adapting the necessary legislation. Laws and regulations concerning the elections overall or the particulars of political party architecture have changed in Russia more than any other post-Soviet country. In order to keep the advantages for the ruling elite, the standards for election are adapted basically every electoral cycle. Velikaya reveals that between 1998 and 2017, a “total of 151 amendments had been made to electoral law and the Law on political Parties [...], i.e. an average of 5 amendments per annum” (2019, p. 82). These amendments mostly consisted of changes to the formation of political parties, limiting the thresholds for election, and “experimentation with majoritarian representation, proportional representation and mixed electoral systems” (Velikaya, 2019, p. 82). The changes made to reduce political representation of opposition forces in particular, have produced the desired effect. In 2019, six elected parties only had 107 seats in the lower chamber of the assembly, where two of those factions are represented with only one seat each. The Parliament therefore turns into a “state-run club with governmental funding, an adjunct of the executive branch rubberstamping the president’s and government’s proposals” (Velikaya, 2019, 87f.).

The OSCE mission during the presidential elections in 2018 noted unfair circumstances regarding the campaign financing and recommended steps to ensure greater transparency of the management of funds. Suggested solutions

included the provision of data on “income and expenses, in the candidates’ financial reports” or the incorporation of the “owners and sources of funding of legal entities and not-for-profit organisations that donate funds to candidates and parties” (2018a, p. 25). Concerning the independence of the media, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media criticised the violence and aggression towards journalists and other representatives of media agencies. Furthermore, the report denounced the planned modifications to existing laws and regulations on media and designated these revisions as an excessive and unreasonable obstruction of media freedom (OSCE/ODIHR, 2018a, p. 15). These changes were and are designed to create the most convenient environmental circumstances indulging the party of power.

4.2.2. Violation of Civil Liberties

Russia has been steadily increasing restrictions on its people, including harsher ones towards the political opposition and public freedoms. Gel’man mentions softer, standard restrictions from a “menu of manipulations” of electoral authoritarianism, comprised of the prejudiced and one-sided journalism regarding the political landscape, the direct and indirect financing for pro-governmental organizations from the state, a wide-ranging, corrupt use of state resources to guarantee the preservation of the regime, and finally, the unfair court rulings with a clear preference and partiality towards state officials and their followers while neglecting the rights of the opposition (2014, p. 514).

Russia’s greatest strength in keeping its authoritarian properties operational, is restricting access to a balanced selection of information, and lying or disseminating false information in those channels that are permitted. As a result of Russia’s monopolist control over the main information outlets, the government has been presented with and taken advantage of these possibilities to “deploy a wide range of propagandist techniques” (Gel’man, 2014, p. 510). Any form of independent reporting was forced to exist in a small niche of media representation with a marginal audience. Overall, the government has developed complete dominion over what is depicted in political news.

Apart from limiting opposition in the media or the existence of opposition parties, Russia has established obstacles in terms of actual, practical opposition. The

governing elite imposed higher sanctions for engaging in demonstrations not authorized by the government and amplified its influence on the “opposition leaders and activists, independent media and NGOs” with the aim to increase the consequences of participating in political activity in opposition to the leading party (Gel'man, 2014, p. 517). The authorities continue to include damaging measures and punishment of civil society agents motivated by dissentient considerations. Vague laws constructed against anti-Russian NGO's and other extremist groups gives the regime justification to restrict or even eradicate civil activity that doesn't endorse the governments agenda.

Those taking part in the opposition, either as a politician or a supporter, are continuously battered and attacked, including with feigned lawsuits and other kinds of administrative pressure and persecution, intended to discourage the participation of 'real' opposition in the political process. *Freedom House* for example reported that politician and activist Aleksey Navalny was “administratively arrested” for 30 days for trying to organize a peaceful rally (Freedom House, 2019b). The goal of instigating fear in those rejecting and opposing the ruling powers has succeeded in that the independent media minimizes its output criticising the government. The verbal attacks by the government sanctioned media on protesters and opponents display the materialization of the political strategy of the government.

4.2.3. Unfair Elections

Russia's regime, belonging to the category of Electoral Authoritarianism, includes elections that are somewhat consequential, providing the people with a choice per say. Fully authoritarian governments on the other hand don't present their people with genuine elections. The majority of researchers have recognized that Russian elections, particularly during Vladimir Putin's authority, have grown to be biased, discriminatory, and flawed. The main allegation is that the powerful and superior position of the party of power remains constant while being accompanied with politically insignificant opposition parties (Gel'man, 2014, p. 514).

Sustaining the veil of the 'Russian Federation', the government agrees to allot a certain power to the regional level, as long as the central line within the regional administration remains loyal to and in accord with the existing state of affairs within

the federal government. This leads to the important conclusion that the elections mainly exist for the purpose of providing the people with a legitimization, showing that the people legitimately chose the status quo regime and “allowed the ruling group to adopt a wide range of policies across various arenas irrespective of voter preferences” (Gel'man, 2014, p. 514). Elections are used in a similar fashion to simply rotate the loyalist and supporters of the party in power, assigning positions to the appointee next in line, even before the voters get a chance to pick their preference.

The electoral reforms reduced the number of eligible parties for the elections drastically, especially amendments made in 2004, which helped the leading party to present itself as the only viable option for many. With reducing the number of choices people have for the elections, the government succeeded in remaining in power, with elections seemingly having provided the basis and justification (Golosov, 2018, p. 236). Other authors, like Shevtsova, agree, arguing that voting in Russia has lost all meaning. The government is restricting and excluding (opposition) candidates acting without government supervision and manipulating irksome results. Adding Russia's dominance over the online media, journalism, and government funding, opposition leaders do not stand a chance to compete with the government-sanctioned candidate (Shevtsova, 2015, p. 30).

In the last assembly elections in 2016, the leading party United Russia won a majority of seats, giving it the power to govern without the approval of other parties, including the ability to make amendments to the constitution. Even if they were reliant on a coalition with an opposition party, the most successful opposition parties that won were all government-approved, which provided the illusion of a more diverse legislature, while in reality, the government influenced the entire process (Freedom House, 2019b).

During the presidential elections, observers noted different violations, such as transparent ballot boxes, which compromised the secrecy of the vote. Those working at the ballot stations were stationed close to where people cast their vote, allowing them to clearly see the voter's preference (OSCE/ODIHR, 2018a, p. 21). These fraudulent practices were realized by diverse modifications of rules and changes being made to different electoral laws since the 2012 presidential election. Disregarding OSCE obligations and international directives on the

democratic, fair, and unbiased election standards, Russia's electoral cycles have shown drastic restrictions of "constitutionally guaranteed political rights and fundamental freedoms" (OSCE/ODIHR, 2018a, p. 1).

5. Russia, Turkey, and Autocratic Peace

This chapter discusses the Turkey-Russia alliance against the backdrop of the theoretical outline. Before each analysis of the different characteristics, I will give a brief outline of the theoretical expectations. Throughout I evaluate the overall relationship between the two countries and the theory's explanatory potential.

5.1. Institutional and Regime-Specific Determinants

The regime-specific features, namely intergovernmental cooperation, joint laws, and high-level contacts reveal Russia's and Turkey's potential for true allyship based on these similarities. As recognized in the analysis above, Electoral Authoritarianism premises the power monopoly of one small group of individuals. Those who hold the power make the decisions, not just on the national level, but also concerning international affairs and foreign policy. This intergovernmental cooperation constitutes any shared platforms, group mechanisms, or apparatuses in place to ensure a more efficient relationship and increase coherence between the two countries. Consequently, we would expect Russia and Turkey to introduce such mechanisms as well as reinforce and strengthen those already existing. Similarly, the voluntary or binding laws, resolutions, and statements connecting the two countries demonstrate their ability to connect based on common perceptions of rules and regulations. By launching these joint initiatives, both governments found common ground for a combined effort and cooperation. We would expect these mechanisms to not only emerge from joint efforts, but to successfully strengthen the relationship. Because the regimes under examination have strong leaders heading the party in power, as well as individuals in positions of influence (such as ministers or ambassadors), looking at the high-level contact reveals the engagement among the official members of government and the level of cooperation between them. This would lead to the assumption that these high-level meetings are regular, effective, and benefitting the overall relationship.

Figures 1 and 2 show the documents analysed from Russia and Turkey in the time frame between 2014 to 2019 and the amount of times intergovernmental cooperation, joint laws, and high-level contacts were found within those publications. The x-axis shows the document groups, the y-axis the sum of the codes for that group. Joint laws were more consistent than the other two categories, which both experienced great impetus after the thawing relations between Turkey and Russia in 2016.

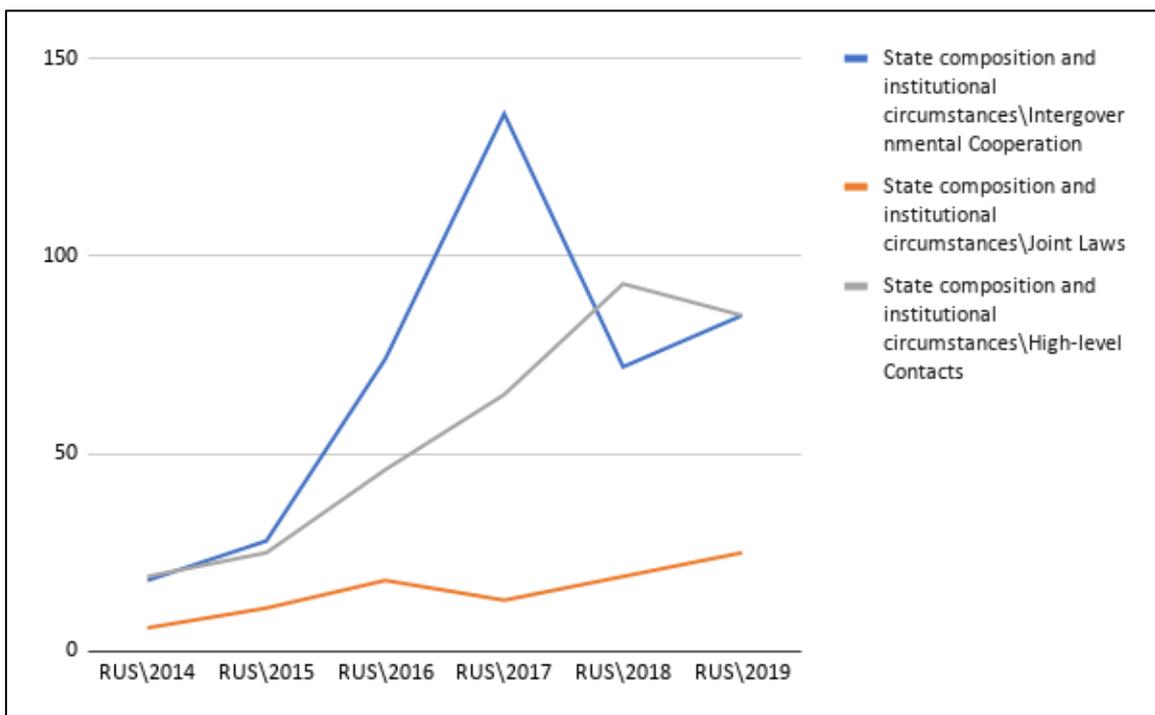


Figure 1: State Composition and Institutional Circumstances for Russia (2014-2019)

5.1.1. Intergovernmental Cooperation

Intergovernmental cooperation is best represented in the most visible political partnership between the two countries, namely the High-Level Cooperation Council (HLCC). The Council is chaired by the respective presidents of Russia and Turkey as well as several sub-groups. These mechanisms are the Joint Strategic Planning Group (JSPG), the Joint Intergovernmental Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation (JIC) and the Russian-Turkish Public Forum.

This cooperation has been incredibly effective in the improvement in ties, not only at the highest political level, but also encompassing the economic and cultural sector. When the Council was created in 2010, both countries announced the

commencement of a new dimension in Turkish-Russian relations. One indication of this is the increase of high-level meetings, especially between the two presidents, elaborated on below.

Many of the documents mention the HLCC meetings and ascribe great importance to them. When the meetings were cancelled and postponed for several months between 2015 and 2016, both leaders were remorseful and displeased with this development (while Russia firmly argued these steps were necessary). Turkey's president, on the occasion of a meeting of the HLCC in 2018, confirmed that these meetings "will further fortify our [Turkey-Russia] relations" (Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, 2018a, p. 2).

The second big cooperation mechanism both countries are a part of and actively participate in, is the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization (BSEC). Especially the Russian documents put a lot of emphasis on this. For instance, in a statement from the Foreign Ministry of Russia he describes the BSEC activities as important for "enhancing the prosperity and progressive development of the Black Sea region" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Russia, 2018c, p. 4). The region is paramount for developmental purposes and investment possibilities. Russia highlights the significance of mutually beneficial participation of all the countries of the BSEC in the Black Sea region, "especially in areas such as transport, energy, customs, tourism, environmental protection and the fight against organised crime" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Russia, 2015e, p. 1). This commitment is illustrated by Russia's "voluntary and non-reciprocal contribution...[of] \$1 million" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Russia, 2018d, p. 2). While Turkey values the organisation just as much, when mentioning the Black Sea, Turkey additionally references the Ukraine's and Russia's ongoing dispute. Since Turkey values both conflict parties as "close friends and wants to carry its deep cooperation with both countries to the future", they advocated for peace to return to the area and for both "friends to resolve their problems through dialogue" (Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, 2018e, p. 2).

In addition to the HLCC and the Black Sea Economic Forum, Russia and Turkey cooperate indirectly in organizations of their respective regions. On the one hand, there are discussions on "Turkey's potential membership of BRICS or the Shanghai Cooperation Organization" (Çancı, 2017, p. 473). On the other hand,

Russia holds the status of an observer within the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), due to Russia's large Muslim population. Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs has declared Russia's willingness in promoting "relations with the OIC as well as its member countries and [reiterated that] the Russian leadership's efforts have wide support" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Russia, 2019d, p. 2). Smaller sub-divisions, such as the Russia-Islamic World Strategic Vision Group, comprised of politicians, experts, and former diplomats from the regions, were established to encourage specifically cultural projects and inter-religious dialogue.

5.1.2. High-Level Contact

The presidential systems established in Turkey and Russia have consequences for the relationship, as both countries are headed by determined, powerful leaders. Putin and Erdoğan have established a personal relationship, and this connection and mutual respect are discernible in their official statements. Russia, for instance, refers to their neighbour as "good friends" (Presidential Executive Office of Russia, 2015c, p. 14), and their joint affairs as "long-term neighbourly ties and friendship" (Presidential Executive Office of Russia, 2016, p. 10). Turkey uses similar language to describe the friendly association. In terms of personal relations, the president is referred to as "my dear friend Mr. Putin" with whom Turkey "took a shared stand to strengthen [...] bilateral and multilateral cooperation" (Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, 2016f, p. 2).

The strategic communication is characterized as "friendly and good-neighborly relations between Turkey and Russia" (Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, 2017b, p. 2), oftentimes claiming that "relations with Russia is growing exponentially stronger" (Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, 2018c, p. 3) or "talks with Russia are bearing fruits" (Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, 2017f, p. 2). Both presidents have encouraged not only their government, but their businesses and economic communities to further engage with each other, even lifting bureaucratic boundaries to allow faster, deeper, and increased cooperation between the two countries.

Turkish President Erdoğan has described this special relationship between the two thusly: "My dear friend, you and I share a common characteristic. We are leaders who like to raise the bar, because we believe our countries, our people and our

shared geography deserve better.” (Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, 2017e, p. 2).

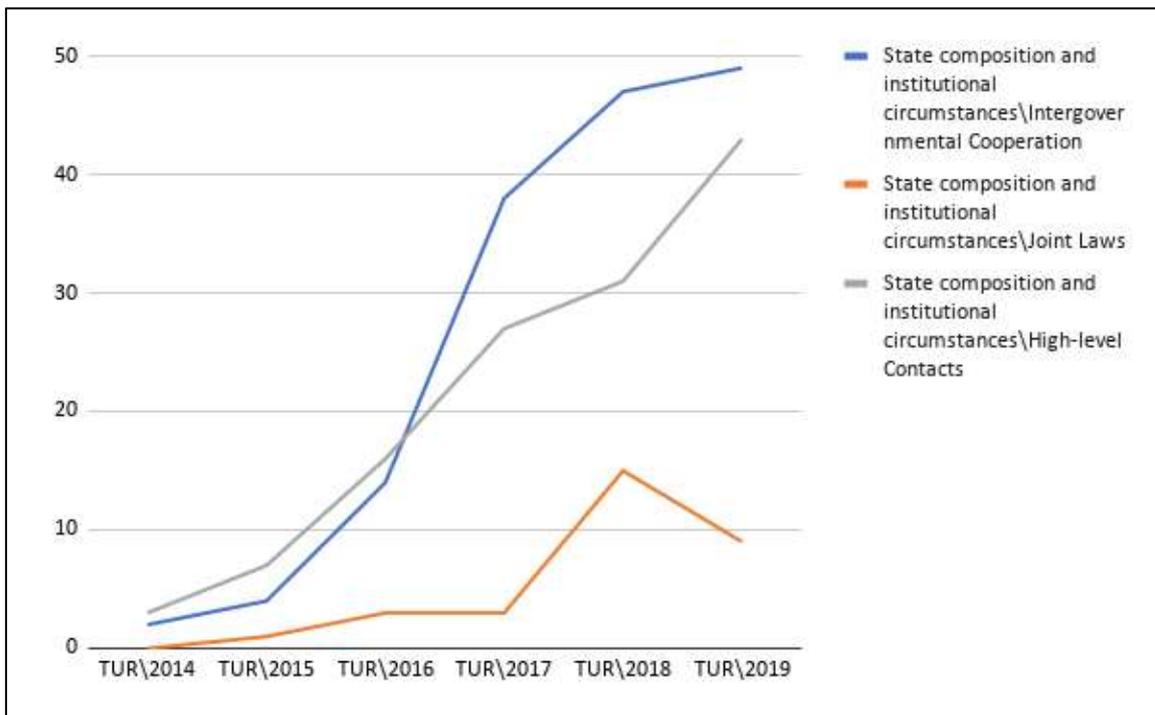


Figure 2: State Composition and Institutional Circumstances for Turkey (2014-2019)

The presidents have two contrasting, sometimes even opposed world-views, where Putin is “a Slavist nationalist and religiously Orthodox”, and his counterpart Erdoğan is an Islamist unification (Çancı, 2017, p. 464). While those views are different, according to Çancı they are both hegemony-oriented, which is an incentive for the two to try to keep, consolidate, or boost their positions of power in their regions. Even though authors have criticized both to play for the opposite team with regard to certain issues, such as Syria, Ukraine, the Caucasus, Georgia, Libya, Armenia–Azerbaijan and Cyprus, both countries are trying to overcome their differences for the sake of gaining dominance at a regional level and perhaps more respect on a global level. And even though Turkey has not shed its pro-Atlantic perspective as a member of NATO, both leaders have deemed a Eurasian partnership appropriate, practical, and advantageous for both countries.

The high-level contact includes telephone conversations between the two leaders and foreign ministers. Telephone conversations between Russian and Turkish officials are regular and all of them are recorded on websites and mentioned in speeches or statements. In one of the joint press conferences between the two

leaders in 2017, President Erdoğan noted that he made two official visits to Russia in the past two months. Additionally, the last meeting between the two marked the “fifth meeting with President Putin of Russia since August 2016... [and they] achieved the desired momentum in political relations between the two countries thanks to all these talks” (Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, 2017d, p. 1). The authoritarian tendencies of both countries’ leaders have contributed to this good chemistry as well (Balcer, 2014, 29f.). Russia and Turkey do not overly criticise each other, as opposed to other actors in the international arena, which makes the closeness and affiliation between the two easy and desirable.

5.1.3. Joint Laws

The joint agreements, voluntary or binding laws, resolutions, and statements connecting the two countries demonstrate the possibility of bringing them on common rules and regulations despite the referenced discrepancies among their foreign policy.

The guidelines for the Syrian conflict are the Joint UN Security Council Resolution 2254 and the Geneva Communiqué. Both countries advocate for the establishment of a constructive platform for finding a solution, while in full compliance with the two documents. Before the trilateral meetings with Iran and Turkey initially commenced, all three countries based their gatherings on those principles and vowed to fully comply with them through these separate meetings (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Russia, 2017, p. 2). Russia and Turkey remind their counterparts, as well as other actors or coalitions involved, that there “can be only one basis – UN Security Council Resolution 2254, which gives top priority to Syrians' approaches and the processes they themselves must conduct” (Presidential Executive Office of Russia, 2018b, p. 6). According to Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov, any other approach would be missing the point, as it would alienate Syria's government, opposition, and civil society by excluding them from important decisions being made. The coalition known as the ‘small group’ on Syria (France, the United States, Great Britain, Germany, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt) takes a stance opposing Russia’s and Turkey’s. The other group seeks “regime change at any cost and [wants] the political process to ultimately conclude in regime change” (Presidential Executive Office of Russia, 2018b, p. 5). The UN

Security Council Resolution 2254 advances straightforward principle, which is that only the Syrian people can and should decide on their own and their country's future.

Another document binding Russia and Turkey in the Syrian peace process is the Geneva Communiqué. The Russian Foreign Ministry calls the way some states address the issues of Syria “another obsession in connection with a regime change because of somebody's personal enemies and personal hatred” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Russia, 2014a, p. 3). The main message from the UN Resolution continues through the Geneva Communiqué, which is to stop the ongoing violence, address the humanitarian aspects, find a consensus between the government and oppositional forces, and create a democratic Syria free from terrorism and extremism. It does not include the West's primary solution of removing Syria's leader.

The Memorandum of Understanding signed in October 2019 was hailed by Russia as “a major step towards restoring Syria's territorial integrity” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Russia, 2019e, p. 2). This document follows two others, namely the Memorandum on the Creation of De-Escalation Areas in the Syrian Arab Republic from May 2017 and the Memorandum on Stabilization of the Situation in the Idlib De-Escalation Area from September 2018. At the Quadrilateral Summit on Syria between Russia, Turkey, Germany, and France, all members welcomed the Stabilization Memorandum, giving the work conducted between Turkey and Russia international recognition and impetus (Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, 2018d, p. 2).

The Montreux Convention is a document regulating the transit of naval warships in the Black Sea. Both countries support and fully endorse the regulations and criteria for the restrictions on “tonnage and duration [and] the length of stay of naval military ships of foreign non-Black Sea states”, especially when confronted with violations by non-Black Sea states (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Russia, 2014b, p. 3). Both countries value the importance of the Black Sea region and often refer to this convention as the basis for their cooperation.

5.2. Military Capabilities and Defence Cooperation

Democratic theory has asserted that autocracies, particularly single leader or single party systems, are very competent at mobilizing their people and necessary resources for the achievement of the party's program. This effective organization can result in sizeable armed forces and other military agents with the potential to align these with the party's agenda (see Peceny et al., 2002). A strong army and the skill of mobilizing resources when necessary sends a strong signal to other single-party governments, leading to them to recognize the other as a genuine threat. This threat perception in turn would catalyse compromise instead of reciprocation with force.

To minimize this threat perception or to increase the mutual knowledge on each other's resources, increased military support, joint development, and defence cooperation can be considered important dynamics in the Turkey-Russia relations. Based on the theoretical premise, any joint military and defence structures or projects with pledges of military support should lead to peaceful relations among the two countries, rather than aggressive or combative retaliation.

When analysing the fighting capabilities, Russia's and Turkey's involvement in regional conflicts need to be considered as well. The neighbourhood which both countries share, create not only obstacles, but also opportunities for cooperation. Both countries seek to establish a position of power within the region, making it impossible for either one to ignore the other. When both countries are involved, either as part of the same organisation, a mediator, or a party, in a conflict where cooperation is required, it should ultimately lead to the countries' resorting to peaceful means rather than using violence to solve these issues.

One of the things the analysis brought forth organically, was the value of territorial integrity of their own and other states mentioned frequently by both countries. The concept of territorial integrity involves acknowledging another country's sovereignty as necessary and decisive, especially in matters connected to conflict resolution. When both countries share common principles such as this one, they can rally around it, basing further association on these shared standards.

5.2.1. Regional Cooperation and Military Partnership

Figures 3 and 4 display the regional and military cooperation of Russia and Turkey respectively. The x-axis shows the document groups, the y-axis the sum of the codes for that group. Regional cooperation was one of the most coded segments, represented in 827 documents from the overall 1730. Because of the shared neighbourhood and the ongoing conflicts within, Russia and Turkey are presented with a lot of occasions for cooperation. Joint developments in the military sector are still in their infancy, since they were only initiated much later in the alliance in 2015.

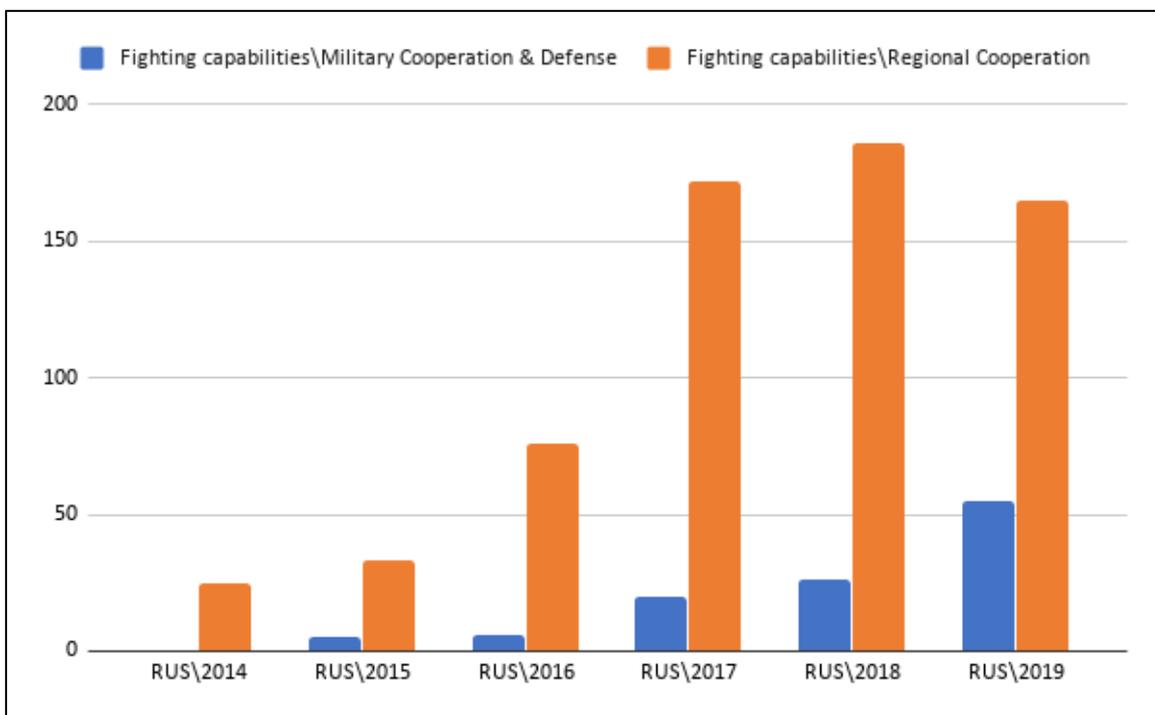


Figure 3: Regional Cooperation and Military Partnership for Russia (2014-2019)

To elaborate on the regional cooperation and military partnership, this segment will look at the situation surrounding Crimea, as well as the growing teamwork in Syria. Regional cooperation was most often mentioned within the analysed group of documents, which is not surprising, considering that some of the most pressing challenges connecting Turkey and Russia are the conflicts within their neighbourhood. Whenever 'regional cooperation' was observed in the analysis, it was with an affirmative, optimistic implication. While Turkey and Russia still do not see eye to eye on several issues, the general difficulty of the joint conflicts brings both countries together and encourages compromise.

Even though research often cites the situation surrounding Crimea and the conflict in Syria as examples for Russia-Turkey cooperation, both confrontations are surrounded by different circumstances. With regards to the Black Sea region, Russia and Turkey, sharing access to the sea, are the two predominant actors. But the main threat is Russia itself. This is different in comparison to Syria because the non-state actors and terrorists account for the greatest threat in general, despite Russia and Turkey being on opposite sides of the conflict. Turkey's attitudes and perspectives on the conflict in Ukraine and Crimea are an issue that has been decisive in the relationship with Russia. In 2014, when Russia annexed the Crimea, Turkey has vigorously defended Ukraine's territorial independence. In several statements on the issue, the government and the president have declared repeatedly, that they will not accept the annexation, or the referendum conducted on the status of remaining in the Ukraine or joining Russia. During a joint press conference with the then Ukrainian President Poroshenko in March 2016, Turkish President Erdoğan confronted Russia on their intrusive policies:

“Russia states that it entered Syria because Syrian government called on it. Then who called on Russia to enter Ukraine? Where will they place this in the international law? This is a logic of ‘might makes right.’ Rightfulness is out of the question here...That Russia trampled on the international law in Crimea was ignored” (Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, p. 2).

The message to Russia is strong but given the aggravated relations between the countries due to the 2015 incident, the robust and hostile stance on the issue could in part be attributed to the temporarily stalled partnership. After the 'reconciliation' between the Turkish and Russian governments, the stance on the issue did not change, but the stance on Russia's role on the issue did. The Minister of Foreign Affairs defended Russia later in August 2016, saying that while the Turkish government still did not accept the annexation, the international community has to shoulder some of the responsibility of things turning out the way they did:

“Look at what happened to Ukraine. They constantly threatened Kiev and forced it to make a choice between them and Russia. The said, “You will either be with us or with Russia.” This approach is unacceptable. What is currently happening in Ukraine reflects the key problem in the region. Clearly, our stance on Ukraine and Crimea is obvious. With regard to Crimea our position on the issue could be different from Russia’s stance on the issue. However, on the other hand we must understand why this happened. We have to face the truth. [...] The West has to change its approach and its tactics. It should abandon its policy of patronage. This is a dead-end.” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Turkey, p. 4).

Within a few months, the rhetoric changed from blaming Russia’s intentions outright to holding the West and its strategy (in part) accountable for the role they played in escalating the situation in Ukraine.

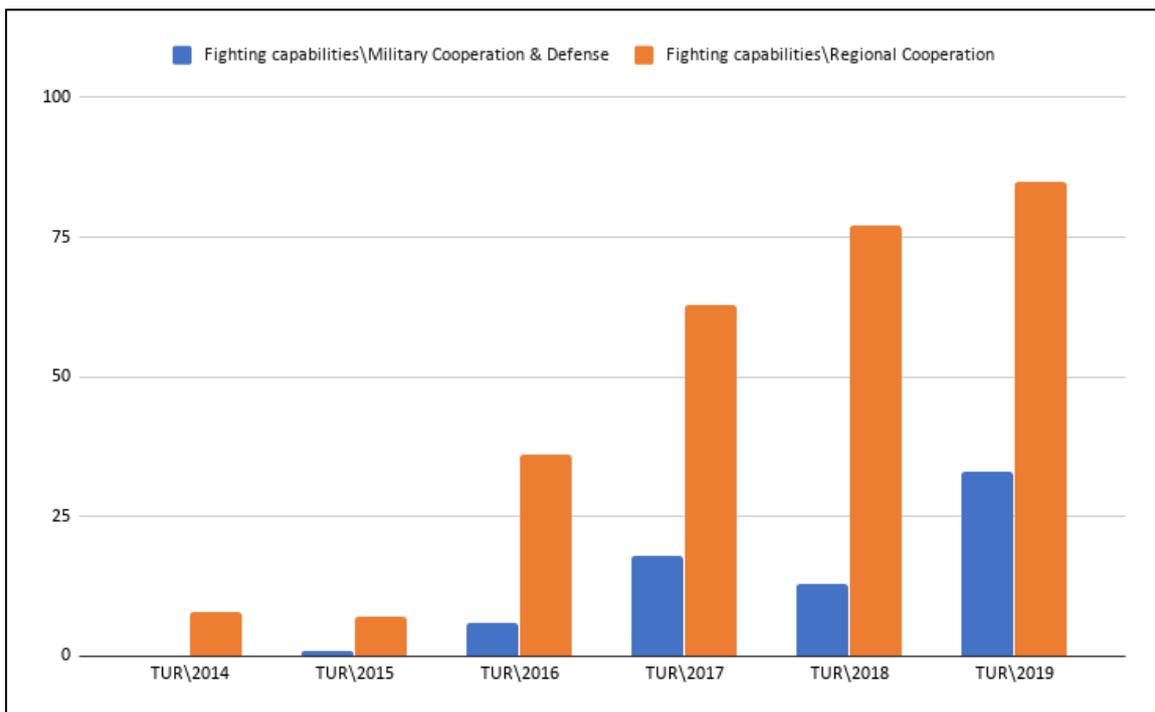


Figure 4: Regional Cooperation and Military Partnership for Russia (2014-2019)

In Syria, information exchange between the militaries started in 2015, when both countries devised a mechanism towards a more organised contact between the armed forces. In a meeting between Vladimir Putin and Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu in 2015, they discussed the new structure of “direct communication

between the Turkish army's central command post and [Russia's] National Defence Control Centre", an instrument to coordinate operations and provide additional safety measures involving the security of Turkey's airspace (Presidential Executive Office of Russia, 2015b, p. 3). The growing military cooperation between the states is observable through the joint patrolling decisions taken by both countries. This effort consists of joint Russian-Turkish patrols arranged "in the west and the east of the area of Operation Peace Spring with a depth of 10 kilometers" (Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, 2019e, p. 3). With the aim to reduce violence in the area and regain control from the terrorist, both the Russian and Turkish military agreed to jointly collaborate in the Memorandum of Understanding from 23 October 2019. Finally, cooperation in the defence sector, specifically regarding military equipment and joint defence projects, was intensified in 2019 with the purchase of S-400 missiles from Russia. Turkey's decision received a lot of backlash from the international community, especially its NATO allies. Turkey vehemently defended its decision and discussed openly its plans for "the purchase of S-400 defense systems from Russia as well as Turkey's offer to Russia on the joint production of S-500s" (Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, 2018b, p. 1). The theory proposes that cooperation can stem from perceiving the other as dangerous. While they might not necessarily perceive each other as threats or do not disclose their opinions openly, even if there was a threat perception, both countries' use of similar systems and coordination of efforts on production of military equipment would significantly limit it.

5.2.2. Territorial Integrity and Sovereignty

Regarding Syria, Turkey and Russia were supporting different camps from the very beginning. Turkey was part of the US/Western coalition insisting on removing Syrian leader Bashar Al-Assad, whereas Russia used the argument of territorial integrity and supported the Syrian regime, calling for elections once the terrorist threat was eliminated. Over the course of six years, there was a change of rhetoric by Turkey. It shifted from blaming Russia for Syria's issues, to then agreeing to cooperate but insisting on removing Syria's current president, to then mentioning this position less and less in official statements.

Similarly, in their discourse on Crimea, Turkey follows a firm and uncompromising position on the issue of Russia's involvement in Syria and the country's leader as well. Turkey criticises Russia for using the argument of being invited legitimately by the Syrian government to disqualify Turkey's presence in the country. Turkey refutes this argument, reasoning that all its "affairs [are] in line with international law" and further stating that "Russia says 'We are there because we were invited by the Syrian government.'" (Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, 2016e, p. 2). Turkey goes on to say that the government in Syria is not legitimate and that, just because Russia was invited, does not mean it had to accept the invitation and fight for the 'wrong' side. In another address, Turkey blames both Russia and the West:

"The West is still quiet. They are holding meetings. Do these meetings yield any results? No. Russia has shown its identity by standing beside murderer and oppressor Assad, who has caused almost 500 thousand deaths. Russia is committing a serious crime against humanity, a war crime with the bombs it drops. The UN says if such a thing is ascertained, it is a war crime." (Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, 2016b, p. 2)

Turkey's written or spoken dialogue regarding their counterpart changes over time as well. During turbulent times, Turkey would accuse Russia of colluding with terrorist organizations, blaming them repeatedly for the resulting deaths. When relations strengthening again, the formulations would become rather careful and focus more towards inviting discussions and dialogue than immediately playing the blame game. While Turkey's view on Assad do not change in the analysed period, in the statements they remain committed to finding a solution and cooperating towards that end.

Russia excuses its presence by cooperating with and technically being there at the invitation of the Syrian regime. Even though its actions do not always reflect this position, according to Syria and a large portion of the international community, Turkey has maintained a clear position on Syria's territorial sovereignty and integrity. With its actions, Turkey advocates that "the Constitutional Committee should be established, elections should be held and a legitimate administration should come to power" (Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, 2019a, p. 3). While they rule out any contact or dialogue with the Syrian regime, they keep the

channel for communication open through their partners Iran and Russia. With the elimination of the terrorist threat by Turkey's military action on Syrian territory, it will re-establish Syrian sovereignty over the terrorists:

"The operation also secures the territorial integrity and political unity of Syria by eliminating the threat posed by the separatist terrorist organization. We do not have any designs on any country's land or sovereignty. We as Turkey have taken all our steps on the ground with sensitivity." (Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, 2019d, p. 2)

Russia's position on Syria's territorial integrity and sovereignty has not changed at all. From the beginning, they advocated for outside forces to respect the country's territory and only proceed after the country's consent was given and in accordance with international law. Russia points out that Turkey isn't in Syria by invitation of the government and also suggests that Turkey wouldn't be acting as arrogantly as they do, if the "US-led coalition wasn't so arrogant (they allegedly know where the terrorists are in Syria and they know who to bomb, so they need no permission from the legitimate Syrian government)" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Russia, 2015h, p. 12). Whereas singular operations are not sanctioned by Syria, the Russia-Turkey-Iran mechanism in form of the Astana arrangement was enforced with Syria's approval. A press statement by President Putin summarised Russia's viewpoint in a very concise manner:

"We believe that all countries in the region, including Turkey, have the right to self-defence and to protecting their national interests and their borders. This does nothing to invalidate the second point that President Erdogan never opposed. On the contrary, he fully supported it. We all stand for the territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic, proceeding from the premise that when questions related to ensuring security and fighting terrorism are resolved, Syria's territorial integrity will be fully restored. This also refers to the withdrawal of all foreign troops from the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic." (Presidential Executive Office of Russia, 2019d, p. 6)

Russia acknowledges Turkey's right to defend its borders and ensure its safety. This grey area between invading a sovereign country or eliminating national security concerns, lets Russia represent two positions within this conflict,

accommodating both actors: 1) understanding for Turkey's security concerns and 2) understanding for Syria's territorial integrity. Both countries support Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity. They reaffirm this to the international bodies and other states who are worried about the military presence and other operations. Both countries can shift the focus from things they do not agree on, to the one issue they do agree on, which is terrorism as the main threat.

5.3. Shared Values and Norms

The theory furthermore suggests that shared norms among single-party states may further explain the peace among these systems (see Peceny et al., 2002). Any development towards a stronger Turkey-Russia relationship is interpreted as increasing their interdependence, leading to peace instead of war. This is visible by any form of encouragement to improve the partnership, even by simply putting emphasis on the value of the partnership. There are a few instances within the examination where the countries reference common principles, such as examples of sharing a similar world view, similar strategies, modes of behaviour, or motivating each other to compromise. These principles provide common ground for the countries to engage in cooperation.

In addition to common principles connecting Russia and Turkey, joint threats provide them with shared enemies to focus on, while simultaneously putting divisive differences aside. These joint threats to either the ideological concepts of the governments, or to the state and its structures from internal or external sources, are most commonly represented within the documents by terrorist organizations, other non-state actors, or states apart from Russia or Turkey. Finally, cultural cooperation is of also crucial when discussing shared values. Within the analysis, cultural interaction is expressed through articulating shared virtues and ideals within the populations of the two countries or through the encouragement of an exchange between the people. While Russia and Turkey do stem from different cultural backgrounds, the continued reinforcement of cultural ties between the two countries again provides a premise for mutual collaboration. Figures 5 and 6 feature the findings on joint threats and cultural cooperation for both Russia and Turkey. The x-axis shows the document groups, the y-axis the sum of the codes for that group. Both countries demonstrate that joint threats are

important in understanding Russia-Turkey relations. The recognition these threats receive from both governments, opens a path to collaborate. Cultural cooperation is also represented in the statements and, even though Turkey experienced a low in 2017, both countries noted an overall increase in their cultural relations.

5.3.1. Joint Threats

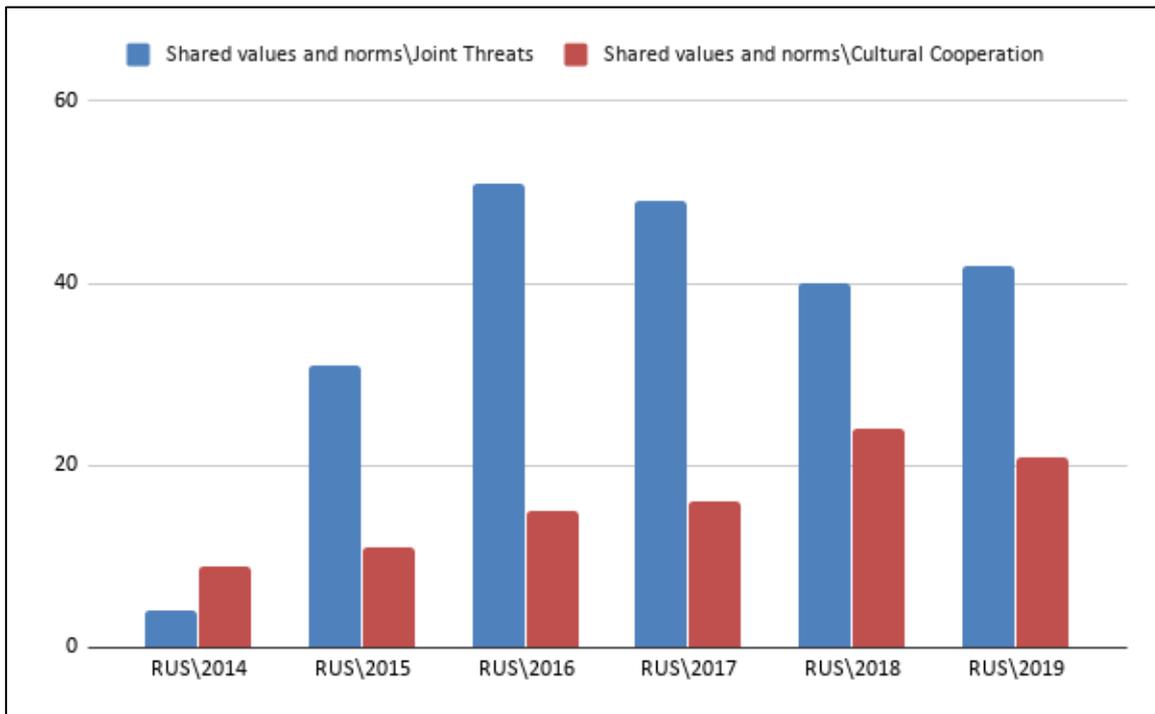


Figure 5: Joint Threats and Cultural Cooperation for Russia (2014-2019)

It seems easier to put aside differences and put on hold disputes, when faced with a common threat. And the chances of overcoming such a threat are greater through a combined effort rather than singular actions.

Most cited in the documents as a joint threat, is the threat of international terrorism. Since both countries are parties to the conflict in Syria and Libya, both struggle with the repercussions of the terrorist factions in those countries. Early on in the relationship between the two countries, the discussion of international issues had focused on the international threat “posed by the Islamic State terrorist group” (Presidential Executive Office of Russia, 2014a, p. 1). Terrorist threats are not exclusive to the most vulnerable regions in the world but happen in Russia and Turkey as well. In statements or press conferences, Russian and Turkish state officials pay their respects and offer condolences when their friendly neighbour

suffers from such an attack. When it came to strengthen the partnership between the two with regards to the visa-free travel, however, Russia remained anchored in the position that stricter, bilateral cooperation on terrorism was required to open the borders completely. Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov endorsed the need to work out visa simplifications, as it would benefit both countries and their citizens. However, he hinted at certain reservations concerning the “serious pressure from the terrorist threat, especially [Russia’s] Turkish friends who are suffering from the spill-over effect from what is happening in their region” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Russia, 2018b, p. 4).

5.3.2. Cultural Cooperation

Russian-Turkish cultural relations were discussed thoroughly in the official statements. Both countries invested a lot into the cultural exchange since 2004, mainly through “diverse sponsorships and the cooperation of some public and private organizations regarding cultural, artistic, and sports activities, as well as display festivals and TV programmes” (Çanci, 2017, 470f.). Additionally, the socio-cultural interactions were boosted by encouraging exchange between the work forces of the countries and the higher educational institutions. Naturally, there are similarities as well as divergences concerning the culture and society of these two neighbouring nations. Both societies can be considered either from the West or from the East, “and they and outsiders debate whether Russians and Turks are

Westerners or Easterners” (Çanci, 2017, p. 471).

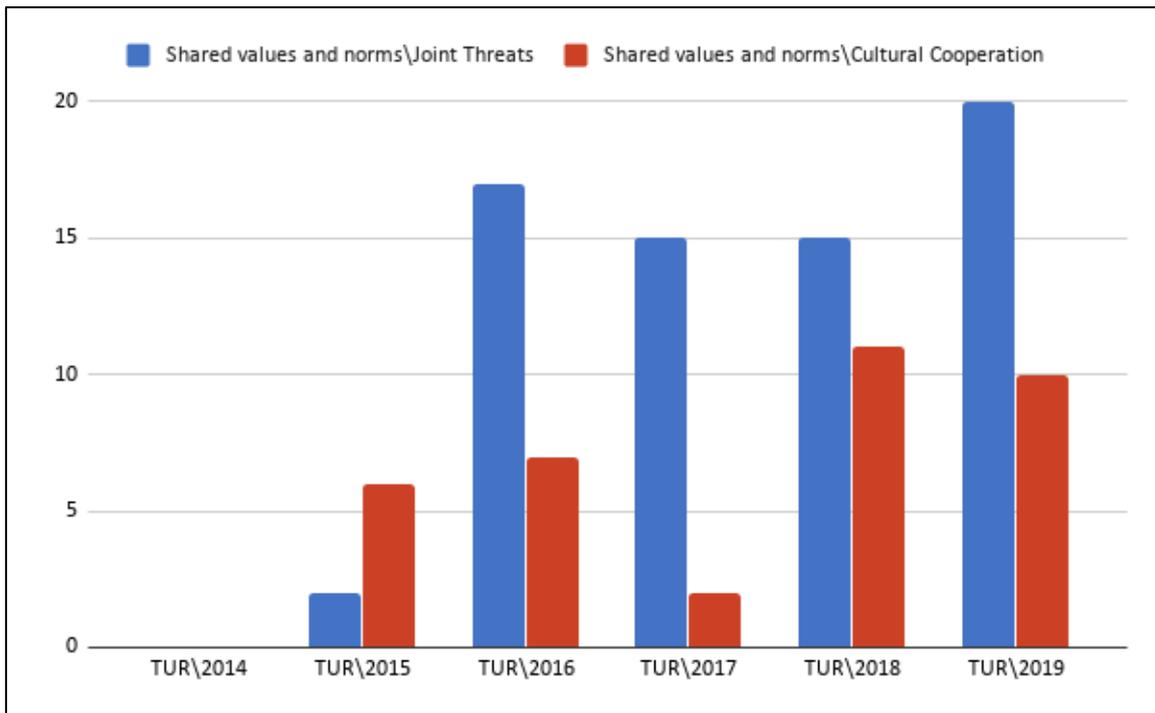


Figure 6: Joint Threats and Cultural Cooperation for Turkey (2014-2019)

The development and advancement of interactions in the areas of culture, science, education, information, and tourism through the civil society organizations of both countries will “contribute to an increase in the level of mutual trust between the people of Russia and Turkey” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Russia, 2014c, p. 4).

One of the instances from early on in the research period, where cultural and humanitarian cooperation between the countries could be observed, was the opening of the Russian Centre for Science and Culture in Ankara and the corresponding opening of the Turkish Cultural Centre in Moscow.

The missing coherence on important and impactful foreign policy issues has obstructed the advancement of a stronger political alliance between the countries, but thanks to the “socio-cultural relations – beyond the political determinations and especially through the help of the ongoing economic exchanges and human circulation” the process can be sped up the risk of a significant relapse or backsliding of relations can be reduced (Çanci, 2017, p. 471). In that sense, even during the 2015-2016 period where the cooperation between governments was briefly suspended, both countries, but especially Russia, confirmed that the people

of Turkey should not pay for mistakes made at the official level. The friendly relations towards the people has not changed and will not change:

“President Vladimir Putin and the national leadership in the person of ministers and representatives of various agencies repeatedly reaffirmed that the Turkish people remained a friend to the people of Russia. We believe and know that this is and will be that way. We had to take appropriate measures, but they are not directed against the Turkish people. There is no need to seek something sensational in current contacts and relationships, including contacts between businesses and economic partners. Turkey has committed a crime that invited a fitting Russian response. But the Turkish people still are our friends. I’d like people to proceed from this basic point; comments and opinions regarding bilateral relations shouldn’t overlook Russia’s principled approach.” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Russia, 2016a, p. 14)

While some forms of humanitarian/social/cultural cooperation were suspended as well, such as travel restrictions or cancellation of events to further these contacts, it shows that the countries (at least in the official line) value their countries’ cultural connections.

5.3.3. Scapegoating

In the section regarding joint threats, the focus lied on physical threats to the country. This segment on scapegoating addresses the issue of endangerment to the party's ideological dominance. Both Russia and Turkey use scapegoating or other types of accusations towards international institutions or individual states to defend their own or each other’s actions. The documents mention the common motivation against other states and institutions, which do not align with Turkey’s and Russia’s own standards, including any statements regarding instances where those institutions or states have failed or were responsible for failures.

Both Turkey and Russia have profited from the ongoing sanctions since the parties have strengthened their commitment towards a development of their bilateral trade. Erdoğan and Putin both have mentioned changing to a new world order, from one where the West is in a superior position “towards a multipolar arrangement” (Park, 2015, p. 596). In addition to voicing anti-US sentiments or controversial rhetoric towards the West, both deem it unacceptable for the West,

and especially for Washington, to keep forcing other states under its control. Such behaviour is unbecoming of this new and growing structure.

To better illustrate the contrast between blaming Turkey and its allies, and just blaming other actors excluding Turkey, the two instances were coded with a different connotation. Figures 7 and 8 perfectly show how, when the relations between Russia and Turkey were briefly suspended or strained, both countries started to condemn the other and their actions. When the partnership was resumed, the negative remarks started to concentrate on other actors, mainly the US, the EU, or international agents. The x-axis shows the document groups, the y-axis the sum of the codes for that group.

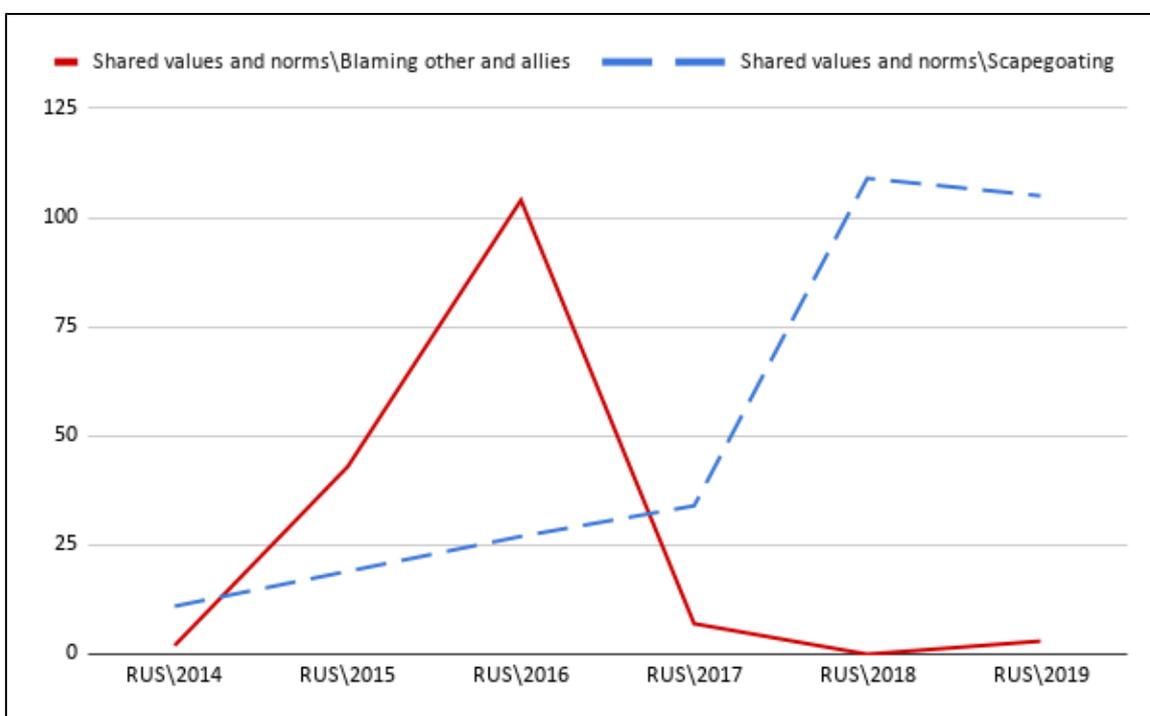


Figure 7: Scapegoating and Blaming Turkey for Russia (2014-2019)

Apart from the ability to realize self-interest or stabilizing troubled regions, this new world order is explicitly shaped around the idea of hindering Western countries from imposing “their unilateral agenda on others” by using a multipolar format (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Russia, 2019b, p. 2). The US and Europe are often accused of trying to manipulate international law to their advantage, “with certain invented arrangements which they call the “rules-based order” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Russia, 2019b, p. 2). From the Turkish side, President Erdoğan connects the issue of multipolarity to the outdated structures in international, political

organizations, such as the UN Security Council. Organizations such as the UN, which are entrusted with the obligations to promote international peace and security, should not be run by a small number of countries. According to Turkish officials, it does not seem right that some advancing states are supposed to take on “more responsibility in global policy and economy but [are] excluded from global decision-making mechanisms” (Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, 2016a, p. 3). The President added that a restructure is necessary and that the fate of the world cannot be left to the decisions of some countries, which Turkey describes as “last century’s balance of power” (Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, 2016a, p. 3). Especially Russia, in defending and promoting its own interests, has referenced the changing world order multiple times. But discussion on who deserves how much power on today’s world stage may still help to account for Turkey’s sporadic use of the anti-US rhetoric similarly to countries such as Russia, China, and Iran. Moreover, the diminishing importance of the Western dominance and the growing cooperation among the countries outside that circle could highlight why Turkey’s government has revealed growing discontent towards the EU and the pending membership. Both leaders recount the idea of strengthening relations with the Central Asia region, oftentimes referring to the West as over or unnecessary and focusing their economic, political, and social ties to like-minded countries in their shared region.

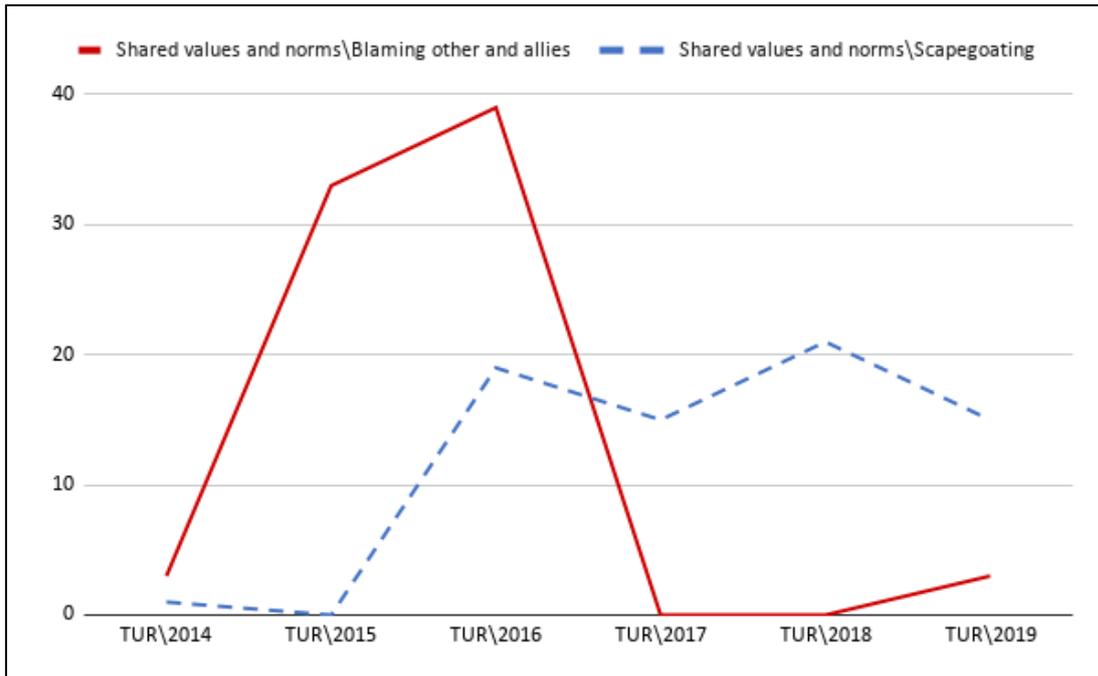


Figure 8: Scapegoating and Blaming Russia for Turkey (2014-2019)

Turkey has, however, always kept close to the Western sphere and one foot in the door to closer cooperation with its European partners. This was visible in the analysis, as Turkey was far more careful in voicing criticism against the US, NATO, or the EU. Russia on the other hand is already well-versed in its confrontation with the West. The EU faces most criticism in response to their policy on the economic projects Russia has planned for the region. When Europe refused to further allow Russia's advancement, Russia turned to Turkey and publicly showed its frustration with EU decision-making:

We are in talks at the moment, but we will not abandon our cooperation with Turkey. Not only because this would not be decent behaviour on our part, coming to an agreement with our Turkish friends and then saying, "No, Europe is making us a new offer now," but also because we could end up in a foolish situation. After all, the European Commission could refuse today, agree tomorrow, and then take its word back again the day after (Presidential Executive Office of Russia, 2015a, p. 9).

When blaming the EU is not enough, Russia resorts to incriminating both, arguing that "these sanctions are taken under heavy US pressure, which is further evidence of the EU's lack of independence [which] is sad" (Ministry of Foreign

Affairs Russia, 2019a, p. 6). Following the EU comes NATO and the US, mainly in the connection with sanctions against Russia, and later also against Turkey. The Russian president has commended “Turkey’s readiness to act independently of its western allies by refusing to join the US and EU sanctions regime”, especially considering NATO’s growing pressure on Turkey to align itself with its Western partners (Park, 2015, p. 596). Later, the sanctions discussion continues for Turkey, where the US warns Ankara “that it may fall under sanctions if it buys S-400 systems from Russia”, with Russia calling this behaviour “an example of blackmail to ensure unfair competition for US companies” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Russia, 2018a, p. 6). Turkey agrees with Russia in the sense “that Turkey is being tried to unjustly be excluded from the F-35 program” and furthermore alludes to the fact that the US acts “without any actual legal grounds conflict[ing] the spirit of alliance and is disrespectful to Turkey’s sovereign rights” (Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, 2019b, p. 4). While Turkey joins in the heavy criticism against the sanctions policy of the West, they reiterate that if the West had offered Turkey the necessary equipment, then they would not have needed to resort to those measures. Turkey showed great strength and support for Russia in refusing to engage in the sanctions regime together with the West, strengthening the countries’ relationship against the backdrop of the West’s aggressive, belligerent policies. When sanctions were imposed on both, they were binding Russia and Turkey together, as it provided them with a common adversary.

5.4. Cooperation Beyond the Political Sphere

The three most frequently cited examples for cooperation were issues related to the economy or trade, the creation or continuation of joint projects, and any references of travel and tourism. Cooperation through these channels is not necessarily connected to the countries’ regime type, but the above-mentioned aspects provide a strong incentive for both to develop their relations in this regard as well. These types of cooperation increase the dependence on each other, making it harder to seriously worsen or weaken the relationships in the future. To provide the reader with a comprehensive overview of the relations, other forms of cooperation are included in the analysis as well. Diagrams 9 and 10 reveal that especially joint projects have always steadily played a role in Turkey-Russia

relations, similarly to tourism and travel. A slight increase in economy and trade is observable. The x-axis shows the document groups, the y-axis the sum of the codes for that group.

5.4.1. Economic Cooperation

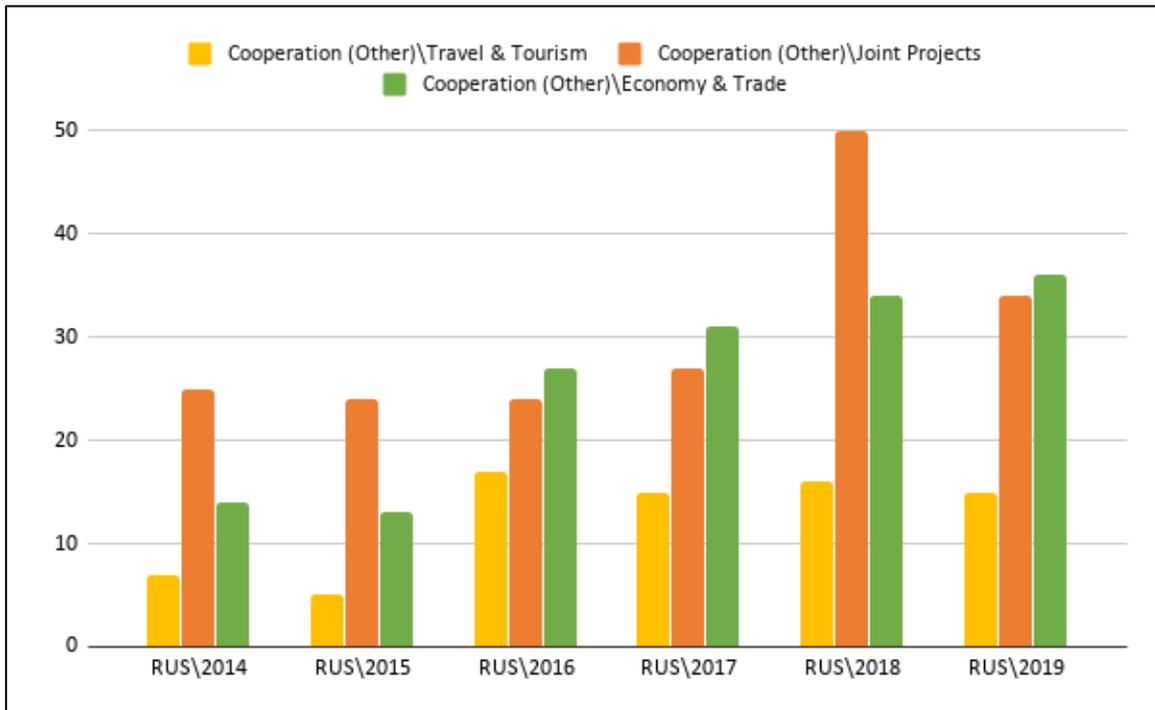


Figure 9: Cooperation Beyond the Political Sphere for Russia (2014-2019)

Moscow’s deteriorating relations with the EU have led to the cancellation of the planned South Stream project. The new project, TurkStream, will increase Turkey’s dependence on Russia’s distribution of gas. Not only do the pipeline projects make up an important part of the cooperation, but they also intensify commitment for the construction of Turkey’s first nuclear power plant. Turkey and Russia face disagreements on considerable amounts of issues, not least of all on conflicts both are involved in, but nevertheless the two leaders have managed to de-politicize their relations in the last years. Both countries “sought to compartmentalize their difficulties, that they admired and respected each other, and that they shared an element of anti-western hostility” (Park, 2015). Back in 2014, Turkey was already an important trade partner for Russia. Numbers from 2013 reveal the bilateral trade turnover to be \$32.7 billion, Russian direct investments in Turkey amounting to \$1.7 billion, and the Turkish investments

in Russia summing close to \$1 billion (Presidential Executive Office of Russia, 2014b, p. 1). Both parties repeatedly ensured their commitment towards keeping this trend on an upwards trajectory. With every meeting of the economic mechanisms between the countries, Turkey and Russia seemed to be adding on to the cooperation initiatives within this sector. In 2016, the Turkish President proposed a trade in local currencies to Russia, Iran, and China, which was met with agreement by the Russian counterpart (Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, 2016g, p. 2). In 2017, Russia and Turkey both agreed that the economic and trade relations were the backbone of the Russia-Turkey relationship and both were appreciative over the 22% increase in bilateral trade in just the first seven months of the year. The two countries have set themselves goals, acknowledging that stronger, more robust relations are possible. The \$100 billion goal is still achievable for both countries and both will work towards making this another success story in Turkey-Russia relations (Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, 2017g, p. 1).

The economic cooperation is labelled as a strategic partnership, which arguably is much more beneficial for Russia than it is for Turkey. Considering the countries' "economic capacities, political influences, and military powers", Turkey is not up to par to Russia (Çancı, 2017, p. 470). Their growing ties, especially in the economic sector, provide Russia with plenty of opportunities to take advantage of the relations for its own strategic goals. Regarding the conflict in Ukraine, Russia has used Turkey for joint projects replacing the Ukraine and other European partners. Furthermore, Russia could use the rapprochement as "an attempt to make a breach in the Atlantic alliance by neutralizing Turkey through strong economic connections" (Çancı, 2017, p. 470). Russia is using the full range of its economic resources to control, influence, and exploit the neighbouring countries to balance its conflict with the Atlantic powers.

5.4.2. Joint Projects

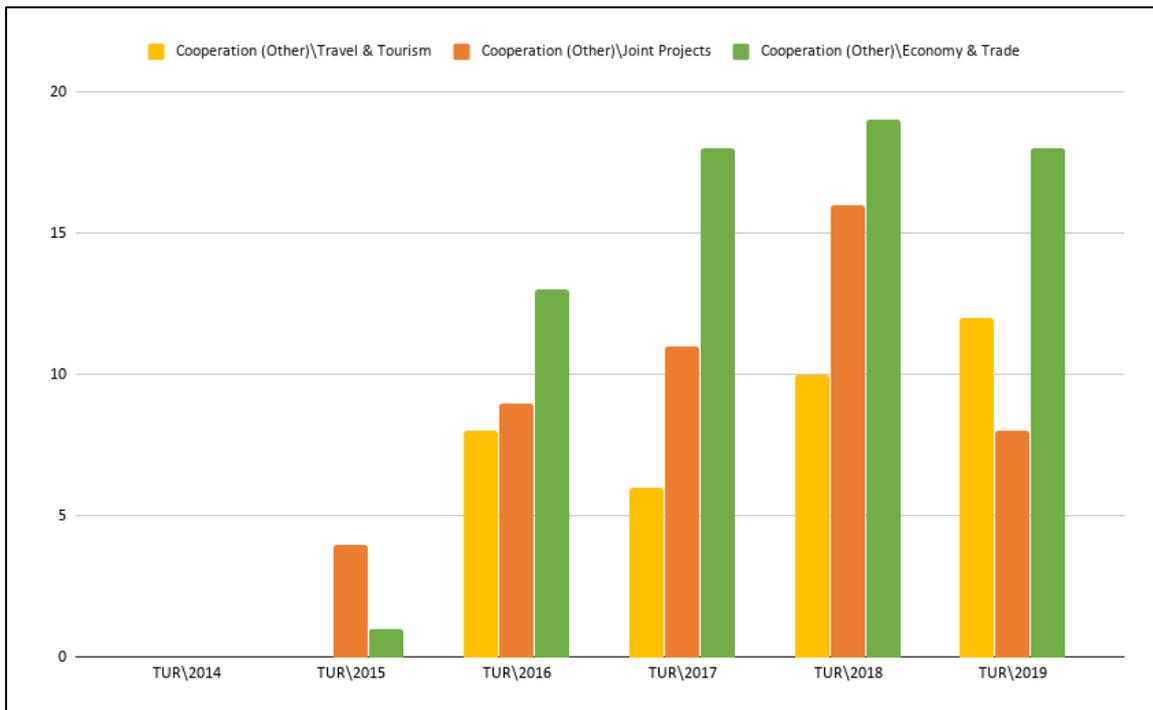


Figure 10: : Cooperation Beyond the Political Sphere for Turkey (2014-2019)

The two main joint projects between Turkey and Russia are energy related. Firstly, the TurkStream pipeline and secondly the Akkyuu Nuclear Power Plant. Regarding the TurkStream project, the development went smoothly, while both Turkey and Russia repeatedly called on their European partners to join this project and facilitate the pipeline from Russia to Turkey to Europe. Both projects were cordially celebrated after completion. When the Russian President spoke at the ceremony for completing part of the TurkStream pipeline, he indicated that these projects required a certain type of leadership to implement:

“I would like to thank President of the Republic of Turkey Mr Erdogan for displaying political will and courage. Why? Because it is impossible to implement projects like this in conditions of growing competition without these traits. The trust, mentioned by my Turkish colleague five minutes ago, hinges on this. And again, projects like this cannot be carried out without such trust” (Presidential Executive Office of Russia, 2018c, p. 5).

These projects were also carried out in a rather short amount of time, alluding to the idea that only a partnership such as the one between Russia and Turkey could

have accomplished this. The Akkyuu Nuclear Power Plant had also made significant progress within the researched period. In early 2018, Russia and Turkey launched the beginning of construction, where President Putin congratulated Turkey and declared:

“The significance of this great innovative project is hard to overestimate. In fact, today we are not simply present at the construction of the first Turkish nuclear power plant, but we are witnessing the laying of the groundwork for Turkey’s nuclear industry. We are creating a new industry” (Presidential Executive Office of Russia, 2018a, p. 1).

Even during the time where bilateral relations were postponed, the work on these projects were slowed, yet never stopped dead in their tracks. The projects are a strong binding agent between the countries, not just economically, but on many different levels. For instance, for the Akkyuu Nuclear Power Plant, several universities in Russia were educating on the workings of that power plant with a student and employee exchange with Turkey.

5.4.3. Tourism and Travel

Tourism is a fundament within the relations between Russia and Turkey and a significant area of cooperation. The number of visiting Russians is increasing with every passing year. The main task of the Russian-Turkish Public Forum is to encourage and further an “active development of [Russia-Turkey] cultural and humanitarian ties” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Russia, 2015c, p. 1). During the turbulent times in bilateral relations, the countries registered a decrease in tourism. But after the two countries began ameliorating on a political level, the number started to increase again immediately. In 2017, Turkey noted particularly good relations with Russia in the tourism sector, observing that Russia is only second to Germany in numbers (Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, 2017a, p. 2). The following year, Turkey and Russia recorded an increase of 30 percent in tourism, with an all-time high of six million visitors. Russian president Putin attributed this increase to the citizens of both countries realizing “the change in the nature and quality of Russian-Turkish relations” (Presidential Executive Office of Russia, 2019b, p. 1). The year 2019 marked a special phase, because the two countries held culture and tourism year events. This Russian-Turkish Cross Year of Culture

was meant to increase the ties between the two countries by engaging in joint activities between civil societies. The tourism and travel sector included the discussion on visa-free agreements between Turkey and Russia, a mechanism to “cement the friendship between the people of two countries” (Presidential Executive Office of Russia, 2019a, p. 2). The political level did have some influence on this area of cooperation, meaning that these other forms of cooperation are to some extent dependent on the governments display of friendly and amiable relations.

5.5. Overall Relationship

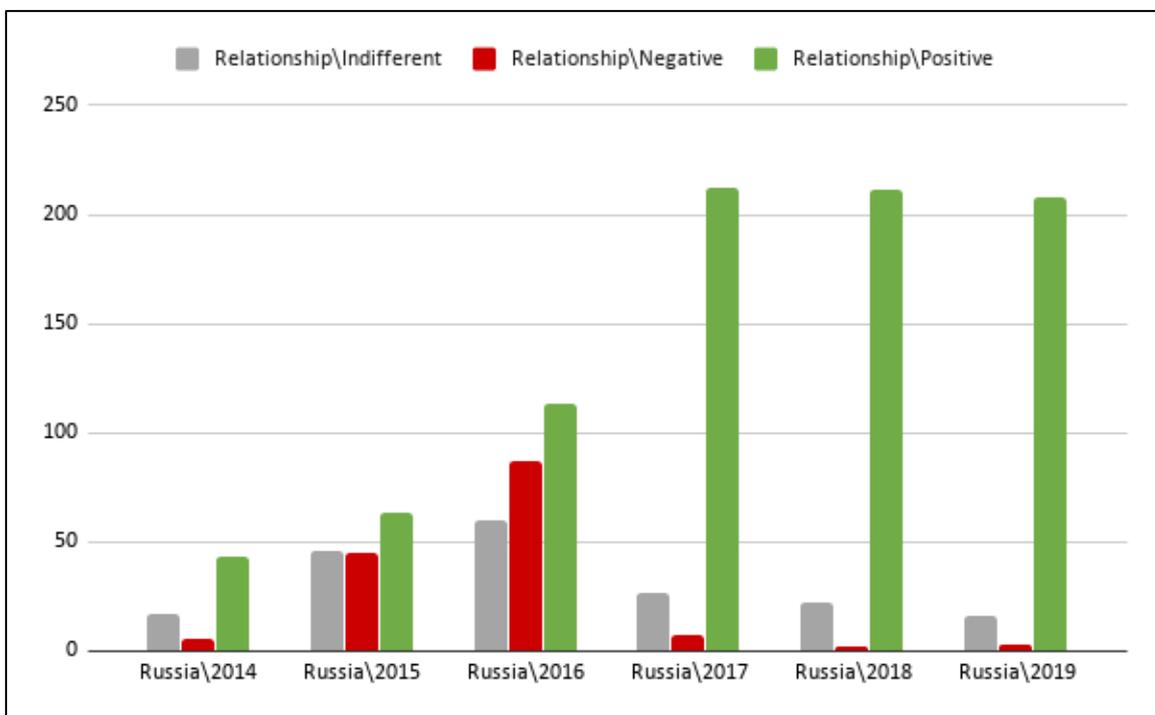


Figure 11: Russia's Presentation Russia-Turkey Relations.

These classifications are supposed to give a general perspective over how the relationship between Russia and Turkey is judged in the officially published documents. To create this overview, each document was coded with an overall ‘positive’, ‘negative’ or ‘indifferent’ label. The relationship within a document is considered positive, if the other country is mentioned in a positive light, if the other is praised, or if the relations are described as productive and effective. In contrast, a negative connotation would be indicated by the other being criticised, revealing conflicting issues or problems, or portraying the relations as worsening. To keep

the document analysis valid and without bias, all documents referencing Turkey and all documents referencing Russia respectively were analysed and coded in the analysis. Within some of the documents, the country was only alluded to within another context, which is when they were coded to be indifferent to the research question at hand.

In graphics 11 and 12, we can see each country's presentation of the other, which has been overwhelmingly positive especially in the last three years. The x-axis shows the document groups, the y-axis the sum of the codes for that group. As previously mentioned, the period between October 2015 and June 2016 exhibits a spike in negatively connotated documents, based on the worsening relations after the Russian aircraft incident. After nearly seven months of the relationship deteriorating, Turkish President Erdoğan sent a letter to Russian President Putin in June 2016 with apologies for and regret over the incident in November 2015. All Russia had wanted was an adequate reaction to a mistake it attributed to the Turkish government and in a letter sent to his counterpart, Turkish President Erdoğan finally obliged:

"In my letter, I expressed our regret over the incident and reminded the opportunities for regional cooperation in a wide range of areas. I believe that we will leave behind the current situation which is to the detriment of the both countries and swiftly normalize our relations. Turkey has always showed that it is a country that contributes to the security and wellbeing of its friends. Therefore I am of the belief that we should work to improve our ties with this close neighbour of ours for the peace of the region." (Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, 2016d, p. 3).

Since the incident, other events have occurred between the countries which might have led to relations worsening again. The assassination of Russian Ambassador Andrej Karlov is an example of the fact that relations between the two countries were growing robust. Turkey, having learned from the incident regarding the Russian SU Bomber, managed to react in a way that did not threaten Russia-Turkey relations. Instead of blaming Turkey's government and depicting the relations as negative, Russia was able to praise Turkey's quick reaction to the assassination. The government officials not only offered their condolences but to cooperate with a Russian delegation in jointly bringing the perpetrators to justice.

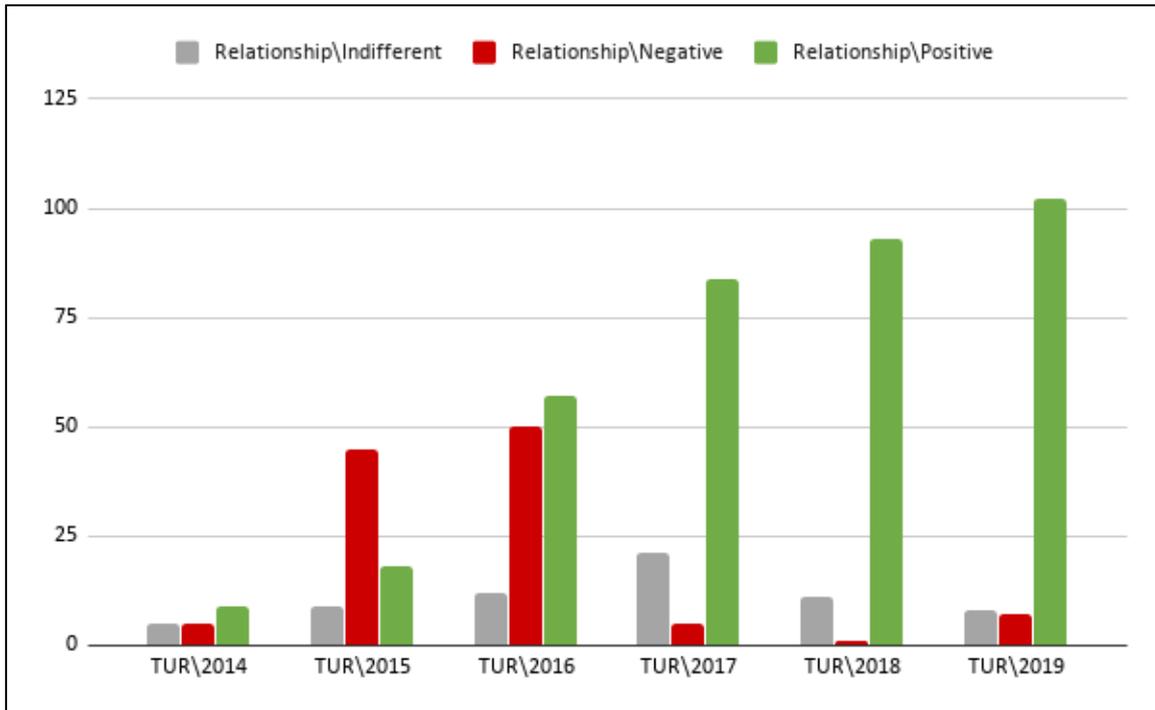


Figure 12: Turkey's Presentation of Russia-Turkey Relations.

Since relations recently worsened with the West, mainly due to the ongoing sanctions regime against Russia and the added sanctions against Turkey, it comes as no surprise that the past years' documents show an overwhelmingly positive attitude towards each other. In political, economic, and social areas, Russia and Turkey find it easier to encourage cooperation with each other, than force a connection with Western countries where there is none. The divide between the two friendly neighbours and the West is consolidating, and Russia and Turkey keep uniting against any threats directed at each other from external actors:

"We have seen that the Turkish-Russian friendship has the power to overcome any challenge, hardship and provocation. We have made important headway toward normalizing the relationship between our countries with the steps we have taken over the recent months."

(Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, 2017c, p. 1).

The close relations are regularly examined and rekindled through the meetings of the HLCC. It was first created in 2010 with the goal to "institutionalize and put within a strategic framework the friendly and good-neighborly relations between

Turkey and Russia” (Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, 2017c, p. 2). The Council provides the two countries with the ability to hold regular consultations on important issues impacting both Ankara and Moscow. In addition to providing each other with regular updates, these meetings allow them to monitor the implementation of their decisions through the involvement of their foreign ministers and other official members of government. The HLCC meetings usually end with the signing of different documents, all aimed to further fortify the existing relations.

6. Conclusion

This thesis analysed Turkey's and Russia's relationship (2014-2019) based on the argument that their similar regime type directly pertains to why their interactions have been focused overall on cooperation and partnership. The link between political regime and peaceful relation is there and requires further research.

On a theoretical basis, the thesis confirmed the enduring relevance of democratic peace as a useful, theoretical tool to evaluate not only the relations among democracies, but also the possible implications for authoritarian regimes.

Moreover, the thesis uncovered a lack of magnified research in this area of peaceful relations and authoritarian regimes, particularly closer qualitative research, and with individual case studies of countries with similar regime attributes.

The qualitative content analysis supported the theoretical expectations and hypothesis. Based on the categories derived from the theoretical framework, the analysis yielded promising results. This analysis should give democratic peace research a new impulse to further examine and investigate this phenomenon.

Both countries have fundamental positions within the international community. The growing, friendly relations between Russia and Turkey have wide-ranging effects on a variety of actors. Most significantly, the rapprochement between the two states has important repercussions for the region they both are a part of. This is a region with several conflicts (in the thesis predominantly represented through Syria and Ukraine), but also room for opportunity and collaboration (in this case Black Sea). Further knowledge of the nature and complexities in Turkish-Russian relations is beneficial for clear and accurate prognoses in the fields of diplomacy, foreign affairs, and geopolitics.

This thesis provides a solid foundation for further, more extensive research on a variety of different topics: 1) the Turkish and Russian regime types (the classification of authoritarian regimes), 2) 'dictatorial peace' between certain types of authoritarian regimes, based on the democratic peace theory, and 3) the regional implications of the robust and growing relationship between the two countries on the Black Sea and MENA regions.

Firstly, new debates questioning how to classify Russia's regime type have sparked recently. According to the criteria analysed in this thesis, Russia still falls under the category of Electoral Authoritarianism. But if Russia's political system continues to slowly deteriorate to a full-fledged authoritarian regime, these warning signals are important indicators for other regimes in the region, especially Turkey. As pointed out in the analysis, authoritarian regimes learn from one another, which should put the strong, supportive ties between the two countries at the centre of regime type research.

At the conceptual level, scholars could consider the phenomenon of democratic peace in further discussing its relevance on the link between political regime and peace. The theory provides a solid framework for analysis with distinct analytical categories for why there is peaceful behaviour between democratic regimes and how these can be transferred to discussing the relations amongst authoritarian regimes.

As for the broader applicability and relevance of the thesis, additional research should include the two states and their regional strength and competence. Russia and Turkey are supporting reforms constituting a new, multipolar world order. An order where the two countries can more easily thrive and are recognized by the international actors as equal, not secondary states. When considering the international sphere, Turkey's membership in NATO and remaining ties to the EU have always been a source of conflict for true concord with Russia. Turkey has stated repeatedly that they do not want to choose sides and can keep favourable relations with either party, without risking existing ties. However, most recently the sanctions regime, resulting from a purchase of military equipment from Russia, led to a friction between Turkey and NATO. Because of this, the implications the Turkey-Russia relations have for the Western partners of Turkey become exceedingly relevant.

Some authors reason that because of conflicting political factors, Russia and Turkey can never truly form a strategic alliance and partnership. Even though economic, social, and cultural relations are recognized as deep and extensive, some disagreements can never be overcome. But while there are certain matters the two countries do not see eye to eye on, it has not stopped them from strengthening ties in all fields – not only in economy or culture. This thesis

documented a great deal of compatibility in the political and military branches as well. Turkey and Russia have also been regularly communicating about disputes going back as far as 2014 without escalating.

To reiterate Peceny and Butler's call to increase research on the particularities among authoritarian regimes and their correlation with peaceful relations: only if we can gather a deeper understanding of the behaviour of different kinds of authoritarian regimes, can we establish a more nuanced approach towards the democratic peace studies. If some arguments of the democratic peace can also be of value for the interpretation of comparable behaviour between certain authoritarian states, it could give the research area on the relationship between political regimes and international peace great impetus for a renewed discussion.

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Appendix 1 – Codes and Categories

Category	Definition	Example
<u>Institutional and regime-specific determinants:</u>	Contact between the countries in foreign policy, especially regarding cooperation mechanisms, contact between official representatives and written agreements	
1. Intergovernmental cooperation	Any platform, group or apparatus in place to ensure a more efficient relationship between the two countries	“key issues of development of our bilateral relations in the context of the preparation for the <u>5th session of the Russian-Turkish High-Level Cooperation Council</u> (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Russia, 2014e, p. 1); The participants noted <u>the BSEC’s leading role</u> in promoting mutually beneficial multilateral cooperation in the Black Sea region (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Russia, 2015d, p. 1)
2. Joint laws	Mention of any voluntary or binding laws, resolutions and statements that bind the two countries, created by both states or an	As to the Black Sea, there is <u>the Montreux Convention, which sets absolutely clear criteria</u> , restricting, by tonnage and duration, the length of stay of naval military ships of foreign non-Black Sea states.(Ministry of

	international body they are a part of for a common purpose or interest	Foreign Affairs Russia, 2015b, p. 3); <u>An agreement on visa-free travel was signed with Turkey in 2010</u> ; the document includes lists of ID documents and documents enabling visitors to cross the state border. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Russia, 2015a)
3. High-level contact	Meetings, summits or engagements among the official members of government and showing cooperation between them	<u>H.E. Feridun H. Sinirlioğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey will pay a working visit to the Russian Federation on 16-17 September 2015.</u> (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Turkey, 2015, p. 1); <u>President of Russia Vladimir Putin and President of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan met with members of the Russian and Turkish business communities.</u> (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Russia, 2016b, p. 1)
<u>Fighting capabilities:</u>		
1. Military support and joint development	Mention of joint military and defence structures or projects and any pledges of military support	The Russia-Turkey interaction at the post-crisis stage can be promoted by <u>joint high-tech space and military-technical projects.</u> (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Russia, 2016c, p. 2); Turkey intends to develop its own defence industry and its

		<p><u>defence potential and if Russia is interested in such cooperation we are ready to discuss this.</u> (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Turkey, 2016b, p. 2)</p>
2. Regional opportunities for cooperation (areas of conflict)	<p>Mention of common areas or joint conflicts involving both countries as either part of the same organisation, a mediator or a party to conflict where cooperation is required</p>	<p>Russia stressed its commitment to completing the tasks agreed on, <u>with support from the Astana process guarantors (Russia, Turkey and Iran)</u>, during the Syrian National Dialogue Congress in Sochi last year, where conditions were created for a political settlement.(Ministry of Foreign Affairs Russia, 2019c, p. 2); At the meeting, the <u>steps taken by Turkey, the Russian Federation and Iran for the implementation of the de-escalation memorandum</u>, in particular the Idlib de-escalation area, were reviewed; (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Turkey, 2017, p. 1)</p>
<u>Shared values/norms and interactive behaviour</u>		
1. Strengthening partnership	<p>Mention of encouragement to increase partnership, of putting emphasis on the value of the</p>	<p>discuss prospects for <u>expanding the partnership</u> under new conditions.(Ministry of Foreign Affairs Russia, 2015f, p. 1); From the beginning, we have</p>

	partnership or of focus on trust, cooperation, strengthening ties	always supported <u>a meaningful dialogue with the Russian Federation, both bilaterally and through NATO</u> . We need to restore confidence-building <u>measures to enhance mutual trust</u> . (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Turkey, 2016c, p. 1)
2. Common principles	Mention of sharing a similar world view, of similar strategies and modes of behaviour or of finding common ground and motivating each other to compromise	We believe that Russia and Turkey are <u>sovereign states that conduct their policies in line with national interests</u> . (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Russia, 2015g, p. 13); This is essentially why many countries and political leaders dislike Russian President Vladimir Putin. Mr. Putin tells the truth flat out, the truth about their mistakes and miscalculations. And <u>they think that Russia and Turkey are second rate countries and complain that these second-rate countries have the courage to criticize them</u> . (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Turkey, 2016a, p. 4)
3. Joint threats	Mention of joint threats to the ideological concepts or to the state and its structures from	the <u>successes achieved in the fight against terrorism</u> and the marked reduction in the level of violence in Syria (Presidential Executive Office of

	internal or external sources	Russia, 2017, p. 1); We have conveyed our views and stated that the <u>incidents happening on the Syrian border are not solely Turkey's problem, they are in fact a problem of the whole region</u> and the entire world in the struggle against terror. (Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, 2015a, p. 2)
4. Cultural cooperation	Mention of expressing common values within the populations of the two countries or of furthering an exchange between the people	We have established a <u>good dialogue with all strata of Russian society</u> and are ready to take this dialogue even further.(Ministry of Foreign Affairs Turkey, 2016a, p. 2); Russia and Turkey share this rich experience of co-existence. The Moscow Central Mosque, we are inaugurating today, is one of the latest and most concrete examples of this. I would like to express that <u>we treat the tens of thousands of Russian citizens living in Turkey, particularly in Antalya equally in terms of the freedom of faith</u> .(Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, 2015b, p. 2)
5. Scapegoating international	Mention of common motivation against other states and	This is the nature of true partnership and the value of Russian-Turkish interaction,

<p>institutions or singular states</p>	<p>institutions which do not align with own standards or of instances where those institutions have failed or were responsible for failures</p>	<p><u>rather than "showing servile obedience" somewhere in well-known Euroatlantic bodies and saying: "Yes sir! At your orders!"</u>(Ministry of Foreign Affairs Russia, 2014d, p. 8); Still, there are many NATO countries that cooperate with Russia in this area. Secondly, <u>if someone does not want to work with us then they should at least not prevent us from cooperating with other countries.</u> (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Turkey, 2016a, p. 2)</p>
<p>6. Territorial integrity of own and other states</p>	<p>Mention of the idea of respecting another country's sovereignty as vital for cooperation, especially in connection to conflict resolution</p>	<p>We have a shared understanding of the tasks the international community is facing, primarily antiterrorist tasks and <u>the tasks of preserving Syria's territorial integrity and preventing its disintegration.</u> So, I can assure you that our contact with Turkey and our actions aimed at coordinating our steps on Syria are intensive and regular.(Ministry of Foreign Affairs Russia, 2016d, 3f.); We focused on <u>our common ground to start this partnership: we all respect Syria's unity and territorial integrity.</u> We all support</p>

		a political solution to end the conflict. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Turkey, 2018b, p. 3)
<u>Overall relationship</u>		
1. Positive	Mention of the other in a positive perspective, of praising them or of productive and effective development	Overall classification of the document to show the general attitude and character of the coded segments
2. Negative	Mention of criticism towards the other, exposing issues or problems within relations or otherwise negatively presenting the other	Overall classification of the document to show the general attitude and character of the coded segments
3. Indifferent/Neutral	Descriptive mention of the other without a positive or negative connotation	Overall classification of the document to show the general attitude and character of the coded segments
<u>Other types of cooperation</u>		
1. Economy/Trade	Mentioning of the importance or of obstacles concerning the economy or trade relations	<u>Our trade and economic ties are growing. We are priority partners for each other in terms of trade,</u> although our trade volume did drop slightly last year. (Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, 2014, p. 2)

2. Tourism	Mentioning of the importance or of obstacles concerning tourism and visa procedures	On the same day, Minister Çavuşoğlu visited the Turkish stands at <u>Moscow International Travel and Tourism Exhibition</u> . (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Turkey, 2018a, p. 1)
3. Joint projects	Mentioning of the importance or of obstacles concerning joint projects or initiatives with the other	We are successfully implementing such <u>major projects as the construction of the Akkuyu nuclear power plant and the TurkStream gas pipeline</u> . We also have many <u>other interesting projects</u> and joint ventures. (Presidential Executive Office of Russia, 2019c, p. 5)

Appendix 2 – MAXQDA documents

Please follow the link to the google drive for an overview of the documents and the coded segments.

Link: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1_SDkDdY26BnODKTATHcPle3vWdq5Rs9r?usp=sharing