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**Tatarstan between Moscow and Ankara: An
Analysis of Tatarstan's Elite's Stance
towards the Changing Relations between
Turkey and the Russian Federation**

Master thesis

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Abstract

The Master thesis is dealing with the external policies of the Republic of Tatarstan, a unit of the Russian Federation, and its relations to Turkey, a nation Tatarstan has cultural ties to, in light of the Russo-Turkish conflict following the shooting down of the Russian fighter jet Su-24 by the Turkish army. To answer questions about the influence of national diplomacy over a region's paradiplomacy, and the possibility to conduct independent paradiplomacy in an authoritarian state, speeches given on topics related to Turkey by the President of Tatarstan Rustam Minnikhanov were analysed against the background of the changing Russian relations to Turkey, using the Critical Discourse Analysis. The analysis revealed that although Tatarstani paradiplomacy reflects the developments of Russian diplomacy – it is not possible not to, since the decisions of the Federal government are binding for its subjects – President Minnikhanov continued to advocate for a long-term (and as close as possible) cooperation with Turkey regardless of Moscow's current stance. In fact, he was lobbying the Kremlin for this end, trying to influence the Federal diplomacy.

Abstrakt

Tato diplomová práce se věnuje vnější politice Republiky Tatarstán, subjektu Ruské federace, a jejími vztahy s Tatarstánu kulturně blízkým Tureckem, ve světle rusko-tureckého konfliktu, následujícího sestřelení ruského bojového letounu Su-24 tureckou armádou. Jako zdroj analýzy s cílem zodpovědět otázky, týkající se vlivu

národní diplomacie na paradiplomacii regionu a možnosti vést nezávislou paradiplomacii v autoritativním státě, posloužily proslovy prezidenta Republiky Tatarstán Rustama Minnichanova, dotýkající se témat spjatých s Tureckem. Proslovy byly analyzovány v kontextu proměňujících se vztahů Ruska k Turecku, za použití Kritické analýzy diskurzu. Analýza odhalila, že navzdory tomu, že paradiplomacie Tatarstánu reflektovala vývoj ruské diplomacie (což je nevyhnutelné, protože normy přijaté na federální úrovni jsou pro subjekty Federace závazné), prezident Minnichanov pokračoval v obhajobě dlouhodobé (a pokud možno co nejtěsnější) spolupráce s Tureckem, bez ohledu na aktuální postoj Moskvy. Navíc v Kremlu loboval s cílem ovlivnit federální diplomacii, aby lépe vyhovovala jeho zájmům.

Klíčová slova

Tatarstán, Ruská Federace, Turecko, Paradiplomacie, Mezinárodní vztahy, Rusko-turecké vztahy, Centrum-regiony, Kritická analýza diskurzu

Keywords

Tatarstan, the Russian Federation, Turkey, Paradiplomacy, International Relations, Russo-Turkish Relations, Centre-regions, Critical Discourse Analysis

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Declaration of Authorship

1. The author hereby declares that he compiled this thesis independently, using only the listed resources and literature.
2. The author hereby declares that all the sources and literature used have been properly cited.
3. The author hereby declares that the thesis has not been used to obtain a different or the same degree.

Prague, July 31, 2017

Tomáš Pospíšil

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V čem se oproti původními zadání změnil cíl práce? Cílem práce je analyzovat zahraniční politiku (paradiplomacii) Tatarstánu na základě projevů prezidenta Tatarstánu Rustama Minnikhanova a zjistit zda, případně jak, je paradiplomacie tohoto regionu ovlivňována diplomací Ruska. Práce tedy sleduje vnější politiku, ale v jejím jádru je snaha nahlédnout do vnitřního fungování Ruské federace a vztahu Moskva-Tatarstán jakožto centra a regionu.
Jaké změny nastaly v časovém, teritoriálním a věcném vymezení tématu? Teritoriální zaměření se zúžilo na Republiku Tatarstán, s přesahy zahrnujícími Ruskou federaci jako takovou, a Turecko. Ostatní turkické státy byly s ohledem na rozsah práce vynechány. Zúžilo se i časové vymezení tématu, a to na co nejaktuálnější období od ruské anexe Krymu po současnost, nebo datum upřesněné později.
Jak se proměnila struktura práce (vyjádřete stručným obsahem)? 1) Úvod 2) Teorie 3) Výzkumný design 4) Analýza 5) Závěr
Jakým vývojem prošla metodologická koncepce práce? Metodologie byla upřesněna, jako nejvhodnější přístup byla vybrána Kritická analýza diskurzu podle Ruth Wodak a Theuna van Dijka.
Které nové prameny a sekundární literatura byly zpracovány a jak tato skutečnost ovlivnila celek práce? Zatím byla zpracovávána především sekundární literatura věnující se metodologickému a koncepčnímu pojetí práce a literatura pokrývající paradiplomacii Tatarstánu v posledním čtvrtstoletí. Albina, Elena, "The External Relations of Tatarstan: In Pursuit of Sovereignty, or Playing the Sub-Nationalist Card?" The Hague Journal of Diplomacy 5 (2010): 99–124.

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Van Dijk, Theun A., "Aims of Critical Discourse Analysis," *Japanese Discourse* 1 (1995): 17–27.

Wodak, Ruth, "Critical Discourse Analysis at the End of the 20th Century," *Research on Language and Social Interaction* 32, No. 1-2 (1999): 185–193.

Charakterizujte základní proměny práce v době od zadání projektu do odevzdání tezí a pokuste se vyhodnotit, jaký pokrok na práci jste během semestru zaznamenali (v bodech):

Byla zpracována výše uvedená literatura, ujasněn metodologický přístup a upřesněno téma práce. Zlepšují se jazykové schopnosti nutné pro provedení kritické diskurzivní analýzy projevů.

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Introduction

The diplomatic strife between Turkey and Russia following the shooting down of a Russian fighter jet by the Turkish army in November 2015 seemed to have one distinctive victim: the Republic of Tatarstan. Tatarstani elites had been forging their ties to Turkey for a long time, and with a significant success. Therefore, the animosity between Ankara and Moscow brought it unwelcome complications. However, the crisis provided a chance for the leader of Tatarstan to show the true character of his commitment to the relations with Turkey, while at the same time opening an opportunity to reveal more about the centre-regional relations between Moscow and Kazan, the capital of Tatarstan.

This thesis is concerned with the relations of the external policies of the Republic of Tatarstan, a subject of the Russian Federation, to the diplomacy of the Federation itself. Paradiplomacy, as foreign policy of regions is often termed, is a widespread phenomenon that has been attracting a growing attention, but the topic of paradiplomacy in states with authoritarian regimes has been asking for more consideration. For that matter, Tatarstan has a history of pursuing quite ambitious goals in its paradiplomatic conduct, but after Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin consolidated his power and the power of the Federal government over its regions, the situation has

settled.¹ However, that does not mean that the subjects of Russian Federation, or specifically Tatarstan, stopped following their objectives on the international scene.

As one of the richest regions of Russia,² and one with a secessionist past full of conflicts with Moscow,³ Tatarstan continues to be actively pursuing its goals both within and outside the Federation. This multinational and multi-confessional region prides itself with a history of calm coexistence among its inhabitants.⁴ The nominal nation of the Republic are Tatars, a Muslim ethnic group culturally, linguistically, and religiously related to the Turkish and other Turkic nations. Although Tatars constitute only a slight majority within Tatarstan with 53 % of a population of 3,8 million (the second largest group are the Russians, with an almost 40 % share),⁵ the ruling elite in Kazan, the capital of the Republic, is thoroughly penetrated by them,⁶ and the paradiplomatic orientation has been reflecting that.

Tatarstan has been enjoying close and fruitful relations with Turkey, which has been since the end of the Cold War forging ties with Turkic states and communities all over Eurasia.⁷ With Turkey being the biggest foreign investor in the Republic,⁸ and

¹ See Sharafutdinova, Gulnaz, "Paradiplomacy in the Russian Regions: Tatarstan's Search for Statehood," *Europe-Asia Studies* 55, No. 4 (2003): 613–629.

² Auzan, Alexander A., and Sergei N. Bobylev eds., *National Human Development Report for the Russian Federation 2011: Modernization and Human Development* (Moscow: UNDP, 2011): 138.

³ Giuliano, Elise, "Secessionism from the Bottom Up: Democratization, Nationalism, and Local Accountability in the Russian Transition," *World Politics* 58, No. 2 (2006): 283.

⁴ Nasyrov, I. R., "Regionalnaya identichnost i mezhdunarodnoe sotrudnichestvo regionov," *Obshchestvennye nauki. Politika i pravo*, No. 4 (2008): 108.

⁵ "Pasport Respubliki Tatarstan," Official Website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation (July 29, 2013), http://www.mid.ru/ru/maps/ru/ru-ta/-/asset_publisher/6HX3Zn3BV6Q7/content/id/100950?p_p_id=101_INSTANCE_6HX3Zn3BV6Q7&_101_INSTANCE_6HX3Zn3BV6Q7_languageId=ru_RU (accessed January 19, 2017).

⁶ Kollektiv avtorov, *Rossiyskaya politicheskaya regionalistika* (Kazan': Kazan'skiy federal'niy universitet: 2011): 78–79.

⁷ Kanli, Yusuf, "Zero problems..." *Hurriet Daily News*, April 24, 2017, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/zero-problems.aspx?pageID=449&nID=112333&NewsCatID=425> (accessed May 29, 2017).

Tatarstan participating in organizations uniting the Turkic world, it is safe to say that there is an identity element that facilitates the links between Kazan and Ankara.

Authoritarian regimes, such as the one in Russia, do not always approve of independent initiatives of their subjects. Therefore, when in autumn 2015 the relations between Russia and Turkey quickly deteriorated, Tatarstan found itself in a difficult position. The main interest of this thesis is to reveal how the Republic of Tatarstan dealt with the situation in which Russia – a state of which Tatarstan is a part – broke ties with Turkey – a state tied with Tatarstan by strong identity links.

The regime in Kazan is also authoritarian, and the elites have a centralized structure, at the top of which firmly stands the President of the Republic of Tatarstan, Rustam Nurgaliyevich Minnikhanov.⁹ His stance, therefore, is crucial to understand Tatarstan's politics and the policies of its government. Minnikhanov's position is crucial especially in regard to the conduction of Tatarstan's paradiplomacy, because he relishes in personally attending ceremonial events abroad (or at home, along with his foreign guests), as these allow him to present himself at home as an internationally respected and influential politician.

The theme of Tatarstan's paradiplomatic relations to Turkey combines several interesting and appealing layers. First, the foreign policy of Russia, the developments of which have been shaking the world recently. Second, the foreign policy of Turkey, a state that has been going through a very complicated transformative period and whose diplomacy has experienced a number of shake-ups in the last years. And last but not least, the centre-regional relations between an authoritarian centre and an authoritarian region whose majority and ruling elite are constituted by a religious and ethnic minority of the multinational state. The junction of these layers offers a valuable insight into the politics of a region, as well as into the way incidents happening in the international sphere can directly and indirectly affect the events within that region.

⁸ Hille, Kathrin, "Putin's fury with Erdogan takes its toll on Tatarstan's trading links," *Financial Times*, February 1, 2016, <https://www.ft.com/content/eca5f41a-c412-11e5-808f-8231cd71622e?mhq5j=e2> (accessed July 10, 2017).

⁹ See Sharafutdinova, Gulnaz, "Getting the 'Dough' and Saving the Machine: Lessons from Tatarstan," *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization* 21, No. 4 (October 2013): 507–529.

The thesis is examining the period between summer 2014, after Turkey refused to join the Western sanctions punishing Russia for the annexation of Crimea, and December 2016, when the Russian Ambassador to Turkey Andrei Karlov was shot dead in Ankara, two events important for the development of Russo-Turkish relations. Speaking of the territories the thesis is concerned with, the Republic of Tatarstan is at the centre of the focus, but events in the Russia Federation and in Turkey are taken into account as well.

At the core of the thesis is an analysis of the speeches of the President of Tatarstan Rustam Minnikhanov related to Turkey. These will be examined using the Critical Discourse Analysis as presented by Wodak¹⁰ and van Tijn,¹¹ and framed according to a scheme used by Youngman.¹² The topic is related to the concepts of paradiplomacy and relations of centre and region. The main actor is the government of the Republic of Tatarstan, represented by President Rustam Nurgaliyevich Minnikhanov. Among other actors are representatives of the governments of Russia and Turkey, as well as other Turkish officials, involved in meetings, during which Minnikhanov issued some of the analysed speeches.

The primary sources of this thesis are in the first place the speeches of President Minnikhanov, available on the official website of the government of Tatarstan, in news sites, and on social media. Other primary sources are the contemporary news published by local and regional media. Secondary sources are the academic articles and monographies supplying the necessary background for the research, and theoretic literature providing tools and concepts needed for the analysis.

As outlined, the thesis is concerned with the relation between the paradiplomacy of a region and its relations to the diplomacy of the centre. Therefore, it aims to disclose whether federations' diplomacies influence the paradiplomacies of their subjects, and

¹⁰ Wodak, Ruth, "Critical Discourse Analysis at the End of the 20th Century," *Research on Language and Social Interaction* 32, No. 1-2 (1999): 185–193.

¹¹ Van Dijk, Theun A., "Aims of Critical Discourse Analysis," *Japanese Discourse* 1 (1995): 17–27.

¹² Youngman, Mark, "Broader, vaguer, weaker: The evolving ideology of the Caucasus Emirate leadership," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 28 (2016): 1–23, <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09546553.2016.1229666>.

more specifically, whether subjects of a federation lead by an authoritarian regime have the possibility to exercise independent paradiplomacy, without provoking conflicts with the centre. The state of the knowledge on which those research questions are based is introduced in the literature review in the theoretical chapter, along with an explanation of terms used. The research design follows, with an account of the use of the Critical Discourse Analysis and the presentation of the division of the analysis, preceding the analysis itself.

1. Theory

This chapter presents the literature review and research questions, followed by the introduction of key concepts and terms necessary for a full comprehension of the topic. First are discussed the concepts of ethnicity and nationality; then, some concepts and terms linked to relations between national centres and peripheries or regions, such as regionalism and federation, are presented. After that, paradiplomacy is introduced in detail. This concept covers foreign agenda of regions and needs to be understood as a multilayered phenomenon related to both the world of international relations and internal politics. The chapter ends with the explanation of other concepts, linked to internal politics in authoritarian countries – the concept of political machine, for example, through which the elites hold onto power on the top of a scheme of patronage, as well as “authoritarianism,” “Regional Elites,” and “Leaders.” This provides the background for the study of Tatarstan's paradiplomatic relations to Turkey, vis-à-vis the changing diplomacy of Moscow.

The concept of paradiplomacy furnishes an explanatory framework in this work, because it provides the best tools to analyse Tatarstan's policies towards Turkey and suggests which areas to concentrate on. The analysis of Tatarstan's relations to Turkey in the context of Moscow's relations with Ankara will provide an insight into Kazan's position within the Russian Federation.

1.1 Literature Review and Research Questions

A growing body of literature deals with the phenomenon of paradiplomacy, or the diplomacy of subnational units (such as regions, cities, members of federations, and other). One of the first scholars to examine the phenomenon of paradiplomacy was Ivo D. Duchacek, who also introduced the term itself. He stated that in general, there are two possible scenarios “conceivable for the relationship of national and subnational governments in the area of foreign policy”; one is *centralization*, the other *federal segmentation*. The former, marked by further expansion of the power of the central government to include “all modern economic, social, ecological, cultural, and humanitarian issue-areas”, is justified by promotion of single “legitimate voice abroad”.

The latter, characterized by separating security from non-security issues, is justified by the ideals of participatory democracy and territorial division of powers.¹³

In his 1984 article, Duchacek noted that the trends suggested that most states operated somewhere in the middle ground and he described four ways of harmonization of the central and regional foreign affairs: high-level channels of consultation, which include inter-executive coordination, as well as incorporation of regional representatives into delegations abroad; inter-administrative links, such as liaison offices of the central ministry of foreign affairs in the regions and vice versa; constitutional changes and reinterpretations granting some powers to the regions; and direct links between subnational components and international organization (for instance membership in agencies like UNESCO), which Duchacek described as rare.¹⁴

In the same article, Duchacek mentioned seven reasons, why the central governments opposed the development and conduction of paradiplomacy, beginning with a straightforward opposition to dilution of central power in principle and fear of anything new, continuing through a fear of a “more complex and complicated pattern” exacerbating policy gridlocks, fear of the consequences of the diplomatic inexperience of the subnational corps, fear of the compromising of the effectiveness of national policies and possibility that another nation could exploit it as a “back entrance”, to fear of “subnational egocentrism” leading to tensions between regions, and fear of “secessionist potential” of some of those activities.¹⁵

The belief held by governments that “everything international should be handled by the state as opposed to sub-state governments” and that paradiplomacy would “undermine the international coherence of the country” seemed to be prevailing for a

¹³ Duchacek, Ivo D., “The International Dimension of Subnational Self-Government”, *Publius: The Journal of Federalism* 14, No. 4 (Autumn, 1984): 22–23.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*: 27–29. In the text of this article, Duchacek uses the term “micro-diplomacy” to describe the phenomenon, but already in the abstract the term “paradiplomacy” is used. *Paradiplomacy* can thus be seen a synonym to *micro-diplomacy* that eventually prevailed as the more suitable for the description of said concept.

¹⁵ Duchacek, “The International Dimension of Subnational Self-Government”: 21–22.

long time.¹⁶ Quarter a century later, Lecours, like Duchacek, highlighted the importance of mutual cooperation on coordination between the national and regional governments. He explained that the intensity of those contacts depends on the character of the paradiplomacy:

If the foreign action of a sub-state unit is modest, that is if it is primarily about cooperation, a fairly informal process of information-sharing may very well be enough to place state officials at ease. If paradiplomacy is more ambitious insofar as it deals with issues (economic, cultural, environmental, etc...) that has implications for national policy and/or politics, a more elaborate set up could be useful. In such a case, the relationship between the region and the state in relation to paradiplomacy needs to go beyond information-sharing to include genuine consultation and, even, coordination.¹⁷

There are two models of such consultation. Either it goes through established communication channels between the subnational and national governments, or a specific intergovernmental body is set up – however, this model is rare according to Lecours (he described it in relation to Belgium), because it requires the central government to acknowledge the legitimacy of the paradiplomatic activities and at the same time, the region has to fully comply its paradiplomacy with the central policies.¹⁸

Elsewhere, Lecours interestingly noted that governments could apply the same logic of division of power to the diplomatic issues as in internal policy issues.¹⁹ In other words, policy areas in the regional government's competence according to the constitution – such as culture and education – that have an international aspect (cultural cooperation), may be left in the regional competence even on the international scene.

¹⁶ Lecours, André, "Political Issues of Paradiplomacy: Lessons from the Developed world," *Discussion Papers in Diplomacy (Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael')* (December, 2008): 6.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*: 8.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*: 8–9.

¹⁹ Lecours, André, "Paradiplomacy: Reflections on the Foreign Policy and International Relations of Regions," *International Negotiation* 7 (2002): 102.

Tavares, in his recent monograph on paradiplomacy, argued that, in general, ministries of foreign affairs had recognized that the involvement of subnational actors in international relations was not just a fashion, but a substantial change in the practice of diplomacy, and therefore, “collaboration and not conflict epitomizes relations between both levels of government”.²⁰ He concurred to Lecours regarding the logic of the division of diplomatic powers, explaining that issues handled in the local-global spectrum (health, education, transportation, culture, tourism, and public security) were usually handled by the regions on both the internal and external levels, leaving the “high policy” represented by security-military agenda to the central governments, generally refraining from “voicing an official view in major world conflicts”.²¹ This way, with spheres of competence divided, central-regional coordination should be relatively easy and devoid of conflicts.

Among states that have established agencies specifically devoted to the development of paradiplomacy are the United States (State Department's Office of the Special Representative for global intergovernmental affairs), Brazil, France, South Korea, and Japan.²² Great Britain's Foreign Office has no institutionalized capacities to handle paradiplomacy despite Scotland's, London's, and the City of London's activities, but British officials themselves have been meeting with local regional officials while abroad. “Results-based pragmatism and respect for the local political culture have driven the United Kingdom's foreign affairs,” according to Tavares.²³

In Canada, as described by Lecours, provinces played “a formal role in the implementation of international treaties” and consultative role on issues related to the provincial jurisdiction within sectoral intergovernmental forums.²⁴ Especially Quebec

²⁰ Tavares, Rodrigo, *Paradiplomacy: Cities and States as Global Players* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016): 48.

²¹ *Ibid.*: 116–117.

²² *Ibid.*: 51–54.

²³ *Ibid.*: 54.

²⁴ Lecours, “Political Issues of Paradiplomacy”: 6.

has a very strong and ambitious paradiplomacy and Ottawa is very carefully watching Quebec's foreign contacts, in particular its special relation with Paris.²⁵

On one far side of the spectrum is Belgium, where the regions have had substantial power over the federation's diplomacy – so much so, in fact, that Lecours argued it had been breaching beyond the scope of paradiplomacy, as the regions had been a “full component of Belgium's foreign policy”.²⁶ Other examples of regions directly affecting central international relations are usually episodes of strong conflictive resentment of a region against central diplomatic initiative, such as the case of Carinthia complicating relations between Austria and Yugoslavia in the 1970s and 1980s due to its Slovenian minority, and, similarly, between Austria and Italy due to issues related to the German speaking minority in South Tyrol, outlined by Cornago.²⁷ Duchacek also noted that by 1970, all federal states in Latin America (Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, and Venezuela), as well as Malaysia, required their senates (made up from regional representatives) to approve presidential travels abroad.²⁸

McAdams and Kocaman wrote about the attempts of Kars, a northeastern province of Turkey, to “persuade the government of Turkey to open the border” with bordering Armenia, in order to improve its economic situation, and to utilize cultural links to curtail the standoff.²⁹ Generally, the instances of regions directly influencing the national foreign policies seem to be singular cases, more the exception than the rule – and are often unsuccessful, as was the case with Kars' bid for improvement of Turkish-Armenian relations.

²⁵ Ibid.: 11.

²⁶ Ibid.: 10.

²⁷ Cornago, Noe, “Diplomacy and Paradiplomacy in the Redefinition of International Security: Dimensions of Conflict and Co-operation,” *Regional & Federal Studies* 9, No. 1 (1999): 42–43.

²⁸ Duchacek, Ivo D., *Comparative federalism: Constitutional government in theory and practice* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970, reprinted 1987): 216.

²⁹ McAdams, Michael Andrew, and Sinan Kocaman, “Using historic preservation as a para-diplomatic agent in cross-cultural conflict resolution in international border areas: A case study in the Kars province in Turkey,” *International NGO Journal* Vol. 8, No. 5 (June, 2013): 103.

More common are events when central governments step out against policies of one of their regions. Tavares described a number of such situations: in 2015, after outrage from left-wing parties and pro-Palestinian activists, Amsterdam had to include Ramallah into a town-twinning initiative originally connecting it only with Tel Aviv; in Japan, the ministry of foreign affairs occasionally clashes with Hokkaido prefecture over its contacts with Sakhalin; both Brazil and South Africa acted against Sao Paulo's and Cape Town's respective official support to events attended by the Dalai Lama, in order to appease Chinese protests; and in 1998, Russia strongly protested against the participation of seven of its regions (Bashkortostan, Chuvashia, Dagestan, Khakassia, Tatarstan, Tuva, and Yakutia) at an Istanbul conference that recognized the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.³⁰ Alaska, British Columbia, California, Oregon, and Washington, dissatisfied with the central governments' reactions to oil spills along the Pacific coast, institutionalized their cooperation in tackling natural disasters, in spite of protests from the central governments.³¹

The outcomes of the conflicts between the centres and the subnational units over specific foreign policy issues vary. In some cases, the regions hold their own (as in the case of Pacific states in North America), in others, a compromise is found (Amsterdam's town-twinning with Tel Aviv that eventually included also Ramallah), or the region backs off (as with Cape Town's suspension of support to an event with the Dalai Lama's presence).

In most countries, paradiplomacy is still in a sort of shadow zone without exact delimitation of powers, and conflicts are resolved ad hoc. In other words, central governments, using various methods, but also with varying success, often work on influencing the paradiplomacies conducted by the regions. Most governments consider it their prime interest to align and coordinate international initiatives representing their country, in order to secure a united, if not downright singular, voice abroad. However, different countries approach this in different ways and some countries are willing to lend their regions significant leeway in their pursuit of international presence. In other

³⁰ Tavares, *Paradiplomacy: Cities and States*: 234–236.

³¹ Cornago, "Diplomacy and Paradiplomacy": 51.

countries, certain regions can be so strong that some of their demands for representation can't be ignored by the centre.

There are various examples of paradiplomacy being conducted by regions of authoritarian states, too, although Lecours mentioned that paradiplomacy had been mostly present in “Western industrialized liberal-democracies”, such as in Basque Country, Catalonia, Flanders, Quebec, and Wallonia.³² He explained that in developing countries the political environment is completely different – as governments struggle to attain formal powers and legitimacy, “coherence of foreign policy, as a demonstration of state power and national unity, is likely to be of paramount importance for state officials”.³³ In case of a lack of liberal democratic order, the relations between state and regional leaders may be dangerous for the representatives of subnational units, “especially if there are salient ethnic and/or religious cleavages,” added Lecours.³⁴

According to Duchacek, up until 1980s there only were two federal states that granted their units the power to access the international system, and these were socialist Yugoslavia and USSR,³⁵ both authoritarian states. The sole purpose of this provision in both Stalin’s and Brezhnev’s Soviet constitutions was to secure more votes in the United Nations’ General Assembly, with Ukrainian and Byelorussian SSRs having a seat there. All Union republics had their ministries of foreign affairs, but neither was ever allowed to conduct their own international policies nor to establish direct relations with other countries, “not even with neighboring socialist states”.³⁶

The case of Yugoslavia was different. As explained by Duchacek, all the six federal republics and the two autonomous regions set up special commissions for foreign affairs “for the purpose of influencing the national Ministry of Foreign Affairs [...] to pursue foreign policies that would be ‘brought to line with [their] internal policies’.”³⁷

³² Lecours, “Political Issues of Paradiplomacy”: 1.

³³ *Ibid.*: 8.

³⁴ *Ibid.*: 8.

³⁵ Duchacek, “The International Dimension of Subnational Self-Government”: 30.

³⁶ Duchacek, *Comparative federalism*: 211–213.

³⁷ *Ibid.*: 214.

Among contemporary authoritarian nations, the paradiplomacy of China's regions seems to have an important place. Tavares cited China's president Xi Jinping as saying that “without successful cooperation at the sub-national level, it would be very difficult to achieve practical results for cooperation at the national level.”³⁸ Bueno, Alameida, and Wang concluded that the internationalization of China went hand in hand with internal decentralization – however authoritarian, top-down directed, and dependant on the central government's willingness – that spanned the involvement of the provincial governments in the formation of national foreign policy, as well as approval for the establishment of overseas regional offices aimed at attracting foreign direct investment into the provinces.³⁹

Cornago pointed out that paradiplomacy might be used in the management of ethnoterritorial conflicts, as shown by contacts of China's Muslim-majority Xinjiang province with Central Asian republics, as well as contacts of restive or previously restive regions of Russia “with the outside world”.⁴⁰

Indeed, Russian Federation is another state with an authoritative government, whose regions have been active beyond the federation's borders. Sharafutdinova described paradiplomacy of the Republic of Tatarstan in her 2005 article. She has given an account of some high profile conflicts between Kazan and Moscow on diplomacy issues such as involvement of Kosovo in the first place,⁴¹ as well as Tatarstan's state-like agreement on cooperation and friendship with Abkhazia at a time when Russia respected it as a part of Georgia.⁴² She concluded that Kazan's international activities were a part of Tatarstan's state-like behaviour and rhetoric of sovereignty. Importantly, Sharafutdinova came to the conclusion that in light of Putin's recentralization, Kazan

³⁸ Xi Jinping in Tavares, *Paradiplomacy: Cities and States*: 54.

³⁹ Bueno, Nidi, Wilson Alameida, and Yong J. Wang, “Divided China in Internationalization: Paradiplomacy and Sub-National Autonomy as a Transforming Phenomenon,” *Economic Analysis of Law Review* 7, No. 1 (January–June 2016): 29–32.

⁴⁰ Cornago, “Diplomacy and Paradiplomacy”: 44–46.

⁴¹ Sharafutdnova, Gulnaz, “Opportunities and Limits of Self-Creation and Identity Politics: Tatarstan’s Paradiplomatic Project,” in, *Emerging Meso-Areas in the Former Socialist Countries: Histories Revived or Improvised?* ed. Matsuzato, Kimitaka (Hokkaido: Hokkaido University, Slavic Research Center, 2005): 397.

⁴² *Ibid.* 394–395.

had to adapt its behaviour on the international scene and its paradiplomacy lost the “political content”.⁴³

Joenniemi and Sergunin studied the trans-border contacts of the northwestern regions of Russia. They have shown that those units, often bordering rich European countries, were assertively following the implementation of some projects with their European counterparts, but in some cases, “Moscow's restrictions have scuttled promising international projects”, such as an industrial park located on Russo-Finnish border advocated for the town of Svetogorsk, or a Special Economic Zone between Murmansk and Norwegian municipality Sor Varanger.⁴⁴ In line with Sharafutdinova, Joenniemi and Sergunin noted that in Yeltsin's era, Russian regions were especially active, as they had been given the autonomy to do so. Putin's and Medvedev's reforms brought a “significant decrease in subnational actors' international activities” (as well as in scholarly attention to this topic).⁴⁵

We can see a wide spectrum of authoritarian regimes' responses to paradiplomacy. Leaving aside the historic cases of USSR and Yugoslavia, modern-day Russia and China are among the most interesting examples. While Chinese government supports trans-border activities of some of its provinces, Moscow is wary of them. However, Beijing is in firm control over the provincial paradiplomacies. And the difference between Yeltsin's and Putin's Russia would suggest that the tightening of the political regime brought tightening of the grip over regional foreign policies, too. A review of the literature suggests that, as with other aspects of political and social life, authoritarian regimes leave less space for bottom-up paradiplomacy.

The question on the link between authoritarianism and centre-regional conflicts caused by paradiplomacy remains open. Such clashes over competences may take place in both democracies and autocracies. According to Tavares,

⁴³ Ibid.: 407.

⁴⁴ Joenniemi, Petti, and Alexander Sergunin, “Paradiplomacy as a Capacity-Building Strategy: The Case of Russia's Northwestern Subnational Actors,” *Problems of Post-Communism* 61, no. 6, (November–December 2014): 22.

⁴⁵ Ibid.: 19.

Paradiplomacy is only conflicting when a subnational government puts in place initiatives and activities through which it aspires to establish itself as a fully sovereign state. The initiatives and activities may also be part of the preparatory work toward a future secession and international recognition of such a status.⁴⁶

The fear of secessionism plays an essential role in potential central opposition to the conduction of paradiplomacy. However, some of the above-mentioned cases prove Tavares' assumption wrong. It is possible to say that all secessionist regions conduct assertive paradiplomacy and produce conflicts with the centre along the way, but not all assertive paradiplomacies that lead to clashes with the national centre are secessionist. Moreover, Lecours showed that where identity is involved, trans-border contacts between an ethnic minority and its kin abroad can lessen the appetite for secession,⁴⁷ acting as a pressure-valve of sorts and thus preventing the creation of further conflicts.

Clashes between different levels of government are, however, more likely, if a substate unit attempts to establish direct links with national governments of a foreign country. The centres may interpret this as a threat to the national unity and accepting it may be seen as entering a slippery slope towards secession of the region. For example, Canada is more likely to oppose Quebec's paradiplomacy when the province is governed by the nationalist Parti Québécois, as its direct contacts (especially with France, but not only) are sometimes seen as a preparation for possible recognition of independence.⁴⁸

Identity is an important element of paradiplomacy. Lecours came to conclusion that regions successful at establishing their international presence were those penetrated “by strong nationalist movements” – such as Basque Country, Catalonia, Flanders, Quebec, and Wallonia.⁴⁹ That goes hand in hand with his statement that conflicts between a state's unit and capital are more likely “in multinational, or even multiethnic

⁴⁶ Tavares, *Paradiplomacy: Cities and States*: 48.

⁴⁷ Lecours, “Political Issues of Paradiplomacy”: 6.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*: 11.

⁴⁹ Lecours, André, “When Regions Go Abroad: Globalization, Nationalism and Federalism,” (Paper presented at the “Globalization, Multilevel Governance and Democracy: Continental, Comparative and Global Perspectives” conference, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada, May 3-4, 2002): 4–5.

countries, where the development of international relations by a sub-state unit reflects the expression of cultural and sometimes political distinctiveness.”⁵⁰ Furthermore, the “choice of partners often follows cultural and linguistic connections”: Quebec cooperates especially with French-speaking regions and states, while Catalonia and Basque Country with Latin American ones.⁵¹

Identity can be seen as a propeller of ambitious paradiplomacy, which can on the one hand lead to further conflicts between substate and state governments, and on the other to establishment of exchange that leads to easing off the tensions. Again, states and regions react variously. It could be presumed that in multiethnic authoritarian states, trans-border contacts along the ethnic and cultural line might be more often interpreted as a threat to the centralized character of government, leading to the centre clamping down on the regional government's activities.

The scale of centres' responses to ambitious paradiplomacies is well described. Hence, we can say that federations do influence and limit and coax paradiplomacies of their subjects, using a wide set of institutional and informal instruments. In some cases, regions also influence the national foreign policy – a rare scenario, generally enshrined in the national constitution.

The reviewed literature offers less conclusive answers regarding the possibility to conduct independent paradiplomacy in an authoritarian state. Subjects of federations lead by authoritarian regimes do conduct paradiplomacy, however, the bottom-up impetus is often limited and the regions seem to be less independent in the pursuit of their trans-border projects. When the regions attempt to act independently, conflicts may arise. So much has been shown. Yet, the question of position of bottom-up diplomacies in authoritarian regimes is understudied. The formal and informal aspects of the centre-regional relations are not well defined and the mechanisms, which either trigger or don't trigger a strong negative reaction by the centre, are not described.

It is the aim of this work to shed more light on the problems of conducting paradiplomacy in an authoritarian state. My research is related to the issues of

⁵⁰ Lecours, “Political Issues of Paradiplomacy”: 9–10.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*: 5.

coordination of paradiplomacy with the state's diplomacy and possible conflicts stemming from the lack thereof. Do federations' diplomacies influence the paradiplomacies of their subjects? And more specifically, can subjects of a federation lead by an authoritarian regime exercise independent paradiplomacy, without provoking conflicts with the centre?

The first question is rather wide and relates to the extent to which paradiplomacy is accepted on the state level, as well as to the approaches states pursue while securing an unfragmented, or downright unitary, voice in the international sphere. This topic has been studied, but there remain gaps in the literature where less institutionalized environments of a state like the Russian Federation are concerned. The latter question is linked to the presumption that authoritarian states are more likely to clamp down on bottom-up initiatives, including those in the realm of foreign policy. Therefore, this work examines paradiplomacy as a possible source of centre-regional conflict.

The case of the relation between the Republic of Tatarstan, a federative unit of the Russian Federation, and the Turkish Republic offers an excellent opportunity to do just that. Tatarstan has strong cultural and linguistic ties with Turkey, so the sharp changes in the relation between Moscow and Ankara offer an opportunity to follow the development in Tatarstan's paradiplomacy within the context of those changes. The varying conditions allow us to see whether (and eventually how) Kazan adapted its policies, and how Moscow responded.

As mentioned above, Tatarstan's paradiplomacy had already been studied. However, in the twelve years since the publication of Sharafutdinova's article, political conditions in Russia have changed significantly. Therefore it is relevant to examine this topic again.

1.2 Terms and Concepts

Since this work deals with politics in an authoritarian region, it understands politics as a sphere of power. Kučera presents three conceptual approaches to politics: first, as a sphere of struggle for the decisive role in public administration and the process of administering itself; second, as a central propriety of a democratic order – sphere of representation of group interests, which cultivates the public discussion and

prevents social conflicts; third, as a sphere of formulation and promotion of collective demands. In this last view politics span into a much wider area than just the parliament and government, and include all sorts of seemingly non-political groups and actors.⁵² Due to the non-democratic character of politics in Tatarstan, the first and seemingly “narrowest” of the approaches presented by Kučera is the most adequate. This is in line with the use of Critical Discourse Analysis, because that method interprets basically all acts as acts of power.

Ethnicity and Nationality

Of significant importance is the understanding of the distinction between *ethnicity* and *nationality*. However, the line separating these two terms is thin and hard to spot, as those terms are tightly intertwined and often used interchangeably. Both terms describe groups that are from the outside considered specific, and acknowledge themselves as such from the inside. Ethnicity presupposes shared language and culture, and so does, usually, nationality. Historically, the concept of ethnicity was close to the concept of race, while nationality was understood as somehow linked to state building. In recent decades, however, they grew closer to each other and their borders got blurred. Both ethnicity and nationality are also linked to a given territory, but politically, nationality is more defined in territorial terms.⁵³

What does this mean in relation to Tatars? That depends on the interpretation. Tatars have long been termed as nation and are connected to their territory. However, they barely form a majority on that territory and they are dispersed in other areas, too. This would make them closer to the concept of ethnicity. Besides, there has been an attempt to construct a Tatarstani national identity – one including all dwellers (or in the words of the government of Tatarstan, “citizens”) of the Republic of Tatarstan: Tatars, Russians, Chuvash, and others.

⁵² Kučera, Rudolf, “Politika,” in *Koncepty a dějiny: Proměny pojmů v současné historické vědě*, ed. Lucia Storchová et al., (Praha: Scriptorium, 2014): 133.

⁵³ Šima, Karel, “Etnicita” in *Koncepty a dějiny: Proměny pojmů v současné historické vědě*, ed. Lucia Storchová et al., (Praha: Scriptorium, 2014): 205-206.

However, there have been nationalist attempts to create governing bodies representing all Tatars regardless of where they live,⁵⁴ and the separatist agenda or seeking of greater independence were mostly driven by ethnic Tatars, suggesting state building ambitions. Also, both historically and presently, the recognition Tatars receive is most often on the level of nationality. Although those two concepts are not the same, they are very close and in the case of Tatars, and therefore it is possible to use them interchangeably.

Centre and Regions

Region is a territorial area within a state (or, in some specific courses, in a supra-state structure like the European Union) that has some powers devolved to it. Those powers may greatly vary and they change with time. Interestingly, the understanding of the meaning of regional power and decentralization has been evolving in diverse directions.

Keating noted that regions had undergone a revival in the 1990s, but the reasons for their recent surge in importance had been different from earlier waves of their upsurge. In the 19th century, for example, a state had to cede power to regions that were too rich and strong. Conversely, in the decades following the Second World War, decentralization was seen as a check against strong centralist nationalist state. Historically, territorial division could be seen as an intermediary stage en route towards an ideal – centralized – state. Later, regionalism could be explained as a “conservative reaction to the modern state”. In the last decades, “a regionalism has emerged in prosperous, competitive regions, seeking either to modernize the state or, failing that, to free themselves from it and from the burden of less productive regions”.⁵⁵

As mentioned, a region is a territorial unit, usually – and specifically in the studied case – within a state. Conceptually, modern states are defined by their

⁵⁴ See, for example, Mikhailov, V. V., *Respublika Tatarstan: Demokratiya ili Suverenitet?* (Moscow: 2004): 71.

⁵⁵ Keating, Michael, “The invention of regions: political restructuring and territorial government in Western Europe,” *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy* 15 (1997): 388-9.

permanent resident population, government, sovereignty, economy, use of currency, and international recognition, as well as their territory.⁵⁶ This territory is divided into smaller units – regions – and this division can take place on various levels. There are metropolitan regions as well as “provincial-scale” regions. The former unite cities with their hinterlands, interconnected by infrastructure and tight economic links, while the latter can be defined primarily by lines “drawn on the map of the whole state”.⁵⁷ Some may be artificial, some may be based on historical considerations and traditions, and some may be defined by being in-between other regions.

However, not only the territory defines a region. An important feature of regions is their functions. Functions give the territory a political dimension and in effect, power. This makes the *region* a rather sensitive term. In Keating's words, the “definition of a region as a framework and a system of action has implications for the distribution of political power and the content of public policy.”⁵⁸ Region has its institutions, government or administration, its position vis-à-vis the national centre, possibly its paradiplomacy, as discussed below. It is a political actor in social and economic issues and it can develop a position regarding autonomy, or the amount of powers it has at its disposal.

The extent to which a region performs the role of a political actor depends on a number of factors. Apart from it stemming down from the powers it officially has, it is mainly the existence of *regional identity*, the feeling of belonging to a region, that decides how much power the region reaches for. The presence of a regional identity can be the result of historical traditions, or of a political imprint. Regional identity does not necessarily contest national identity, as each citizen can have ties to “different scales of territory” – from parish, through town or region, all the way up to state or even some supra-national body.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Knight, David B., “Identity and Territory: Geographical Perspectives on Nationalism and Regionalism,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 72, No. 4. (December, 1982): 517.

⁵⁷ Keating, “The invention of regions”: 390.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*: 383.

⁵⁹ Knight, “Identity and Territory”: 514

Another significant factor characterizing region as a political space is the party system. Regional politics may be formed either by regional parties or by national parties. The latter, in turn, can adapt their programmes to regional specifics, or keep following the central line without significant adjustments. National parties can also utilize regions as pools for their support, or govern them as an end in itself. Other factors include the form of government or administration, and the existence of regional media and social movements.⁶⁰

Regional administration or governance has a number of possible forms. Regions can be managed by elected governments, special divisions of the central government, administration offices supervised by the central government, or, for instance, tripartite corporative structures. Strongest form of regional representation within a state is federalism, where competences of regional governments are specifically enshrined in the Constitution, and units of the federation have a right “to participate in national politics through territorial second chambers of the legislature” or alternative mechanisms. In some unitary states is present the formula of *asymmetric regionalisation*, which is developed “to respond to demands from specific territories, while retaining a unitary constitution.”⁶¹

Knight explains that territory doesn't exist in itself, because it is a passive piece of land. Only when people start to recognize an area as a territory through their beliefs and actions, the area *becomes* territory and acquires some meaning. While in the past a group living in an area defined it as a territory, modern regional and national identities turned this principle around and “the politically bounded territory came to define the people”.⁶²

The distinction between regionalism and nationalism is often hard to spot. Moreover, especially in multi-national states, interpretations of identities belonging to regions can contradict one another – what one group claims to be nationalism, members of another group can view as regionalism. For instance, Seton-Watson suggested that

⁶⁰ Keating, “The invention of regions”: 391-392.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*: 392.

⁶² Knight, “Identity and Territory”: 516-517.

the feeling of being “British” had been to an extent merged with “English” national consciousness, but included also Scots, Welsh, and Irish, without acknowledging the latter three nationalities' distinctness.⁶³ Scottish nationalists have, therefore, demanded sovereignty, while there had not been need any for similar claims by the English. At the same time, from the British perspective, Scottish nationalism was seen as “mere” regionalism, while the Scots themselves saw that “regionalism” as “a ‘nationalism’ rooted in place, that place being the territorial extent of Scotland, wherein Scots' nation and state [were] said to coincide”.⁶⁴ In other words, they have seen it as “full” nationalism.

This example can be interesting in the context of the Soviet Union or, indeed, Russian Federation. Levels of identity bonds have been created one upon the other in the last century: Soviet identity, Russian identity in relation towards the multiethnic federalized state (*rossiyskiy*) or as a national identification (*russkiy*), and Tatar (ethnic/national) or *Tatarstani* (republican) identities in case of the Republic of Tatarstan. A Tatar inhabitant of Kazan can, thus, have a Kazan local identity, Tatar national identity, and Tatarstani, Russian (*rossiyskiy*), and, still, Soviet identities in relation to the state – all at the same time, at various levels, with flexible importance in relation to time and circumstances (and there still remains space for a more specific local identity as in a relation towards one district, social identity stemming from their status in society, and, indeed, religious identity).

Although the question of autonomy and secession may capture significant attention, regionalism is not automatically separatist or autonomist. According to Keating,

there are integrative regionalisms, seeking the full integration of their territories into the nation and the destruction of obstacles to their participation in national public life. There are autonomist regionalisms

⁶³ Seton-Watson cited in Knight, “Identity and Territory”: 518.

⁶⁴ Knight, “Identity and Territory”: 518.

seeking a space for independent action; and there are disintegrative regionalisms, seeking greater autonomy or even separation.⁶⁵

Regional group elites seeking separation usually operate with terms such as ethnic, national and linguistic integrity and uniqueness, status of minority, desire for national freedom, and natural right to independence based on the principle of self-determination. The nationalist stance, more often than not, stems from emotional and historical (mostly revisionist) sentiments accompanied by politico-economic grievances.⁶⁶ This way, regions often serve as a stage for promotion of cultural and linguistic policies. However, linguistically and culturally specific groups rarely inhabit an area territorially corresponding to the politically defined borders of a region.

The relations between centre and region can be structured in a number of ways. Russia, following the tradition of Soviet Union, chose to be a federation. However, it is a federation with a very opaque structure and institutional framework. Interestingly, in the case of contemporary Russia, the notion of ‘state’ is associated with the central government in Moscow, while ‘federalism’ seems to be perceived in terms of politics in the ‘periphery’, often seen as a burden or a problem to deal with.⁶⁷

Federalism is defined by the constitutional division of power and competences between the federal centre and the constitutive units – regions, states, and republics. However, this interpretation deals only with the principal and legal dimension of the problem. Acclaimed political scientist Daniel J. Elazar argued that “true federalism systems manifest their federalism in culture as well as constitutional and structural ways.” According to him, “the viability of federal systems is directly related to the degree which federalism has been internalized culturally within a particular civil society.”⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Keating, “The invention of regions”: 389.

⁶⁶ Knight, “Identity and Territory”: 523.

⁶⁷ Keating, “The invention of regions”: 391.

⁶⁸ Daniel J. Elazar, cited in Ross, Cameron, “Federalism and Electoral Authoritarianism under Putin,” *Demokratizatsiya* 13, No. 3 (summer, 2005): 347-348.

Moreover, the extent to which citizens enjoy political freedoms and democracy can differ greatly within a federation. According to Gervasoni, the extent to which federative units are heterogeneous from the perspective of democracy, is remarkable, for example within states like India, Brazil, and also the Russian Federation.⁶⁹

As we see, there is more to the topic of federalism than the legal and institutional aspects. There are other challenges to acknowledge, like informal structures, which are often prevailing in the non-democratic states and sub-state units. Ross notes that prior to the 1990s, there was no tradition of federalism in Russia, although the Soviet Union officially was one and so was the RSFSR (the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic) – which, technically, was a “federation within a federation”. There was, however, a long tradition of “highly authoritarian political culture”.⁷⁰

Paradiplomacy

The conducting of foreign policy by regions is a relatively recent phenomenon. Throughout the 20th century, foreign policy has undergone a substantial development; besides the more obvious examples such as the desecration of offensive wars as a standard tool in international relations, there were a number of more subtle changes that continue to reshape the diplomatic world today. One of the trends is something that could be viewed as a decentralization of international affairs. Once a domain of sovereign states, diplomacy has seen a thorough diversification and the entrance of new actors to the playing field.

The developments that followed both world wars brought, for instance, the creation of influential international organizations, in which the states are represented, but those organizations act on their own behalf. Examples of such organizations are the United Nations Organization, World Bank, and Organization of Islamic Cooperation, among many others. A generally accepted theory thus says that there are two types of

⁶⁹ Gervasoni, Carlos, “A Rentier Theory of Subnational Regimes: Fiscal Federalism, Democracy, and Authoritarianism in the Argentine Provinces,” *World Politics* 62, No. 2 (April, 2010): 302.

⁷⁰ Ross, “Federalism and Electoral Authoritarianism”: 348.

actors in the sphere of international relations – state and non-state actors. The above-mentioned international organizations, however made up of representatives of states who try to pursue their state agenda within said organizations, form a different presence in the area of diplomacy than states. But the spectrum of non-state actors in the international relations is much wider. Markets, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), social movements, gender, culture and other, are all said to have an international politics dimension.⁷¹

Since the 1980s, a phenomenon of subnational units – regions, cities, and federative components – getting involved in international affairs has been observed and discussed in the academic fields of foreign relations and comparative politics. Regions open their “offices”, “houses”, “representations”, or trade missions all over the world, and set up regional associations. This phenomenon, when subnational territorial units become active on the supranational level, is most often described as “paradiplomacy” – a term most likely coined by Czech-American academician Ivo Duchacek.⁷² Regions have been entering the world stage for various reasons.

Territorial components of federal and decentralized unitary systems have been increasingly asserting their international competence. They have done so in matters concerning foreign investment, trade promotion, environmental and energy issues, cultural exchanges, human and labor rights, and tourism.⁷³

It is plausible to expect the tools used by regions to vary depending on the area in which they operate, as economic interests can be pursued in a different manner than cultural ones.

Discussing paradiplomacy, we need to take into account several issues, most of which are mutually intertwined. To understand it properly, we need to know where the region's diplomatic international efforts are oriented and, especially, what drives them, where the impetus for action comes from. Besides, we need to understand the legal

⁷¹ Lecours, “Paradiplomacy: Reflections on the Foreign Policy”: 92.

⁷² Duchacek, “The International Dimension of Subnational Self-Government”.

⁷³ *Ibid.*: 5.

framework within which they take place and where the actions stand in regards to the relations between the region and the national centre.

The receiving end of the subnational units' diplomatic efforts can vary greatly. Duchacek offers a basic distinction between *transborder regionalism* and *global paradiplomacy* or *global micro-diplomacy*.⁷⁴ Transborder regionalism, as the term suggests, deals with bilateral and multilateral cooperative associations among bordering regions divided by national frontiers. Those associations can be either formal or informal, but what binds them is the regions' drive for self-help.

Global micro-diplomacy is not limited by territorial proximity. The most obvious aspect is the stationing of permanent (paradiplomatic) missions, but the set of instruments includes also sending missions to other states for short-term visits or the authorities' trips abroad with the aim to obtain experience or promote the unit's interests; hosting foreign missions or officials for the same reasons; involvement in trade and investment shows; promotional campaigns in foreign media; special trade and banking zones; special relations with other subnational units in other parts of the world; and even lobbying its own policies in the national centre. As Duchacek notes, “whereas physical proximity is the obvious main reason for transborder regionalism, *awareness of universal interdependence* is the major cause of global micro-diplomacy.”⁷⁵

On the other hand, Lecours completely circumvents this division, suggesting that paradiplomacy needs to be studied from the perspective of its goals. He distinguishes three layers on which regional governments approach paradiplomacy – economy, cooperation, and politics.⁷⁶ The first element is always present. The aim is to attract foreign investment and/or to find markets for export. “This layer does not have an explicit political dimension, nor is it concerned with cultural issues. It is primarily a function of global economic competition.”⁷⁷

⁷⁴ Ibid.: 8-9.

⁷⁵ Ibid.: 15.

⁷⁶ Lecours, “Political Issues of Paradiplomacy”: 2-4

⁷⁷ Ibid.: 2.

The second layer – cooperation – can be centred for example on culture, education, or technology. It can serve also as a form of development assistance. In such a case, rich, developed regions can partner with poorer regions in less developed countries or with the countries themselves. For instance, Quebec has partnerships with Rwanda, Togo, Senegal, Somalia, Lebanon, Vietnam, and Cambodia.⁷⁸ For the developing partner, such a partnership can have a great value, as they can tap the reservoir of the rich region's expertise or get access to development funding. The rich region, on the other hand, gains access to new markets (economical advantage) and a symbolic justification for its paradiplomatic activities (political advantage).

That leads us to the third layer of paradiplomacy – the political considerations. Lecours explains that regions following this path are usually driven by the will to express their identity, different from the one presented by the central government, on the international stage:

[These paradiplomacies] tend to be very ambitious which is not always manifested in the scope of their networks (some are fairly specifically targeted) but in the logic driving the international ventures. Here, sub-state governments seek to develop a set of international relations that will affirm the cultural distinctiveness, political autonomy and the national character of the community they represent.⁷⁹

However, identity is not necessarily always the main reason, the regional government can have other political goals, such as influencing other regions. Those three layers can be randomly combined and are hard to separate in real life. Economical cooperation can be driven by political ambitions and cultural cooperation can have economic implications.

Foregoing Duchacek's division between regional and global ambitions can be useful, because the tools that regions can use are in both cases quite similar when we take the interconnectedness of modern world into consideration. More importantly, the

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*: 3.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*: 3.

reasons why regions choose to cooperate with foreign partners can be the same, regardless of the distance separating them.

In general, it is possible to say that the more active and ambitious a paradiplomacy is, the more likely it is to have stronger political undertones. Establishing a strong international identity is crucial for (regional) governments that want to present their national or ethnic identity to new audiences – both abroad and on the domestic scene. Lecours also suggests that nationalism is one of the main factors explaining the whole phenomenon of paradiplomacy. He suggests that the regions that became the most successful in building their presence in the sphere of international affairs (Lecours mentions Quebec, Flanders, Wallonia, Catalonia, and the Basque Country) all share one characteristic: a strong nationalist movement influential in their domestic politics.⁸⁰

Nationalism is closely conflated with the doctrine of self-determination. According to Knight, nationalism “holds that humanity is naturally divided into nations, that nations are known by certain characteristics which can be ascertained, and that the only legitimate type of government is self-government.”⁸¹ However, the question of what “scale of population” is worthy of being acknowledged as a nation remains open.

Lecours argues that nationalism involves three processes, “which can be logically and functionally related to paradiplomacy”.⁸² First, building an international presence is one of the tools nationalist leaders can use to construct the national identity. It allows the leaders to create a discourse through which the region is present in the world of other nations. There it supposedly represents its specific people with their specific national identity. As nation building is, in the constructivist perspective, a part of construction of identity, putting the region within the context of international relations bears a significant symbolic, because it presumes nationhood. In other words, international relations are a sphere generally understood as a domain of states. Creating a discourse where the region plays a role in this sphere presents the region in a state-like

⁸⁰ Lecours, “When Regions Go Abroad”: 4.

⁸¹ Knight, “Identity and Territory”: 519-520.

⁸² Lecours, “When Regions Go Abroad”: 4.

perspective. This, in turn, has the potential to strengthen nationalist feelings among population.

Second, nationalist leaders also need to define specific regional interests in order to construct a group identity, because that is the way the group's cultural distinctiveness is accentuated. International relations provide the nationalist governments with a useful backdrop on which to define and present the 'national interest' (such as the protection of the region's unique culture from dissolution in their state's dominant way of life). Lecours explains that:

This is why the interest component of paradiplomacy is the most straightforward and visible; indeed, regional governments operating on the international scene adopt state-like discourses, that is, they express preferences in the context of a 'national interest framework'.⁸³

Third, as a type of politics, nationalism is a tool to get or fortify power. It involves politicians competing for power and influence and thus inevitably positioning themselves against others. Of course, the construction of a national identity involves demarcation of the group and defining it in contrast to other groups surrounding it. To practice their power, leaders also need a territory which they represent and where they actually hold that power. Paradiplomacy lifts the significance of the region's territorial borders from domestic onto international stage and can, thus, be highly conflicting towards the national capital.

Indeed, paradiplomacy can also serve the subnational governments in their attempts to gain independence. As mentioned, paradiplomacy usually serves to create economic ties, establish international cooperation, or promote the region's policies. However, a separatist government might try to directly influence policies of foreign nations. This most ambitious form of paradiplomacy is sometimes called *protodiplomacy*⁸⁴, because it aspires to become a "full" diplomacy. The main goal of protodiplomacy is to convince foreign governments to favour the separatist unit's independence (or at least not to oppose it). However, this seems to be a rather rare

⁸³ Ibid.: 5.

⁸⁴ Lecours, "Paradiplomacy: Reflections on the Foreign Policy": 107.

occurrence (Lecours mentions Quebec and its nationalist party's attempts to lobby the US and French governments⁸⁵). Whether this practice can be seen as successful is questionable, because subnational units have very little leverage in bilateral relations with sovereign states.

Duchacek notes that when “history, language, and culture are involved, the cold eloquence of trade statistics is not of much avail” and nationalist sentiments prevail.⁸⁶ Accordingly, the choice of foreign partners is often influenced by cultural and linguistic ties. Activity in the international field is a necessity for secessionist governments, because the project of a new independent nation needs to be presented to other states.

Interestingly, evidence suggests that more space for connections with culturally or nationality-wise close communities abroad can allay the nationalist drive for secession or unification with a distant homeland, because it provides more space for self-realization for the regional leaders and serves as a pressure-valve for the population. Lecours notes that for instance in Quebec, calls for new referendum on independence from Canada tended to follow situations when “the federal government [was] taking tough stands on Quebec's international aspirations.”⁸⁷

The constitutional and institutional background of paradiplomacy is another key issue. Paradiplomacies often operate in legal limbo, in an unsanctioned grey zone. Foreign policy is overwhelmingly understood as a domain of national governments and most constitutions suggest that, too. Moreover, central governments are often unwilling to devolve any foreign policy powers to the subnational level out of fear of losing a clear united voice and coherence. To deal with that, some countries have developed mechanisms to assure regional voices are heard and respected, but aligned with the central stance.

Efficient channels of communication between levels of governments are the key to sustainable paradiplomacy. Lecours suggests there are two models: regional government has to consult a responsible central government office on paradiplomaic

⁸⁵ Ibid.: 107.

⁸⁶ Duchacek, “The International Dimension of Subnational Self-Government”: 18.

⁸⁷ Lecours, “Paradiplomacy: Reflections on the Foreign Policy”: 104.

proposals; or a specific intergovernmental body is set up as a platform where foreign policies are aligned.⁸⁸ The latter model is rare (Belgium is an example of this approach), because it requires the central government to fully acknowledge the right of the regions to formulate their foreign policies.

Paradiplomacy is often seen as more conflictual in multiethnic or multinational countries. These concerns are, not surprisingly, connected to the above discussed paradiplomatic feature of separatism. The central governments face a dilemma between alienating ethnic groups and letting go of powers that are viewed as a fundament of statehood.⁸⁹ On the one hand, the state risks being seen as not representing interests of one part of its citizens and possibly strengthening their aversion towards it. On the other hand stands a fear of threatening the “national unity” and a possible entrance on the “slippery slope” towards secession. This dilemma is emphasized in developing countries and countries with a fragile democracy, where a weaker centre can feel even more threatened by regional elites.

The whole concept of paradiplomacy is introduced in such a detail, because it is a multifaceted phenomenon. Speaking of Tatarstan and its international relations, we need to take all the possible aspects and explanations of those activities into account. Hence this detailed look into potential drivers of paradiplomacy, and especially into the conflictual aspects of it, interconnected with nationalism and separatism. These are of great interest in the (formerly) very rebellious Republic of Tatarstan.

Authoritarianism, Regional Elites and Leaders

In authoritarian regimes, among which Tatarstan and Russia can be included, the authoritarian incumbents can utilize centre-periphery interaction, as well as all other sorts of resources “to consolidate the position of the ruling elite”.⁹⁰ Sharafutdinova presents the concept of “political machine” which is characterized as an “organization

⁸⁸ Lecours, “Political Issues of Paradiplomacy”: 8–9.

⁸⁹ Ibid.: 9–10.

⁹⁰ Sharafutdinova, Gulnaz, “Getting the ‘Dough’ and Saving the Machine: Lessons from Tatarstan,” *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization* 21, No. 4 (October 2013): 509.

capable of delivering a vote with mechanical regularity”. She described three features of political machine:

First, a political machine represents a political organization that works to generate broad and continuous support for its own regeneration. Second, central to generating such broad and continuing support is patronage, i.e. distribution of spoils from political office to “machine workers” [...]. And, third, one of the key mechanisms of getting the vote is a personalized material reward or a threat of punishment.⁹¹

This concept explains and describes how authoritarian cliques can cling on to their power over a longer time-span. Workplace is among the crucial hotspots for keeping the machine running. Gervasoni explains that “economically autonomous citizens are more likely to engage in politics and challenge authorities”, which helps to create democratic environment. On the other hand, when the state has a monopoly over economy, people rationally choose not to collide with the regime's interests.⁹²

As Sharafutdinova wrote, central to the political machine is patronage.⁹³ Patronage is a hierarchical top-down structure, where the upper layers provide advantages such as job security and protection of status in society in exchange for participation on keeping the political elites in power. The respected citizens in leading positions in local communities, such as the doctor, banker, priest, merchants and newspaper owners, all exchange their own interest for the state interest to keep their privileges. The system relies on tight links between political and economic spheres.⁹⁴

In these conditions, the regional elite becomes closed and concentrated on protecting itself from any outside influence. In Mendras' words, “local rulers, officials, and enterprise directors are playing the political-economic game among themselves and consciously strategize to prevent newcomers from entering it.”⁹⁵ As the elite is getting more exclusive, it is also getting smaller and ever more self-contained and step by step

⁹¹ Ibid.: 511.

⁹² Gervasoni, “A Rentier Theory”: 304.

⁹³ Sharafutdinova, “Getting the ‘Dough’”: 509.

⁹⁴ Ibid: 513.

⁹⁵ Mendras, Marie, “How Regional Élités Preserve Their Power,” *Post-Soviet Affairs* 15, No. 4 (1999): 306.

fortify its positions. The political competition moves from the open area where various groups and opinions struggle for voters' support, to couloirs where members of the ruling elite fight each other for the most precious posts – and the citizens get left out.

In the following chapters the Republic of Tatarstan is presented as a region governed continuously by an authoritarian clique using paradiplomacy as one of the tools for holding onto power .

2. Research design

To answer the research questions outlined in the previous chapter, the analysis of discourse of the President of Tatarstan has been chosen as the most revealing method. Since academic works do not cover the most contemporary developments of Tatarstan's politics (neither external, nor internal), it is necessary to rely on the statements of the Republic's officials, and on first-hand news published by local and regional media.

As Tatarstan has one of the most authoritarian regimes among the subjects of the Russian Federation⁹⁶ – itself an authoritarian state –, a lot of political decisions and procedures are in fact decided through informal channels, which are hardly (if) accessible from outside of the ruling elite. Besides, the President, Rustam Nurgaliyevich Minnikhanov, has been the undisputed head of the regime that has been de facto ruling Tatarstan since the end of the 1980s (Minnikhanov reached the top position in 2010, after the then Russian President Dmitry Medvedev had refused to appoint Minnikhanov's mentor and architect of the Tatarstani regime Mintimer Shaimev, who had governed the Republic since the 1980s, for another term⁹⁷). Therefore, analysing Minnikhanov's public addresses related to Turkey is the best way to uncover the character of Tatarstan's paradiplomatic relations to the Turkish Republic.

The Critical Discourse Analysis, as presented by Wodak⁹⁸ and to some extent van Tijn,⁹⁹ has been chosen to examine the speeches, because it concentrates on spotting hidden meanings and exercises of power in public appearances. The characteristic focus

⁹⁶ See, for example, Mikhailov, *Respublika Tatarstan*, Sharafutdinova, "Getting the 'Dough'," and "Karta glasnosti za mart 2009 – febral' 2010 goda", *Glasnost Defence Foundation*, April 21, 2010, <http://www.gdf.ru/map/> (accessed July 10, 2017).

⁹⁷ See, for example, Kinnosian, Nadir, "Post-Socialist Transition and Remaking the City: Political Construction of Heritage in Tatarstan," *Europe-Asia Studies* 64, No. 5 (July 2012): 879–901, Matsuzato, Kimitaka, "From Ethno-Bonapartism to Centralized *Caciquismo*: Characteristics and Origins of the Tatarstan Political Regime, 1990–2000," *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 17, No. 4 (December 2001): 43–77, and Williams, Christopher, "Tatar nation building since 1991: Ethnic mobilisation in historical perspective," *Journal on Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe* 10, No. 1 (2011): 94–123.

⁹⁸ Wodak, "Critical Discourse Analysis."

⁹⁹ Van Dijk, "Aims of Critical Discourse Analysis."

on speech (or other types of expression) as a tool of exerting power is especially useful in environments with limited freedom, such as the Russian Federation, and more specifically the Republic of Tatarstan.

The analysed speeches were divided into three groups differentiated by the time when they were issued. The first period starts after Turkey refused to join sanctions imposed on Russia by a number of countries lead by the members of the European Union and the United States after the Federation annexed Crimea, and ends after relations between Moscow and Ankara deteriorated due to a Russian fighter jet being shot down by Turkish air force for alleged violation of Turkish airspace near borders with Syria. The second phase, characterized by the conflict between Russia and Turkey, ends with the first personal meeting of Putin with Erdogan since the incident with the Russian fighter jet – a meeting that symbolized the turn of the mutual relations towards the better. The third, and last period ends with another violent incident in Turkey, the murder of Russian ambassador Andrei Karlov in Ankara, an event that thoroughly tested the commitment of the Turkish and Russian governments to cooperation. This framework allows the examination of Minnikhanov's statements within their contemporary context and thus spotting how the President of Tatarstan reflects the diplomatic developments in Moscow.

To analyse the developments in Minnikhanov's discourse, Youngman's approach was used:¹⁰⁰ each statement was coded as *diagnostic*, *motivational*, or *prognostic*, and then each of those areas was examined separately within each of the periods. This approach allows a systemic analysis of the main topics covered in Minnikhanov's addresses, and following the developments in time.

In this chapter, the Critical Discourse Analysis is presented as a concept and tool; the research method is then explained in greater detail, including a more thorough characterization of the analytic phases.

¹⁰⁰ Youngman, Mark, "Broader, vaguer, weaker: The evolving ideology of the Caucasus Emirate leadership," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 28 (2016): 1–23, <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09546553.2016.1229666>.

2.1 Critical Discourse Analysis

The Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was employed as the method to study the stance of the Tatarstani leader towards Turkey, because it allows analysing what image he wants his audiences to receive. Tatarstan's paradiplomacy remains to a large extent in a grey zone, outside of any transparent institutionalized channel. Under such circumstances, analysing public statements by the officials is the best option to get some insight into how the policies are made. However, public statements of the regime officials are not as much a source of information, but a means of controlling power. The Critical Discourse Analyses provides a tool to look behind the primary content of a speech and to discover how that speech is utilized in terms of exercising influence.

The Critical Discourse Analysis stems from realizing that power is imposed through a very wide range of means. For instance, American sociologists such as Skocpol, Canning and others stopped understanding the state as a narrow group of political elites, but as a much less visible and omnipotent actor, which has a much wider scope of tools to influence society than just the government. It can use policies like social care, education, religious policies, family policies, and employment among others.¹⁰¹ With such a wide scope of factors, it was evident that social issues are too multifaceted to be studied with the old set of methods. As Ruth Wodak wrote, “social problems are too complex to be analysed just linguistically or historically.”¹⁰² This is where the CDA steps in. Critically analysing speeches and other forms of communication within their political, social, and historical context allows the academician to understand the power aspects of those acts. Van Dijk explained that “powerful speakers may control at least some parts of the minds of recipients.”¹⁰³ This is the best explanation of how elites can exert power through seemingly harmless acts.

Wodak explained that language is a social phenomenon, which always carries meaning and is “always embedded in a social context and history.” Understood this

¹⁰¹ Kučera, Rudolf, “Politika,” in *Koncepty a dějiny: Proměny pojmů v současné historické vědě*, ed. Lucia Storchová et al., (Praha: Scriptorium, 2014): 137.

¹⁰² Wodak, “Critical Discourse Analysis”: 187.

¹⁰³ Van Dijk, “Aims of Critical Discourse Analysis”: 22.

way, language becomes a formative part of discourse or the means of interaction and is always “intertwined with social processes and interaction”.¹⁰⁴ The fact that language is an act in a social context has several consequences: first, discourse involves power and ideology; second, discourse is always historical, stemming from previous or concurrent events; third, each recipient of a given speech may interpret it differently, depending on their beliefs, knowledge of context and other factors – including academics analysing given speeches. Therefore, the scholars have to keep in mind that there is no “right” and conclusive interpretation.¹⁰⁵

All in all, this means that any speech or comparable act can have consequences and thus exert power. Speeches can be understood only in their context, but the context is multilayered and can itself be interpreted in various ways. Hence, there is no single interpretation and each interpretation stems from the interpreter's own experience, ideological basis, and knowledge. In van Dijk's words:

Among the descriptive, explanatory and practical aims of CDA-studies is the attempt to *uncover, reveal* or *disclose* what is implicit, hidden or otherwise not immediately obvious in relations of discursively enacted dominance or their underlying ideologies. That is, CDA specifically focuses on the strategies of *manipulation, legitimation, the manufacture of consent* and other discursive ways to influence the minds (and indirectly the actions) of people in the interest of the powerful [emphasis by van Dijk – author].¹⁰⁶

Van Dijk argued that scholars using Critical Discourse Analysis consciously choose an “oppositional stance *against the powerful and the elites*, and especially those who abuse of their power”¹⁰⁷ and went on to argue that CDA should explicitly follow the political agenda of standing up for the powerless and raising the question of ethics.

Evaluating the studied discourse from the perspective of wrong or right might not be directly opposed to Wodak's argument that there are no “right” or conclusive

¹⁰⁴ Wodak, “Critical Discourse Analysis”: 186.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*: 186-187.

¹⁰⁶ Van Dijk, “Aims of Critical Discourse Analysis”: 18.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*: 18.

interpretations, but with this approach, van Dijk might be asserting a role of power in his analyses which threatens to blunt the critical aspect of this method.

What does the “critical aspect” in the CDA stand for? Wodak explained that it did not mean assessing only the negative side of analysed material.¹⁰⁸ Critical analysis gauges the studied material in all its complexity, evaluating synchronous and asynchronous circumstances, weighing all possible explanations and refusing easy, noncomplex answers and solutions. It also means acknowledging one's own biases and ideological background and their possible influence on the conclusions and minimize their impact. That does not, however, mean separating those biases and beliefs – that is not possible –, on the contrary, it is necessary to consciously reflect them.

To sum up, while carrying out a Critical Discourse Analysis, we need to “theoretically and descriptively [...] explore which structures and strategies of text and talk to attend to in order to discover patterns of elite dominance or manipulation ‘in’ texts.”¹⁰⁹ Following this approach, this work will analyse speeches given by the President of the Republic of Tatarstan Rustam Minnikhanov that are related to Turkey. The analysis will reveal what Minnikhanov, as the undisputed political leader of Tatarstan, wants Tatarstani people and other of his audiences to believe regarding his position on relations with Turkey.

2.2 The Research Method

The Critical Discourse Analysis offers a chance to expose hidden meanings of statements, and the changing of international environment in which Tatarstan's paradiplomacy was taking place offers an opportunity to reveal its developments vis-à-vis the shifting position of Moscow towards Ankara. The two sharp turns in Russian relations to Turkey that happened within less than a year provided a background against which it is possible to analyse Minnikhanov's paradiplomatic discourse. Comparing the character of his comments in differing international conditions can show how the President of Tatarstan adapted his stance in relation to the contemporary position of the

¹⁰⁸ Wodak, “Critical Discourse Analysis.”: 186.

¹⁰⁹ Van Dijk, “Aims of Critical Discourse Analysis”: 19.

central government – and answer the question whether a region of an authoritarian federation can pursue its own independent paradiplomacy.

Division into phases

As mentioned above, for analytical reasons, the examined period is divided into three phases: pre-crisis, crisis, and restoration of relations. The analysed period starts after Turkey refused to join economic sanctions imposed on Russia by the European Union, the United States, and other countries in summer 2014,¹¹⁰ and ends with the attack on Russian ambassador to Turkey Andrei Karlov in December 2016.¹¹¹ The phases are defined in accord with developments of mutual relations between the Russian Federation and the Turkish Republic. The first turning point was the incident when Turkish army shot down Russian fighter jet Su-24 for alleged violation of Turkish airspace on the border with Syria, an event that sent the Russo-Turkish relations down a downward spiral.¹¹² The second turning point was identified as the first meeting of the heads of Russia and Turkey, presidents Putin and Erdogan, since the Su-24 incident, on August 8th, 2016, in Saint Petersburg.¹¹³

The pre-crisis period is characterized by expanding cooperation between the countries, especially in the energy field, as Turkey is virtually dependent on supplies of Russian fossil fuels, and Russian nuclear energy company Rosatom was building Turkey's first nuclear plant in Akkuyu.¹¹⁴ Turkey, on its part, was involved in Russia's

¹¹⁰ Onis, Ziya, and Suhnas Yilmaz, "Turkey and Russia in a shifting global order: cooperation, conflict and asymmetric interdependence in a turbulent region," *Third World Quarterly* (November 2015): 14.

¹¹¹ Bechev, Dmytar, "The murder of Russia's ambassador shows Turkey in the worst possible light," *LSE: EUROPP – European Politics and Policy Blog*, December 20, 2016, <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/europpblog/2016/12/20/turkey-russia-ambassador-murder-putin-erdogan/> (accessed May 26, 2017).

¹¹² "Turkey shoots down Russian warplane on Syria border," *BBC*, November 24, 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-34907983> (accessed July 10, 2017).

¹¹³ "Putin meets Erdogan for 1st time since downing of Russian jet," *Russia Today*, August 9, 2016, <https://www.rt.com/news/355173-erdogan-putin-first-meeting/> (accessed May 30, 2017).

¹¹⁴ Akturk, Sener, "The Crisis in Russian-Turkish Relations, 2008-2015," *Russian Analytical Digest* 11, No. 179 (February 2016): 3.

construction sector, with its firms working for example on projects related to the 2018 World Football Championship, and was becoming more and more popular as a summer destination for Russian tourists.¹¹⁵ Granted, there had always been differences between Ankara and Moscow – their interests had been clashing for example in Caucasus and Central Asia, regions that Russia has been considering its sphere of influence (the “Near Abroad”), while Turkey has been growing its ties with Muslim and Turkic peoples in tune with its policies of increasing its influence over culturally close nations and ethnies – a policy often termed as “neo-Ottoman”.¹¹⁶ Despite that, Ankara and Moscow had proven their ability to overcome these issues and find a modus operandi acceptable for both sides. Turkish firm stance on the need for Bashar al-Assad to leave the government of Syria, however, had clashed hard with Russia's support to him. The relations had been deteriorating and the climax came when the Turkish army shot down the Russian Su-24 on November 24, 2015.

The ties between Russia and Turkey started to cool down already before the incident, but the shooting down of the Russian fighter jet was the clear beginning of an open conflict between Moscow and Ankara. The second phase, therefore, is defined by very hostile positions of both these governments towards each other. The Russian government introduced sanctions on import of Turkish goods, and suspended passenger flights connecting the two countries.¹¹⁷ Putin spoke of Turkish government directly supporting terrorism and ruled out future cooperation with Erdogan's government.¹¹⁸

The third phase is characterized by a normalization of the relations. The meeting of Erdogan and Putin in August 2016 was not such a clear breaking point as the shooting down of the fighter jet, as Erdogan had reached out to Putin with an apology

¹¹⁵ Bechev, Dimitar, “Russian–Turkish Relations In Crisis,” *Russian Analytical Digest* 11, No. 179 (February, 2016): 9.

¹¹⁶ Kanli, Yusuf, “Zero problems...” *Hurriet Daily News*, April 24, 2017, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/zero-problems.aspx?pageID=449&nID=112333&NewsCatID=425> (accessed May 29, 2017).

¹¹⁷ Bechev, “Russian–Turkish Relations In Crisis”: 9.

¹¹⁸ “Turkey shoots down Russian warplane on Syria border,” *BBC*, November 24, 2015.

already in June and since then, the relations slowly started to warm up.¹¹⁹ However, it was during this meeting that the major steps towards normalization of mutual contacts were made. Moreover, in the run-up to that high-level meeting, Minnikhanov had not publicly commented on Turkey and Tatarstan's (or Russia's) relations to it, so the question of specifying one exact date is rather theoretical anyway. Therefore, the publicly most visible moment of reconciliation between Ankara and Moscow was chosen. From that moment, the collaboration of Turkey and Russia started to slowly deepen again, with Moscow slowly lifting the sanctions on trade with Turkey. For the understanding of this stage of the relations it is important to note that Turkey has actually gotten into an unfavourable position with regards to Moscow, as the limits on mutual trade and flow of Russian tourists highlighted how unbalanced the mutual relation is, especially due to Ankara's dependence on cooperation with Russia in the energy sector.

The public murder of ambassador Karlov during a vernissage in Ankara, which was directly linked to Russian involvement in Syria,¹²⁰ has for the purposes of the analysis been chosen as the end of the restorative phase. The violent incident that could have had the momentum to break fragile diplomatic ties did not threaten the continuation of the Russo-Turkish rapprochement, suggesting that the most difficult stage of restoring ties was over. It is true that the relations had not yet fully normalized, and as of summer 2017, not even all of the Russian sanctions have been lifted. However, the aftermath of the attack has proven the will of both sides to continue the reconciliation.

These turbulent events provide a backdrop against which the stance of the President of the Republic of Tatarstan is examined. All those developments offer the

¹¹⁹ Luhn, Alec, and Ian Black, "Erdogan has apologised for downing of Russian jet, Kremlin says," *The Guardian*, June 27, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jun/27/kremlin-says-erdogan-apologises-russian-jet-turkish> (accessed May 30, 2017).

¹²⁰ Bechev, DMITAR, "The murder of Russia's ambassador shows Turkey in the worst possible light," *LSE: EUROPP – European Politics and Policy Blog*, December 20, 2016.

opportunity to compare Minnikhanov's positions in time and to reveal how he reflected the foreign policies of the centre.

Dissecting Minnikhanov's speeches

Within the examined period, a total of fourteen speeches given on ten different occasions were analysed. The aim was to analyse all the speeches related to Turkey and Tatarstan's relations to it that Rustam Minnikhanov gave during that time. The addresses were researched in Russian and in English, omitting speeches that were issued in Tatar and not published in another language, due to linguistic reasons (the research has not brought a significant number of them, although some of the videos covering the events, on which Minnikhanov spoke about Turkey in Russian, contain short segments of him speaking in Tatar). Each of the analysed speeches was reflected by local media. The reliability of the information was verified by linking each report of a speech to an officially published press release by the government of Tatarstan on the official domain <http://tatarstan.ru> (and related sites such as <http://president.tatarstan.ru> and <http://prav.tatarstan.ru>). Some of the speeches (or parts of them) were published by local media on the video-sharing website <http://youtube.com>, while most of the videos containing Minnikhanov's addresses were also published in the official press releases.

It is necessary to be very careful while using social media content (such as, in this case, YouTube videos) as a primary source of analysis, but in contemporary world reflecting possible new sources and channels of information is needed. Besides, the pool of what is considered primary sources has been growing constantly for a long time already. Horský and Šima, for example, presented primary sources for studying the past as “anything from which it is possible to get some knowledge about the past.”¹²¹ They added that, traditionally, it was texts and material artefacts that had been considered as worthy primary sources. However, innovations in historiography have been bringing

¹²¹ Horský, Pavel and Karel Šima, “Pramen,” in *Koncepty a dějiny: Proměny pojmů v současné historické vědě*, ed. Lucia Storchová et al., (Praha: Scriptorium, 2014): 15.

new ideas and along with them new sources.¹²² Horský and Šima didn't specifically mention Internet sources and social media. Nevertheless, the tendency towards accepting new channels as possible sources of understanding is apparent, and modern technologies should not be left out. Moreover, some researches have proven that the use of YouTube videos as sources of analysis is on the rise in varied fields from medicine to education to technology to arts and social sciences.¹²³ The use of videos containing political speeches was specifically mentioned as a useful source for political sciences where other sources are lacking.¹²⁴ Snelson found that a significant part of studies she analysed “employed a simple content analysis approach during analysis of YouTube content.”¹²⁵ All in all, there are reasons to accept videos published online as primary sources.

A problem that was encountered during the research of the speeches is the uneven distribution of speeches across the phases. There are eight speeches issued on six occasions (three speeches were delivered during one visit to Turkey, which is considered to be one event, but the addresses need to be differentiated) in the first phase, and five speeches delivered on three occasions (two speeches were issued during the visit of the Turkish Minister of Economy to Alabuga, as well as during the visit of the Turkish Prime Minister to Kazan) in the third phase. Only one address related to Turkey was delivered during the second – crisis – period. This obviously constitutes a problem, but it is necessary to work with the data that are available. Besides, the fact that while in the twelve months separating the first and last address of the first period, Minnikhanov had spoken of Turkey on seven occasions, and in the five months of the

¹²² Ibid.: 15.

¹²³ Kousha, Kayvan, and Mike Thelwall, “Motivations for Citing YouTube Videos in the Academic Publications: A Contextual Analysis” (Paper presented at the 17th International Conference on Science and Technology Indicators (STI), Montreal, Quebec, Canada, September, 2012), Kousha, Kayvan, Mike Thelwall, and Mahshid Abdoli, “The role of online videos in research communication: A content analysis of YouTube videos cited in academic publications,” *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology* 63, No. 9 (2012): 1710–1727, and Snelson, Chareen, “YouTube Across the Disciplines: A Review of the Literature,” *MERLOT Journal of Online Learning and Teaching* 7, No. 1, (March 2011): 159–169.

¹²⁴ Kousha, Thelwall, “Motivations for Citing YouTube Videos”: 494.

¹²⁵ Snelson, “YouTube Across the Disciplines”: 166.

third phase on three occasions, while in the more than eight months of the second phase he spoke of the relation to Turks only once, has its own informative value, too.

The research followed Youngman's approach to studying the development of ideology of Chechen separatist and radical Islamist leader Dokka Umarov, because it offers a refined framework for analysing different aspects of speeches and following their developments through time.¹²⁶ Hence, each statement or sentence from all of the examined speeches was ascribed to one of the three analytical categories, based on its purpose: first, *diagnostic* or descriptive, containing definitions of the character of Tatarstan's relations and links to Turkey; second, *motivational*, where audiences are directly addressed and encouraged or invited to act; and third, *prognostic*, containing advocating for specific policies and definitions of goals and aims of the paradiplomatic ties to Turkey.

In accordance with the research questions, the research approach does not analyse Tatarstani paradiplomacy itself, neither does it attempt to characterize the Republic's paradiplomacy in general. Within the research, speeches of Rustam Minnikhanov are studied to reveal the relation of Tatarstan's paradiplomacy to the diplomacy of the Russian Federation.

¹²⁶ Youngman, "Broader, vaguer, weaker": 5.

3. Analysis

The analysis focuses on the speeches given by the President of the Republic of Tatarstan Rustam Nurgaliyevich Minnikhanov. However, the paradiplomacy of Tatarstan takes place within the Russian legal framework. In general, the Constitution of the Russian Federation states that the international and external economic relations should be coordinated within the joint jurisdiction of the Federation and its subjects, but due to its bilateral agreement with the Russian government, Tatarstan has had a special position – the agreement, as Tavares pointed out, “recognized [Tatarstan's] right to develop its own international relations in certain fields, in particular, in foreign trade.”¹²⁷ This means that Tatarstan has the right to pursue some paradiplomatic goals on its own. Due to the authoritarian character of political life in Tatarstan, the analysis of speeches given by its President is the best way to examine Tatarstan's paradiplomacy.

3.1 *First phase: Pre-crisis cooperation*

The first phase is characterized by mutual cooperation, supported by all parties as well as both state-level governments (in Moscow and Ankara), seen as developing in the right direction. In the grand scheme, it is a time when Russian foreign policy is defined by its clashes with the European Union and United States after the invasion of Ukraine and annexation of Crimea. Though a vocal partner and defender of the Crimean Tatars (due to the ethnic, cultural, religious, historic, and linguistic bonds Turks share with the Volga Tatars inhabiting Tatarstan and surrounding republics), Turkey steered clear of any actions against the Russian Federation. Ankara voiced concern over the fate of the Crimean Tatars and “strongly condemned” Russian involvement in Crimea and Ukraine, but hasn't joined the Western sanctions – choosing rather to alienate its European allies.

¹²⁷ Tavares, *Paradiplomacy: Cities and States*: 77–78.

Diagnostic - Ties of Tatarstan and Turkey: Not only, but most of all economy

Within this period, when collaboration was the prime tune of Russo-Turkish relations and Ankara was eager to exploit the market that had suddenly closed to European (especially food) importers, economic cooperation seemed to be the main topic of Rustam Minnikhanov's contacts with Turkey. Out of the eight speeches analysed¹²⁸, six were given at economy- or business related occasions, such as meeting with the Turkish economic minister, meeting with members of an association uniting Turkish entrepreneurs in Russia, or attending a business forum in Turkey.

Speaking of the importance of the relation with Turkey, Minnikhanov stressed the strength of mutual trade and the number of joint ventures and investments:

Turkey is one of our principal foreign partners. It occupies the first place in terms of quantity of joint ventures with foreign capital; there are now 280 of them in the Republic with the participation of Turkish businesses. The volume of Turkish investments makes up one and a half billion USD. The volume of commodity turnover between Tatarstan and Turkey last year exceeded 650 million USD. A quarter of all foreign investment in the Republic of Tatarstan is due to the Turkish Republic.¹²⁹

Indeed, in 2013, the commodity turnover between Tatarstan and Turkey added up to more than 659 million USD, but that was the peak. According to Tatstat (the Territorial Organ of Federal Service of State Statistics for the Republic of Tatarstan), the following year (at the end of which this speech took place) the value started to trail off at 509 million, and continued to drop to 356 million in 2015,¹³⁰ the year at the end of which the Russo-Turkish crisis broke out. These numbers oscillate between 2,2 and 2,5 % of

¹²⁸ Three of these speeches took place on different occasions during one event, Minnikhanov's visit to Kocaeli province in Turkey, and therefore are labelled as "6a", "6b" and "6c"

¹²⁹ Speech 1, November 27, 2014, Moscow. Sources of each speech are listed in the bibliography.

¹³⁰ *Vneshnyaya trgovlya Respubliki Tatarstan po stranam*, the Territorial Organ of Federal Service of State Statistics for the Republic of Tatarstan, http://tatstat.gks.ru/wps/wcm/connect/rosstat_ts/tatstat/ru/statistics/foreign_trade/ (accessed May 10, 2017).

Tatarstan's external trade, and place Turkey between 13th and 15th position among trade partners.¹³¹

In the context of the statistics, the words of Turkish economy minister Nihat Zeybekci, delivered at a meeting with Minnikhanov just days after this speech (at the event of Minnikhanov's second analysed speech), are interesting. He said that Tatarstan was important in fulfilling the government's task to raise trade with Russia to 100 billion USD.¹³² Tatarstan's hundreds of millions seem rather insignificant next to this number; note, however, that those numbers do not necessarily signify a lack of Tatarstan's importance in the trade between Russia and Turkey. Russo-Turkish trade relations are burdened by Turkish dependence on the import of Russian fossil fuels, which constitute the major part of their mutual trade.¹³³

Although in the rest of the analysed speeches Minnikhanov did not go into such a detail, he would repeat that

today, 26 % of foreign investment, it is Turkey. Turkey is today a strategic partner for Tatarstan¹³⁴

on the occasion of signing a treaty on the cooperation of Tatarstani and Turkish parliaments half a year later.

Regarding trade, the statistics suggest that Minnikhanov's talk of Turkey as a “principal partner” might be overblown. Turkish investment in Tatarstan is, however, another story, and its significance is tangible.

Emphasizing Turkey's importance as an economic partner, or respectively the potential of Tatarstan as a place for Turkish investment, was not a singular occurrence – on the contrary, priority given to economic and business issues was rather typical of Minnikhanov's speeches. After all, as he did not forget to point out while speaking to

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Mironov, Mikhail, “Khronika sobytiy,” Press service of the President of RT, Official Website of the Government of the Republic of Tatarstan, December 1, 2014, <http://president.tatarstan.ru/news/view/123500> (accessed May 6, 2017).

¹³³ Onis, Ziya, and Suhnas Yilmaz, “Turkey and Russia in a shifting global order: cooperation, conflict and asymmetric interdependence in a turbulent region,” *Third World Quarterly* (November 2015):

¹³⁴ Speech 5, April 16, 2015, Kazan.

the association of Turkish businessmen in Russia, the scope of the relations between his Republic and Turkey is wide:

Tatarstani-Turkish relations are actively developed in the fuel and energy sector, petrochemicals, automotive industry, woodworking, glass industry, construction, and the sphere of services, tourism, and many other fields.¹³⁵

It is worth noting that the “relations are actively developed” in a lot of industries and economic sectors, but other matters seem to be side-lined.

Minnikhanov had not been omitting culture and cultural ties binding Tatarstan to Turkey, though. During the ceremony of honouring the mayor of Istanbul, Kadir Topbas, he appreciated the cooperation:

For many years, we have been successfully cooperating with Turkey in many areas: culture, intergovernmental and interregional cooperation, healthcare, education, sport, and tourism. We have all the options to beneficially develop our cooperation.¹³⁶

And speaking to Turkish businessmen in Moscow, he made a remark about the usefulness of close languages:

[Regarding] the proximity of our languages, we have a lot of people who can understand Turkish, and a person who knows the Turkish language can learn [Tatar] quickly - here, Mr. General Consul, a few days ago, addressed investors in the Tatar language. It shows that it is also some correspondence that allows us to quickly communicate.¹³⁷

Minnikhanov placed cultural bonds or linguistic proximity in a similar context on several occasions. During this cooperative period he mentioned religion as a link tying Tatarstan with Turkey only along with both of these topics, and only once – in fact only responding to the words of the governor of the Turkish region he was visiting, Kocaeli, Hasan Basri Guzeloglu:

¹³⁵ Speech 1, November 27, 2014, Moscow.

¹³⁶ Speech 4, March 26, 2015, Kazan.

¹³⁷ Speech 3, February 10, 2015, Moscow.

Mr. Governor, you have already spoken about our history, proximity of our languages and religions, our cultural relations - they are fundamental for the options of widening our contacts.¹³⁸

Visiting Kocaeli, Minnikhanov actually implicitly touched upon the religious link also while speaking of Putin and Erdogan's meeting at the occasion of the opening of the Moscow Cathedral Mosque, appreciating that

There is Turkish merit in the opening of the mosque. Before, I had been told that there had been problems with the construction of the mosque. I asked Turkish specialists for help. Thanks to the brotherly help, we have built and opened the beautiful ensemble of the mosque in Moscow.¹³⁹

In the last statement, he implies that it was the religious bond connecting Tatars and Turks that allowed for Minnikhanov's help with bringing the "Turkish specialists" to solve the problem with the construction of a mosque.

One thing that connects all of the above-cited statements about cultural, linguistic, and religious bonds (and is typical for a strong majority of the statements in general) is that they are mentioned as an opportunity for further deepening of cooperation in the economic field. Language proximity allows easier communication with investors, and shared religion opens opportunities in construction. The collaboration in culture, healthcare, education, and other fields provides a good basis for

¹³⁸ Speech 6b, October 15, 2015, Kocaeli.

¹³⁹ Oktay, Sahin, "Rustam Minnikhanov: Tatarstan i Turtsiya dve bratskie strany," *Anadolu Agency Ruskiy*, October 15, 2015, <http://aa.com.tr/ru/%D0%BF%D0%BE%D0%BB%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%B8%D0%BA%D0%B0%D1%80%D1%83%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B0%D0%BC-%D0%BC%D0%B8%D0%BD%D0%BD%D0%B8%D1%85%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%BE%D0%B2-%D1%82%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B0%D1%80%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B0%D0%BD-%D0%B8-%D1%82%D1%83%D1%80%D1%86%D0%B8%D1%8F-%D0%B4%D0%B2%D0%B5-%D0%B1%D1%80%D0%B0%D1%82%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%B8%D0%B5-%D1%81%D1%82%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%BD%D1%8B/445340> (accessed May 7, 2017).

“beneficial” development of the mutual collaboration. In Minnikhanov's speeches, all those links seem to be there to be utilized for profit.

Among the links tying Tatarstan with Turkey, which Minnikhanov had liked to point out, are the Plenipotentiary Representative office of the Republic of Tatarstan in Istanbul and Turkey's Consular Office in Kazan (which he mentioned on three occasions), and direct flight connection between Turkey and Tatarstan, which he praised in six of the analysed speeches:

In order for our contacts to be systemic and permanent, it is obviously Turkish Airlines who very seriously provide the services. They transport our passengers, our Turkish passengers, they give us an opportunity to actively cooperate, I would say on a daily basis.¹⁴⁰

The frequency with which he had been bringing this topic up suggests he considered it a serious accomplishment and a strong asset. The presence of respective representations in Istanbul and in Kazan was also used as a proof of Tatarstan's importance and weight. As such, both of these issues (repeatedly mentioned alongside each other) are important for the home audience as well as for the direct listeners of the addresses. Where direct flights to Turkey offered the residents of Tatarstan comfort on the way to a popular (if not the most popular) holiday destination for Russian citizens, the existence of the representations allowed Minnikhanov to show his strong position.

One thing Minnikhanov values highly is personal meetings and travelling to strengthen ties. He also considered the relation between presidents Putin and Erdogan a crucial condition for the development of Tatarstani-Turkish relations:

I think about the factors that come together today: first, the Russian-Turkish relations. The friendly relationship of the heads of our states is a very important factor. And any activities from the Russian side are supported by the government of the Russian state; any activities from the Turkish side are supported by the government of the Turkish Republic. That the heads of our

¹⁴⁰ Speech 3, February 10, 2015, Moscow.

states have not only a trade relationship, but also a comradeship is felt at the meetings. It is also a very important factor.¹⁴¹

Minnikhanov mentioned the importance of a good personal relationship between the heads of both states first during an address to Turkish businessmen in Moscow in February 2015, and then returned to the idea two months later, speaking at the occasion of signing a memorandum on the cooperation between the parliaments of Turkey and Tatarstan, reminding the audience:

And you know the beautiful relationship of our President Vladimirovich Putin and Erdogan.¹⁴²

In retrospect, it is easy to think of those words as of a certain irony. But in the middle of October 2015, just over a month before the Turkish military shot down the Russian Su-24 near Syria-Turkey border, in the latest analysed speech from this first period, Minnikhanov's diction had changed from warmly personal to more broadly diplomatic:

Cooperation between Russia and Turkey is successfully developing in various fields. This year we celebrate 95 years of diplomatic relations between our countries. We are grateful to the governments of the Russian Federation and Turkish Republic for the development of beneficial conditions for the advancement of interregional relations.¹⁴³

In light of Russian involvement in Syria, bilateral relations between Ankara and Moscow were deteriorating rather quickly, and Minnikhanov, on a visit to Turkey, visibly felt the need to thread lightly. Instead of talking of “beautiful” “comradeship” between Putin and Erdogan, who were already exchanging threats over alleged violations of Turkish airspace by Russian jets¹⁴⁴, the Tatarstani President emphasized gratefulness to both heads of states for providing a good basis for his policies, and long-term diplomatic relations and cooperation.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Speech 5, April 16, 2015, Kazan.

¹⁴³ Speech 6c, October 15, 2015, Kocaeli.

¹⁴⁴ Shaheem, Kareem, “Turkey 'cannot endure' Russian violation of airspace, president says,” *The Guardian*, October 6, 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/oct/06/nato-chief-jens-stoltenberg-russia-turkish-airspace-violations-syria> (accessed May 29, 2017).

Let's remember that within the 95 years Minnikhanov mentioned, Russia and Turkey had found themselves on the opposing sides of the Iron Curtain and within competing military alliances. However, this was clearly not his point – Minnikhanov could hardly try to conceal that there had been conflicts between the USSR and Turkey. The head of Tatarstan chose to implicitly emphasize cooperation, steadiness, and building on the foundations both countries had been creating for a long time, possibly despite all disagreements. He selected those careful words because he knew that for Tatarstan, a lot would be at stake in case the worsening of Russo-Turkish relations spilled into a more significant conflict.

Careful threading around problematic international topics appears to be Minnikhanov's strategy. In the span of this period, only in one speech did he mention the geopolitical “situation” of the Russian Federation:

Today, in the situation, there are some relations between countries, sanctions and other positions, one of the most prestigious parliaments comes to Tatarstan, participates in the work of our parliament, signs this memorandum, it's not for free, it is a very serious relation to Russia, and at least as serious relation to Tatarstan [RM smiles – author]. We are grateful to the government of the Turkish Republic, to the President, to the Prime Minister, but also to Mr. Speaker. He said ambiguously: ‘I should have been here before’ [RM smiles – author], and it is a serious claim. Well, we will work more actively, and today Turkey is both a very serious market and partner for Tatarstan.¹⁴⁵

Unlike in the previous excerpt, where we only deduce the reasons for his changed rhetoric, in this case it is very clear what he is talking about. However, the choice of expressions hints at certain uneasiness talking about it: “Today, in *the situation*”; “*Some relations* between countries”; “*Sanctions and other positions*”. Minnikhanov, on the occasion of signing the inter-parliamentary memorandum, appreciates the arrival of the Speaker of the Turkish parliament, despite the standoff between Russia and the West that followed Russia's annexation of Crimea – implicitly acknowledging he realized that

¹⁴⁵ Speech 5, April 16, 2015, Kazan.

Turkey would be criticized by its Western allies for this step. However, even Minnikhanov's smiles point towards a certain nervousness while opening a sore, “high” international policy topic.

Speeches analysed within this phase showed that Tatarstan's relation to Turkey was not characterized only by the trade exchange and number of joint ventures – Minnikhanov spoke of cultural and linguistic proximity, too. However, most of the bonds connecting the Republic to Turkey were mentioned as an opportunity to further the economic collaboration. Avoiding conflict issues in the links between Russia and Turkey, and the world in general, is associated with this – any clashes only complicate mutually beneficial cooperation, and thus are better off avoided.

Motivational - Tatarstan: Investor's promised land

When addressing specific audiences – be it businessmen or politicians directly in the same room or hall, or the public in general – Minnikhanov was striving to send positive images in the analysed speeches. As shown before, the head of Tatarstan prefers to avoid controversies and concentrates rather on the forward-looking aspects. The most direct addresses were aimed at luring investors and trade partners to work with Tatarstan, or at politicians to deepen the collaboration.

Travelling to Turkey, Minnikhanov feels a lot more “at home” compared to talking about problematic international issues. For instance, visiting the Turkish Minister of Economy Nihat Zeybekci in Ankara, he remarked:

In any town to which we've arrived, we were greeted with full understanding and support, that's our feeling and we are very grateful. And that is valid for today's meeting, too.¹⁴⁶

During his visit of the Kocaeli province, he expressed a similar feeling. After all, such expressions are not out of the ordinary. For example, Kadir Topbas, the mayor of Istanbul, receiving an honorary medal in Kazan, said that his visit was not only friendly,

¹⁴⁶ Speech 2, December 1, 2014, Ankara.

but downright within family, as he had always been awaited in Kazan by people who were close to him.¹⁴⁷

Minnikhanov was often expressing gratefulness both to his hosts for inviting and hosting him, and to his guests for coming to Tatarstan, which is well within the norm of diplomatic ceremonial. Repeatedly, he showed also gratitude to the presidents of both Russia and Turkey, as shown above, but on three occasions, Minnikhanov appreciated also specifically the work of Turkish government, as represented by its ministers or directly by president Erdogan.

When it come to enticing his audiences, Minnikhanov emphasized he “really [liked] to meet representatives of Turkish business”,¹⁴⁸ and pointed out what a “hard-working nation” Turkey is.¹⁴⁹ An even stronger hint at the cooperative resources to be tapped had been the notion of Turkey as a “brotherly nation”, repeated in five of the analysed speeches.¹⁵⁰

On two occasions, both times while speaking to entrepreneurs, the President of Tatarstan concluded his address with “*Tesekkur ederim*” – “thank you” in Turkish.¹⁵¹ This cannot be viewed as a gesture stemming from the linguistic or cultural proximity, as the Tatar way of saying it is far from the Turkish. However, it is apparently meant to be a friendly gesture demonstrating the open and welcoming environment that awaits the entrepreneurs in Tatarstan.

The Tatarstani entrepreneurial environment is not only welcoming to the “brotherly” Turkish businessmen; Minnikhanov also presented the Republic as a well-developed region with good infrastructure. Speaking in Kocaeli, he invited the participants of a business conference:

¹⁴⁷ Speech 4, March 26, 2015, Kazan.

¹⁴⁸ Speech 1, November 27, 2014, Moscow.

¹⁴⁹ Speech 6b, October 15, 2015, Kocaeli.

¹⁵⁰ Speech 1, November 27, 2014, Moscow; Speech 4, March 26, 2015, Kazan; Speech 5, April 16, 2015, Kazan; Speech 6a, October 14, 2015; Speech 6b, October 15, 2015, Kocaeli.

¹⁵¹ Speech 1, November 27, 2014, Moscow; Speech 6c, October 15, 2015, Kocaeli.

Possibilities for the development of business relations are tremendous. The Turkish companies working in our Republic are a proof of that. We need to use the economic potential for further cooperation. Tatarstan is one of the leading industrial developed regions of Russian Federation. [...]

Dear ladies and gentlemen, we are interested in Turkish companies interested in businesses in the Russian Federation. Choose the Republic of Tatarstan. We have the infrastructure, we have good conditions for the organization of business. We will be glad for the widening of relations with the business circles of the Kocaeli province. I invite you to cooperate with the Republic of Tatarstan.¹⁵²

Attending a meeting of Turkish businessmen in Moscow, the President went into more detail, stressing again that:

Tatarstan is one of the leading developed regions of the Russian Federation. We extract and process oil, develop petro-chemistry, produce airplanes, helicopters, cars, engineering products. More than 50 % of our industrial production is exported. Special attention is given to innovations; it is the Special Economic Zone Alabuga, Special Economic Zone Innopolis, industrial parks, techno-parks, engineering centres. We work on the development of nano- and biotechnologies, production of composite materials, robotics and other fields.¹⁵³

It is clear that Minnikhanov wanted to attract companies operating in attractive, modern fields that are more prestigious than the heavy industries for which Tatarstan is better known. That is why he, next to petrochemical and automotive industries, mentioned areas such as robotics and nanotechnology. Moreover, to specifically assure investors, he presented the Republic as a solid and reliable partner, who paid its dues:

There are a lot of bankers, and for bankers, credit history is very important. We have a very good credit history. Hundred years ago, and today as well.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵² Speech 6c, October 15, 2015, Kocaeli.

¹⁵³ Speech 1, November 27, 2014, Moscow.

¹⁵⁴ Speech 3, February 10, 2015, Moscow.

Other options for the investors were, according to one of the speeches, provided by big sporting events organized in Tatarstan:

A good opportunity to realize business projects opens with the organization of important mass sporting events in our Republic. Last year, Kazan hosted the Summer Universiade with the participation of more than 160 countries and twelve thousand participants. Next year we organize the World Aquatic Championship with two hundred countries. In 2018, there are matches of the Football World Championship. We invite you all for next year's swimming world championship, and of course also for football, which you love just as much as we do [RM smiles – author].¹⁵⁵

Such events are a significant component of Tatarstan's paradiplomacy and self-presentation in Russia and abroad. Despite that, Minnikhanov only mentioned them once in this period,¹⁵⁶ and moreover, hosting of these events is presented more as an opportunity for Turkish construction companies than as a prestigious accomplishment.

All in all, attracting investors and entrepreneurs to Tatarstan is one of the main topics of Minnikhanov's analysed speeches from this period. He presented the Republic as modern, reliable, highly developed, and capable of providing infrastructure even for modern and highly technical industries, as well as a friendly place culturally close to Turkey.

Prognostic - Making Tatarstan international

On the general level, speeches analysed in this period showed that Minnikhanov almost always remembered to mention that his aim was to strengthen friendship and cooperation between the Russian Federation and Turkish Republic, through the Republic of Tatarstan. The President mentioned this in all but one of the addresses examined in this phase. While he repeatedly spoke of the development of interregional relations, he also often implicitly put Tatarstan in a more state-like context and in some cases on the level of Turkey's even partner.

¹⁵⁵ Speech 1, November 27, 2014, Moscow.

Minnikhanov also frequently spoke of successful examples of past projects, outcomes of cooperation, and the importance of personal meetings in pushing projects forward. Speaking of those topics, he not only described them in the past tense as an illustration of the character of the Tatarstani-Turkish relations, as examined above; he also used them to advocate for the continuation of his policies and as a proof that he is leading the Republic successfully.

Mentioning the reasons why Turkey is an important partner, the head of Tatarstan stressed that:

Turkey is today a very dynamic and developing country. Our partner.

[...] in trade and economic relations it is also a crucial partner.¹⁵⁷

Those sentences were not only a way to make the direct audiences among the Turks and specifically Turkish investors feel comfortable. He emphasized this on various occasions and particularly the event from which the sentences above are taken, a meeting with the Speaker of the Turkish parliament after representatives of Turkish and Tatarstani parliaments signed a memorandum on “further extension of comprehensive cooperation” – an event not directly related to business. These statements are addressed also to the Tatarstani public, to whom the cooperation with Turkey needs to be presented not only through cultural, linguistic, or religious links, as almost half of the population of the Republic is ethnically Russian. Moreover, during one of his visits to Turkey (most likely shortly before addressing a business forum), Minnikhanov pointed out that

Business is the basis and foundation for all Tatars.¹⁵⁸

This way, he again creates an image of an entrepreneurial republic.

It has been already mentioned that on repeated occasions, Minnikhanov pointed out the importance of meetings as a successful tool for the deepening of the mutual relationship:

¹⁵⁷ Speech 5, April 16, 2015, Kazan.

¹⁵⁸ Speech 6b, October 15, 2015, Kocaeli, speaking to governor of Kocaeli. On the same day he addressed a business conference Match4Industry.

A serious impulse for the development of cooperation was the arrivals of the President of Turkey in 2009, the Prime Minister of Turkey in 2011, and of many Turkish ministers and provincial governors to Tatarstan during their visits to Russia. Three years ago, we hosted the meeting of the Russian-Turkish intergovernmental commission on trade and economic cooperation. Last year saw a successful Russian-Turkish public forum in Kazan. [...]

I have repeatedly visited Turkey. Just this year I have been to Antalya, Mersin, Adana; in August this year I participated in the ceremony of the inauguration of the President of Turkey Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Literally next week I plan to visit Turkey with a Russian delegation in order to take part in the meeting of the High-Level [Russian-Turkish] Cooperation Council managed by the heads of our states.¹⁵⁹

In this address given in Moscow at the end of November 2014, the President expressed his belief that the development of Tatarstan's beneficial relations with Turkey had been sparked by the visits of high-level Turkish politicians, and were further advanced by the organization of meetings in Kazan and Minnikhanov's active travelling and hand-shaking. He put it very clearly, saying:

If someone thinks that we had met two times and big projects were done, he is very wrong. It is necessary to work, meet, communicate a lot, and only after all this, the results will come.¹⁶⁰

This way, Minnikhanov was showing the hard work he and his team had been putting in and that it had not been all about ceremonies and travelling. He presented himself as the active driver of the cooperation that would be bearing its fruits later. Furthermore, there were not only projects to be finished in the future – Minnikhanov was also keen to prove that his policies were working:

I see real results, important projects, big investments, successful factories. [...] On every visit and meeting we are very warmly welcomed, and thanks to our brothers from Kocaeli who invited us, and the serious work that awaits

¹⁵⁹ Speech 1, November 27, 2014, Moscow.

¹⁶⁰ Speech 3, February 10, 2015, Moscow.

us tomorrow, and then again, our meeting gives a new impulse to our relations.¹⁶¹

“The meeting [gave] a new impulse” to the relation which would bring results after all the “serious work that awaits” them would have been done – just like in the previous cases, where Minnikhanov saw “real results, important projects, big investments [and] successful factories”. Analysing those topics, we find out that Minnikhanov talked of the strengthening of trade and economic relations between the Republic of Tatarstan and Turkey four times, the same number of occasions as on which he mentioned the value of personal contacts for the development of Tatarstani-Turkish partnership, and also pointed out his own personal travels four times.

Although the gist of the relations, all the projects, and “beneficial cooperation” lay in trade relations and investments, and although other fields of contact and collaboration seemed to be either side-tracked or utilized to enhance economic ties, Minnikhanov appreciated the cultural links between Tatarstan and Turkey, too. Hosting the mayor of Istanbul and president of international organization United Cities and Local Governments Kadir Topbas, he awarded him a medal “for merits in the development of local self-government in the Republic of Tatarstan” and for “fruitful cooperation in the field of local self-government, for the input in the development of international relations between Kazan and Istanbul”.¹⁶² The event had a highly ceremonial tone and although economic aspects of the relations were mentioned, Minnikhanov extensively spoke about cultural cooperation:

I welcome you here in Kazan and I am delighted to present you today with the medal of the Republic of Tatarstan for merits in the development of local self-government. For promotion of joint Tatarstan-Turkish projects and support to the Tatar Diaspora. With your help a memorial to a great Tatar poet Gabdulla Tuqay was revealed in Istanbul and a park named after him. And also the Tatar house in the museum complex of Turkic-speaking

¹⁶¹ Speech 6a, October 14, 2015.

¹⁶² “Kazan' igraet vse bolshuyu rol' na mezhdunarodnoy arene - mer Stambula,” *Information agency Tatar-Inform*, March 26, 2015, <http://www.tatar-inform.ru/news/2015/03/26/447564/> (accessed May 7, 2017).

nations in the Topkapi Park. Your regular participation in the Sabantuy celebration¹⁶³ in Istanbul and help with the organization of that celebration, days of culture of Tatarstan, and other events, bring an invaluable contribution to the fortification of warm relations between our nations. In 2014, thanks to your support, the wonderful 'Istanbul' Park has appeared in Kazan.¹⁶⁴

This was not the only event at which the President spoke of cultural projects, but at other occasions, he framed the topic more squarely as an opportunity to further the economic exchange:

For many years we have been successfully cooperating in the sphere of culture. Intergovernmental and inter-municipal fraternity in education, healthcare, sport. The organization of days of the Republic of Tatarstan and Sabantuy in Turkey has become traditional.

The events within the year of Kazan as the Culture and Arts Capital of the Turkic World ended in our Republic literally last week, and a gala concert of the international competition Turkvision took place.

We are satisfied with the high level of interaction. Along with this exists a tremendous economic potential.¹⁶⁵

It is not out of place to talk about “tremendous economic potential” that exists along with the cultural ties at a businessmen's conference, but Minnikhanov put these ties in this context in most instances.

In the excerpt above, the President also spoke of Tatarstan's active participation in Turkic cultural events such as the Turkvision song contest, a Turkic variant of the Eurovision, and Kazan's designation as the cultural capital of the Turkic world within the International Organization of Turkic Culture TÜRKSÖY. This is a proof in itself of the Republic's open embracement of the cultural and linguistic links binding it with Turkey and other Turkic countries. Minnikhanov's striving for a strong presence in such

¹⁶³ Tatar summer festival dating to the Volga-Bulgarian epoch.

¹⁶⁴ Speech 4, March 26, 2015, Kazan.

¹⁶⁵ Speech 1, November 27, 2014, Moscow.

organisations and for gaining respect among Turkic states is a part of the Republic's long-term effort to get greater international recognition.

One topic that is present in both of the parts above is interregional relations. Topbas, the mayor of Istanbul, was honoured with the medal especially for being the president of the United Cities and Local Governments international organization (UCLG), and he came to Kazan on the occasion of a founding meeting of a Eurasian branch of the UCLG, and in run-up to Kazan's hosting of a meeting of the whole organization two months later. Minnikhanov specifically pointed out Topbas's work in the organization and his support for the Republic of Tatarstan within the organization. Interregional relations or collaboration were talked of five times – of which three times were on a visit to Kocaeli, where a cooperation agreement between one Tatarstani municipality and one municipality of the Kocaeli region had been signed.

Minnikhanov often said that his efforts were directed towards the strengthening of mutual relations between the Russian Federation and the Turkish Republic. To be exact, it was mentioned in all speeches but one (which was a short address given at a meeting of Turkish entrepreneurs in Moscow):

The Republic of Tatarstan values the contemporary high level of relations with Turkey and the brotherly Turkish nation. It adds large meaning to the development of our comprehensive relations that are aimed at the strengthening of the friendship and cooperation of Russia and Turkey.¹⁶⁶

In Ankara, the head of Tatarstan specified where he saw Tatarstan's position within the Russia-Turkey relations:

I think that in the framework of Russian-Turkish relations Tatarstan contributes its serious bit so that we are even closer and work even more.¹⁶⁷

Minnikhanov spoke of a “bit”, but it is clear he was suggesting that Tatarstan is significant in the advancement of the relations on the state level – the bit is “serious”, and he even called Tatarstani-Turkish relations the most successful example of Russo-

¹⁶⁶ Speech 1, November 27, 2014, Moscow.

¹⁶⁷ Speech 2, December 1, 2014, Ankara.

Turkish relations.¹⁶⁸ Minnikhanov had on the one hand been emphasizing the role of Tatarstan in Russia's diplomacy, and sometimes offering Turkish businessmen an easy entrance to the Russian market through the Republic, thus really playing a role of a link connecting the two states. On the other hand, he had been exaggerating the position Tatarstan has vis-à-vis Turkey. On two occasions, Minnikhanov directly spoke of bilateral relations between his Republic and Turkey:

With the assistance of federal organs of power, the infrastructure of support to bilateral relations with Turkey develops in Tatarstan. The general consulate of Turkey successfully operates in Kazan; [our plenipotentiary] representation actively works in Istanbul. Tatarstan and Turkey are connected with regular flights taking off from Istanbul and Kazan and Begishevo airport [near the town of Nizhnekamsk in Tatarstan];¹⁶⁹

and:

With the assistance of our governmental structures, the infrastructure of support to bilateral relations with Turkey develops in the Republic. In Kazan operates Turkish general consulate, in Istanbul operates representation of Tatarstan.¹⁷⁰

It is noteworthy that the sentences, which mention the “bilateral relations”, are almost identical, with just some synonyms swapped out. And Minnikhanov even continues with the same topics right after – first the representative offices, then the flights,¹⁷¹ despite the speeches being separated by four months and given under very different circumstances. Reusing parts of speeches is nothing new in the world of politics (and elsewhere), but the fact that he used the same expression twice, and under different circumstances, means that he stood behind these words: Minnikhanov did consider the relations between the Republic of Tatarstan and Turkish Republic to be “bilateral” – among two equal sides.

¹⁶⁸ Speech 3, February 10, 2015, Moscow.

¹⁶⁹ Speech 1, November 27, 2014, Moscow.

¹⁷⁰ Speech 4, March 26, 2015, Kazan.

¹⁷¹ Notion of the flights omitted from speech 4 for the sake of simplicity.

Revisiting Minnikhanov's speeches, where he mentioned interregional relations, we can notice that oftentimes he actually talked of contacts between *regions* of Tatarstan with regions of Turkey, rather than of outer contacts of Tatarstan *as a region of the Russian Federation*. For instance, during their visit to Kocaeli, Minnikhanov and his entourage met the governor of Kocaeli province and signed a treaty on interregional cooperation between the Tyulyachinsky municipal *raion* of Tatarstan and Gebze municipality in Kocaeli¹⁷², thus a treaty of a Tatarstani region and region of a Turkish region – effectively a comparable level. During the same event, a treaty on the cooperation of the business chambers of Tatarstan and Kocaeli were also signed – once again, on an equal, region-region level. However, commenting on the success, Minnikhanov said:

We devote a great attention to the development of interregional cooperation. The good business relations between our republics are an excellent example.¹⁷³

Let's remember that Kocaeli is *not* a republic, *Turkey* is. In this fashion, Minnikhanov skilfully raises the perceived importance of Tatarstan above the level of a federative subject, in the same manner as when talking about bilateral relations.

Tatarstan, however, had really been receiving a favourable treatment. Aside from meeting representatives of business, appearing at events attended also for example by the Turkish ambassador, and meeting regional politicians (governor of Kocaeli and mayor of Istanbul), Minnikhanov met two state-level Turkish politicians: the Minister of Economy, and the Speaker of the Turkish National Assembly, who he welcomed in Kazan. The Speaker, Cemil Cicek, arrived to Kazan to sign a Memorandum on Further Extension of Comprehensive Cooperation between the State Council of the Republic of Tatarstan and the Supreme National Assembly of the Turkish Republic.¹⁷⁴ In other

¹⁷² Speech 6c, October 15, 2015, Kocaeli.

¹⁷³ “Khronika sobytiy,” Press service of the President of RT, Official Website of the Government of the Republic of Tatarstan, October 15, 2015, <http://president.tatar.ru/news/view/486686> (accessed May 7, 2017).

¹⁷⁴ Nizameev, Bulat, “Rustam Minnikhanov: Turtsiya ostanetsya osnovnym vneshneekonomicheskim partnerom Tatarstana,” Press service of the President

words, a memorandum on cooperation between Tatarstani and Turkish parliaments, which can be understood as a very prestigious achievement of Minnikhanov's government.

We can see that despite all assurances that the development of Russo-Turkish relation was on the top of the list, Minnikhanov was at the same time trying to magnify the position of the Republic of Tatarstan, and of himself. Mentions of working on behalf of the cooperation between Ankara and Moscow can be explained on two levels, which are not mutually exclusive. First, addressing the immediate audiences, Minnikhanov could have been offering the Republic as a sort of backdoor to the Russian market to boost possible investors' interest. Second, it could have been an assuring message to the Moscow Kremlin that Tatarstan is a loyal subject, representing Russia abroad without conflicting with the centre's interests. Similarly, presenting Tatarstan as a largely independent republic, which conducts its own policies at home and – at least to a certain extent – abroad, might also bear two complementary messages. For the immediate listeners it is a message about an attractive, self-confident, developed territory with an outward-looking government. For the indirect audiences in Tatarstan, Minnikhanov is presenting himself as the leader who, without sparking conflicts with Moscow, secures Tatarstan a respectable place in the international sphere. Such an image is an important asset for an authoritarian leader who wants a strong backing by the population in his territory.

The eight analysed speeches from this period (between the annexation of Crimea and the shooting down of Russian the Su-24) have shown that from the effective point of view, the economy is in the centre of Minnikhanov's approach to Turkey. However, cultural, linguistic, and religious bonds did have their place in Minnikhanov's speeches and in the policies of the Republic he leads; in most cases they were framed primarily as an opportunity for trade and investment. In line with that, addressing his immediate audiences, he often motivated them to come to invest in Tatarstan, presenting the Republic as a developed, modern, and reliable partner. Analysing Minnikhanov's

statements compared to the long-term, broad outcomes, we could see a striking gap between the claims about striving to strengthen the Russo-Turkish relations and the implicit elevation of Tatarstan to an equal level with Turkey. Presenting the Republic in a state-like manner could hint towards greater paradiplomatic goals and a possible clash of interest between the Republic of Tatarstan and the centre of the Russian Federation.

3.2 Second Phase: Crisis Management

After the Turkish army had at the end of November 2015 shot down the Russian fighter jet Su-24, which they had alleged violated their airspace, Russia swiftly reacted and the relations between these two states came to a halt. Questions about the continuation of Tatarstan's budding relation to Turkey emerged quickly. Therefore, it shouldn't surprise us that the only speech given within this period was an answer to a journalist asking just about that.

The rupture did affect Tatarstan's ties with Turkey. At the all-Russian level, the space for preparations of any new business projects was limited, as Moscow introduced sanctions against Turkish entrepreneurs and on trade with the Turkish Republic¹⁷⁵ and re-introduced a visa regime for the citizens of Turkey.¹⁷⁶ The cultural relations turned out to be under attack, too, in spite of Putin's assurances that it is the government, not the Turkish nation, who he fell out with.¹⁷⁷

The Federal Minister of Culture, Vladimir Medinskiy, required the regions that had been members of the TÜRKSOY organization (Altai, Bashkortostan, Khakassia,

¹⁷⁵ Bechev, Dimitar, "Russian–Turkish Relations In Crisis," *Russian Analytical Digest* 11, No. 179 (February, 2016): 10–11.

¹⁷⁶ Selin Nasi, "The pitfalls of the Turkish-Russian rapprochement," *Hurriyet Daily News*, December 13, 2016, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/the-pitfalls-of-the-turkish-russian-rapprochement.aspx?PageID=238&NID=107218&NewsCatID=570> (accessed May 26, 2017).

¹⁷⁷ "Miroporyadok. Dokumental'niy fil'm Vladimira Solovyeva," Rossiya 1 television documentary, December 20, 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZNhYzYUo42g> (accessed May 17, 2017), and "Press-konferentsiya Putina: 'Reshayte sami'," *TatCenter*, December 17, 2015, <http://info.tatcenter.ru/article/153990/> (accessed May 17, 2017).

Sakha, Tuva, and Tatarstan) to break up their ties with the cultural organization.¹⁷⁸ Tatarstan refused to do so, remaining a member,¹⁷⁹ but the Republic withdrew from participation in that year's edition of the TurkVision song contest nevertheless. Moreover, educational ties were harmed too, when the Yunus Emre Institute's Centre of Turkish Studies at Kazan Federal University had been shut down on a request of the Federal Ministry of Education¹⁸⁰ and did not open until the relations between Moscow and Ankara had improved again.¹⁸¹

Within the more than eight months between the shooting down of the Russian fighter jet and the Saint Petersburg meeting of Putin with Erdogan, which changed the course of the relations back towards collaboration, Minnikhanov publicly spoke of Turkey and Tatarstan's relations to it only once. This sole fact is a proof of a certain change, since during the preceding twelve months he touched this topic during at least seven different events, and in the less than five months after the Putin-Erdogan meeting at a minimum of three occasions. That is not to say, however, that Minnikhanov did not reflect the developments.

Apart from the fact that the one speech examined in this period had taken place under different international relations conditions, there is one more feature that sets it apart from all the other speeches: it was not given at the occasion of a meeting with any Turkish representatives. Minnikhanov spoke about his and Tatarstan's relation to Turkey during his traditional end-of-year meeting with journalists, where he answers questions on all topics imaginable.

¹⁷⁸ "Minkultury RF prekrashchayet sotrudnichestvo s organizatsiey tyurkskoy kultury TyurKCOY," *Russia's Information Agency TASS*, November 27, 2015, <http://tass.ru/kultura/2480269> (accessed May 22, 2017).

¹⁷⁹ Umaraliev, Tolkun, "Tatarstan ne khochet rvat' otnosheniya s Turtsiey," *Nastoyashee Vremya*, December 24, 2015, <https://www.currenttime.tv/a/27445311.html> (accessed May 9, 2017).

¹⁸⁰ "V Kazani zakryli Tsentri izucheniya Turtsii," *Interfax*, December 4, 2015, <http://www.interfax.ru/russia/483228> (accessed May 17, 2017).

¹⁸¹ Dolgov, Aleksandr, "Tsentri izucheniya Turtsii imeni Yunusa Emre v KFU vozobnovit rabotu s sentyabrya," *Tatar-inform Information Agency*, August 11, 2016, <http://www.tatar-inform.ru/news/2016/08/11/515904/> (accessed May 19, 2017).

During the event, the head of Tatarstan talked of issues such as developments in economy, trade, and demography, about opening kindergartens and medical centres, and about Innopolis, a new town meant to become a high-tech hub.¹⁸² Answering journalists' queries, he mentioned that 2016 would be a year of water preservation in the Republic, mentioned that he was taking all possible measures to protect citizens from terrorism, and commented on the *Platon* system of paying transit fees and machinations in housing construction. Responding to a journalist wondering whether Minnikhanov's checks his younger son's pupil's book, he answered:

And they have pupil's books? My wife watches the house, and if my son learns badly, it's in her sphere. But I will ask where his pupil's book is.¹⁸³

The President also praised that he had been elected the President of Tatarstan by a public vote earlier that year, offering his thought about the necessity to invent elections in case they had not existed, to give politicians an opportunity to meet people and listen and talk to them.¹⁸⁴

With topics ranging from the care of Minnikhanov's son's school results to the state of the Republic's economy, and from the importance of popular elections to the necessity for truck drivers to pay for the use of roads, Minnikhanov conducted himself as the true national leader in all important areas touching the government of a state as well as everyday lives of the citizens. In the atmosphere that prevailed during the month following the Su-24 being shot down, speaking about such a boundless range of

¹⁸² Britvina, Elena, "Rustam Minnikhanov: Nesmotrya na opredelennye slozhnosti, po obyemam promyshlennoy produktsii respublika prevysila uroven proshlogo goda", Press service of the President of RT, Official Website of the Government of the Republic of Tatarstan, December 21, 2015, <http://prav.tatarstan.ru/rus/index.htm/news/525000.htm> (accessed May 8, 2017).

¹⁸³ Britvina, Elena, "Rustam Minnikhanov otvetil na voprosy zhurnalistov o sotrudnichestve s turetskimi partnerami, o situatsii s obmanutymi dolshchikami i o sisteme 'Platon'," Press service of the President of RT, Official Website of the Government of the Republic of Tatarstan, December 21, 2015, <http://prav.tatarstan.ru/rus/index.htm/news/525008.htm> (accessed May 8, 2017).

¹⁸⁴ Amochaeva, Yuliya, "Rustam Minnikhanov: 'Posle lyubogo krizisa dolzhen byt' podyem'," *TatCenter*, December 22, 2015, <http://info.tatcenter.ru/article/154145/> (accessed May 8, 2017).

politics-related questions without mentioning the relations with Turkey could come as a surprise.

Analysing speeches in the previous section, we have seen that the President prefers to avoid conflictual and problematic topics; however, he also wants to be seen as the man leading his Republic through all that comes up. The issue of the crisis between Russian Federation and Turkey was too big to pass over. Moreover, in Russia, where the media are controlled by the state, and specifically in Tatarstan, where the freedom of press is among the lowest of all subjects of the Federation,¹⁸⁵ it is sensible to presume that topics had been agreed upon in advance. The fact that it is very likely that Minnikhanov knew that the question on relations with Turkey would come gives his answer a stronger meaning, since he most likely also knew what he would say.

The query regarding cooperation with the Turks was directly preceded by a generally formulated question on which states Tatarstan is ready to cooperate with, and from whom to expect investment in the future. According Minnikhanov, the Republic of Tatarstan was:

ready to be friends with all who are, on their side, ready to invest in the economy of the Republic,¹⁸⁶

adding that at that moment, it was especially Arab countries, East Asia, and China. He also pointed out that investments were the best marker for the state of economy, as they were responsible for the creation of new enterprises, new jobs, and for development. The remark on investment could be directly linked to Turkey, whose companies had been responsible for the largest slice of foreign investment.¹⁸⁷

The question on Turkey itself, asked from among journalists seated around a long table at whose head Minnikhanov was sitting, sounded:

¹⁸⁵ “Karta glasnosti za mart 2009 – febral' 2010 goda”, *Glasnost Defence Foundation*, April 21, 2010, <http://www.gdf.ru/map/> (accessed July 10, 2017).

¹⁸⁶ Britvina, Elena, “Rustam Minnikhanov otvetil na voprosy zhurnalistov.”

¹⁸⁷ Hille, Kathrin, “Putin’s fury with Erdogan takes its toll on Tatarstan’s trading links,” *Financial Times*, February 1, 2016, <https://www.ft.com/content/eca5f41a-c412-11e5-808f-8231cd71622e?mhq5j=e2> (accessed July 10, 2017).

Rustam Nurgaliyevich, one more topic, important for the Republic. It is the mutual relation with Turkey. We are tied with strong and good relations in various spheres, and most of all in the economy. How do you see the development of the mutual relations of Tatarstan and Turkey, accounting for the serious cooling of relations between Turkey and Russia?¹⁸⁸

Diagnostic – “There is discrepancy” (“The President says”)

While describing the situation, Minnikhanov referred to the words of Vladimir Putin, once again avoiding directly talking about and specifically naming the problems himself. Rather, he chose to point out the positive aspects of the relations (both on the level of Tatarstan and on the whole national level) and to carefully pick his words about the confrontation.

At the beginning of his answer, Minnikhanov expressed his pity about the current state of affairs:

You know, it is a complicated situation, very painful and noticeable for Tatarstan. But I can refer to what the President of the state has said. He spoke about it two times. The first time he talked about it in *Poslanie*, the second time he said it when he spoke about it with [Vladimir] Solovyov. We need to separate where the topic came from and how it can be solved.¹⁸⁹

Minnikhanov implies that the situation is especially perceptible for the Republic (as does the journalist asking him, in fact), but more interesting than that is that he immediately referred to the words of Vladimir Putin.

Putin's annual press-conference, to which Minnikhanov referred to as *Poslanie*, the Message, took place on the 17th of December, 2015, just 5 days before Minnikhanov's own meeting with the press. There, Putin claimed it had not been them, Russia, who had abandoned the cooperation, suggesting that Turkey should have had simply called them to avoid the confrontation:

¹⁸⁸ Speech 7, December 21, 2015, Kazan.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

With the Turkish government it is difficult or practically impossible for us to reach an agreement. When we say that we agree, they hit us from the side or from behind. I practically don't see a perspective to establish relations on a state level. [...]

What has outraged us is – what they do in such instances. They should pick up the phone and call. Instead, they immediately ran to Brussels, started to cover themselves with NATO.¹⁹⁰

The other instance that Minnikhanov talked of was the documentary movie *Miroporyadok* (The World Order) by chief pro-Kremlin journalist and TV presenter Vladimir Solovyov, based around an interview that Solovyov made with Putin right after the press conference. It is a cleverly made piece of propaganda about the way the West supposedly disrupts the world order. There, Putin explains:

Turkey is not Europe. [...] As I've said in *Poslanie*, and I will repeat it now, Turkey is a friendly nation for us. We don't want our relations especially with the Turkish nation to collapse. But regarding the acting government – nothing lasts forever.¹⁹¹

Putin to a certain degree revealed that he has taken the incident as a personal attack and an act of betrayal from Erdogan, but clearly differentiates between the government of Turkey and its people – even suggesting that after this government goes, the chance to restore the mutual relations would come up.

In his speech, Minnikhanov implicitly relates himself to the distinction between, in Putin's words, the friendly Turkish nation and its acting government:

As the president has clearly said, there are political disagreements. And he said with whom, and for what reasons. These questions are being resolved on the political level between our countries.¹⁹²

Again, Minnikhanov did not say anything about the conflict itself apart from pointing out there were “political disagreements”, being “resolved on the political level” between

¹⁹⁰ “Press-konferentsiya Putina: ‘Reshayte sami’,” *TatCenter*, December 17, 2015.

¹⁹¹ Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin in “Miroporyadok. Dokumental'niy fil'm Vladimira Solovyeva,” *Rossiya 1 television documentary*, December 20, 2015.

¹⁹² Speech 7, December 21, 2015, Kazan.

Moscow and Ankara. Explicitly, he would not comment on the reasons and sources of the conflict; neither would he specifically accuse any party of wrongdoing or calling someone an enemy. Neither did he mention Syria nor any other centre of conflict; neither did he mention the Turkish government nor president Erdogan – all these issues remained hidden in the reference to Putin. Minnikhanov was taking his hands off the issue.

The head of Tatarstan, however, gave a clear message that he found the conflict an unpleasant hindrance, and stayed clear of calling for any hard measures against Turkey. As during the rare occasions on which he had spoken of international problems in the previous phase, this time he also appealed to commonalities:

I think that many citizens, not only in Tatarstan... Turkey is a beloved place for relaxing of many Russians. People got used to that.¹⁹³

And where for the Russians it was holidays that bound them to Turkey, “for Tatarstan, for Tatars”, the links run deeper:

[...] Turkey is a friendly nation to Russia. For Tatarstan, for Tatars, it's a brotherly nation. We are of the same language group. We have the same religion.¹⁹⁴

The notion of “brotherly nation” does not stand out – it is a sentiment repeated in a number of Minnikhanov's speeches – but the remark about linguistic proximity and, especially, religion does. It is the first time language proximity was mentioned as a value and bond per se, not as a tool for the facilitation of business. In the pre-crisis phase, Minnikhanov only referred to religion once, and then, it was in a response to his Turkish host, who had brought the topic up.

There is, in fact, a stark contrast between what Minnikhanov said and the words of Putin, which Minnikhanov referred to. Even if Putin differentiated between the Turkish “nation” and its government and pointed out that it is the government that was the problem, his message was harsh. Minnikhanov referred to this difference, too, and in

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

general spoke of relations to the nation, but his message was overall positive. He even put more stress on the deep-rooted ties than was the norm before the crisis. In general, Minnikhanov's speech was more concentrated on the long term, while Putin's was more concerned by the latest developments. The head of Tatarstan basically ignored the incident itself, which facilitated the avoidance of blaming anyone. But if there is such a difference, why did he refer to Putin? First of all, it allowed him to avoid saying anything controversial. By choosing not to mention the incident in his own words, he evades the risk of saying something that would alienate someone – either the Turkish, or Moscow. It is also a signal of loyalty to Moscow at a moment when he actually emphasized a different stance. Last but not least, Minnikhanov resorted to the position of a regional leader who has the comfort of not having to comment on such a “high” diplomacy issue.

While describing the current situation and the bonds tying Tatarstan to Turkey, Minnikhanov seemed to have turned towards a more culture-centred characterization of the ties after the crisis had begun. That does not mean that he didn't talk of economy and business projects, as is apparent in the following sections. Also, he didn't speak about any specific cultural projects or events; neither of any example of cooperation in this sphere. But he brought up language and religion as a bond that remains strong and valuable at a time of crisis. It is possible to interpret it as a sort of turn towards values, instead of just utilizing the links.

Motivational - Preserving the contacts

Minnikhanov's lean towards cooperation and emphasis on mutual convergence with the Turkish shines through also when he expresses his opinion on what all involved parties should do. He suggested that it is solutions and not complications that should be sought. According to him, Tatarstan, and consequently Russia, should retain trust and prove as reliable partners. He also believes that the conflict will be resolved, and therefore calls for all parties to work on the preservation of all contacts.

The President of Tatarstan was, throughout the speech, especially stressing the importance of not betraying the trust given to Tatarstan by the investors and businessmen who worked in favour of mutual trade:

If somebody tries to find some difficulties, to make difficulties, it is not right. [The investors] are people who have trusted our country, they are people who came with money, they created highly technological jobs, and they are a part of our country. And we gave them guarantees. Here I find full support of the government of our Russian state.¹⁹⁵

The first sentence of this excerpt is typical of what appears to be Minnikhanov's general stance towards international problems. He prefers to make deals, shake hands, appear at conferences, and lure investors; delving deep into conflictual issues might lead to making “difficulties”, which “is not right” – because it complicates doing mutually profitable business. On the other hand, trust and reliability are crucial and Moscow should not stand in the way of projects that had already been agreed upon. At the end of the answer, Minnikhanov pointed this out, stressing that not only businesses that had already been running should get a chance to continue, but so also should the ones that were being developed:

I really hope that we will find the support of our colleagues in Moscow even for these projects. So far we do.¹⁹⁶

Minnikhanov acknowledged that this issue is out of his hands and that further development would depend on the Kremlin. After all, business visas and other necessary documents are issued on the state level. But Minnikhanov also clearly expressed his ideas on the minimum that should be done by the centre. “So far we do” at the very end of the answer was a nod in favour of Moscow that to the extent possible, the central government had been doing well.

Encouraging further collaboration and promoting the will to maintain the partnership between Tatarstan and Turkey, Minnikhanov articulated his hope that things would turn for the better:

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

I think that a political solution [RM smiles – author] will happen, and we need to save the contacts and projects – with joint efforts.¹⁹⁷

The head of Tatarstan implicitly called on all involved to keep on going without any serious disruptions. His calm smile while talking about his faith in a viable political solution could, in retrospect, even raise questions on whether he knew something that he would not share with the journalists. A similar sensation could be acquired after his suggestion that other important investments might be on the way:

I will not go into this part [serious discrepancy in political questions – author], but I hope, anyway, that projects... We are expecting several other big Turkish investments,¹⁹⁸

Minnikhanov smiled and paused before saying that his government regretted “a lot that it happened this way”. We do know that later, certain Turkish officials expressed their gratitude to Minnikhanov for his work on the mending of Russo-Turkish relations during this crisis¹⁹⁹, which would suggest a behind-the-scenes work on his behalf and possibly even some access to unpublished information. However, in the second half of December 2015, the relations between Moscow and Ankara appeared to still be on a downward spiral, and proposing that Minnikhanov *knew* the situation would change in a matter of months; would be pure speculation, until more is revealed about the negotiations.

From the motivational point of view, Minnikhanov was calling on partners to keep up the work, continue to realize projects, and try to find common ground instead of dwelling on disagreements. His suggestion to do it all “with joint efforts” itself shows a belief in the possibility of working together. During the crisis, Minnikhanov lobbied in Moscow for the preservation of cooperation with Turkey, and for the conditions in

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ “Genkonsul Turtsii: 'Tatarstan sygral vazhnuyu rol' v normalizatsii rossiysko-turetskikh otnosheniy',” *Tatar-inform Information Agency*, February 27, 2017, <http://www.tatar-inform.ru/news/2017/02/27/541160/> (accessed May 21, 2017) and

Mys'ko, Vlas, “Turetskiy ministr: ‘Khochu podcherknut’: Rustam Minnikhanov yavlyaetsya i moim prezidentom!..’,” *Biznes Online*, October 10, 2016, <https://www.business-gazeta.ru/article/325154> (accessed May 23, 2017).

which the Republic could keep on cooperating with Turkish companies. Within this speech, he was motivating the Turkish to collaborate for this goal, as well as appealing to Moscow not to stand in the way.

Prognostic - “Reliability” above all

At the core of this speech were economic projects and investments and the need for their preservation. Above it all stands the importance of continuing on the path that had been drawn and providing a stable environment. Minnikhanov was advocating for the continuation of the projects in the name of jobs and reliability. Trustworthiness and dependability were very important in his mind, apparently in expectation of an improvement of the situation again and subsequent restoration of close cooperation between the Republic and Turkey.

Within Minnikhanov's answer to the journalist's question on the future of relations between Tatarstan and Turkey, advocating for the economic cooperation played a very significant role. The head of Tatarstan mentioned jobs created by Turkish investment twice:

Of course that the President has said [that the Turkish are a friendly nation] is very serious support for us, because we have big Turkish projects. And, of course, they trusted our President, they trusted in our Republic. One and a half billion dollars of investments are in contemporary factories where 95 to 98 % of workers are Tatarstan's, Russia's citizens, and those enterprises are residents of the Russian Federation. Of course, there should not be such U-turns.²⁰⁰

And towards the end of his answer, he came back to it:

How I said, 94 - 98 % there - they are our workers. Or those two Turkish companies, very high-tech, oriented on the installation work - we have invited them. They are high-level specialists who work without a pause in

²⁰⁰ Speech 7, December 21, 2015, Kazan.

schedule on big projects on the agreed terms, which we need. Yes, we can find some here too, but the price and quality are competitive. I think that to refuse such specialists would be wrong on our part, the more so on the projects, which we already started to realize with them.²⁰¹

Minnikhanov argued that with all the vacancies that Turkish companies had created, they had become an important part of the Tatarstani, and respectively Russian, economy. After all, the 280 Turkish companies that were operating in Tatarstan had a significant weight – also due to the fact that there was the biggest taxpayer in Tatarstan among them, the Efes brewery.²⁰²

The former of those two excerpts also contains a layer of appeal towards the Federal President, Vladimir Putin. First, the notion that all the workers are not just Tatarstan's, but Russia's, citizens was not coincidental. Second, the direct reference to the trust Turkish investors gave not only to Tatarstan, but to the Russian Federation represented by Putin himself, puts a degree of responsibility for Tatarstan's trustworthiness (and the jobs) on Putin's shoulders.

Both of these excerpts are interlaced with hints of the need to remain reliable and consistent. We have seen that Minnikhanov attributes great importance to trustworthiness, when he spoke to investors about the credit history of Tatarstan a hundred years ago and today.²⁰³ However, then, he had talked about it motivating investors to come to Tatarstan, while at this occasion, it is an attempt to limit the damage of the threat of a complete cut of ties with Turkey, commissioned from the centre. Judging by Minnikhanov's words, in order to protect Tatarstan's reliability, it is crucial to continue with all projects according to the plan, to keep the specialists invited to Tatarstan, regardless of their possible substitutability by domestic ones, and to prevent any sharp U-turns. He clearly pointed out the necessity to go on within the legal framework, saying that:

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² Umaraliev, Tolkun, "Tatarstan ne khochet rvat' otnosheniya s Turtsiey," *Nastoyashee Vremya*, December 24, 2015.

²⁰³ Speech 3, February 10, 2015, Moscow.

[...] regarding the nation [i.e. Tatarstan – author], and our projects, we work in the framework of legal norms that are there in our country. We do not have any differences regarding those investors.²⁰⁴

Then Minnikhanov proceeded to condemn any search for complications. He implicated that as far as legal norms are followed, there should not be any problems between Kazan and Moscow regarding businesses already established in the Republic. However, it would be a mistake to pursue any special policies aimed at Turkish entrepreneurs in the Federation.

Minnikhanov's emphasis on reliability might be addressed to various audiences. First, there is the above-mentioned message putting responsibility for Tatarstan's jobs and trustworthiness on Putin's back. Second, there is an attempt to calm Turkish investors worried about their assets (as well as other foreign investors, possibly worried about the long-term investment environment). Third, the head of Tatarstan was talking to his domestic public, too, assuring them that the contacts in which their government invested serious time and effort will not remain fruitless, that jobs will be kept, and for the Tatars living in the Republic that the bonds with their Turkish brethren would not be broken. And finally, he was trying to preserve Tatarstan's appeal to Turkish businessmen in the future, as we have seen that he was positive about the outcome of the conflict.

The only speech analysed in the second phase, taking place at a time of quickly cooling relations between Ankara and Moscow, has shown a certain shift compared to the speeches from the preceding phase, characterized by cooperation of the two countries. Describing the mutual relation, Minnikhanov steered away from concentration on economic ties towards a more culture-centred definition, in which linguistic and religious closeness are values, not valuable tools – thus basing the Republic's paradiplomacy on deeper and longer-lasting links. The speech was more inward-oriented, at least because it was given as an answer to local journalist, not as an address to (partly) Turkish audiences. He called on all involved to join efforts to preserve the relations, and attempted to shift the unpleasant responsibility to Moscow,

²⁰⁴ Speech 7, December 21, 2015, Kazan.

while at the same time completely relying on Putin's words in defining the problem – in fact altogether avoiding to name the troubles himself. In the speech, Minnikhanov extensively argued for the need to remain reliable, steady, and predictable, and not to betray the trust given to the Republic by investors and entrepreneurs.

3.3 Third phase:

The third phase, starting with the Saint Petersburg meeting of Vladimir Putin and Recep Tayyip Erdogan in August 2016, where they agreed to put the most burning disagreements behind, bore the appeal to get back to full cooperation in Minnikhanov's speeches. That is in line with the official stance of Moscow, whose rhetoric of Turkish betrayal was being replaced by gradual normalization of the relations. After Turkey went through a rather shocking experience with an attempted coup d'état in July 2016, Putin and Minnikhanov were among the first to assure Erdogan with their support to the acting government.²⁰⁵ It appears as though Erdogan went through a similar feeling of betrayal from the West as Putin had with Erdogan eight months earlier, and this sped up the restoration of Russo-Turkish relations.

Rustam Minnikhanov personally attended Putin's meeting with the Turkish entourage in Saint Petersburg on the 9th of August, 2016. It is worth noting that it is rather difficult to find reports of Minnikhanov's comments on that meeting. The excerpts of that speech (No. 8) come from an English article on a Tatarstani news site.²⁰⁶ However, since the site had been visited in January 2017, the English speaking

²⁰⁵ Sharkov, Damien, "Putin calls Erdogan to voice support for order in Turkey," *Newsweek*, July 18, 2016, <http://www.newsweek.com/putin-calls-erdogan-voice-support-order-coup-turkey-481307> (accessed July 20, 2017), and Nizameev, Bulat, "Rustam Minnikhanov: Otryadno, chto turetskie kompanii dlya realizatsii svoikh investitsionnykh proektov vybirayut Tatarstan," Press service of the President of RT, Official Website of the Government of the Republic of Tatarstan, October 8, 2016, <http://tatarstan.ru/rus/index.htm/news/750285.htm> (accessed May 19, 2017).

²⁰⁶ "Rustam Minnikhanov: 'Tatarstan and Turkey are willing to cooperate'," *Tatar-inform Information Agency*, August 29, 2016, <http://eng.tatar-inform.ru/news/2016/08/29/57026/> (accessed January 15, 2017).

version of the site was abolished without being archived, and it has not been possible to find any reports of those comments in Russian – neither on that site, nor on any other.

The events at which the other two analysed speeches happened had one thing in common: both events were scheduled to happen a lot sooner, but were postponed. First, in October 2016, Minnikhanov and Turkish Economy Minister Zeybekci (indeed a frequent guest in Tatarstan) opened two Turkish factories in the Alabuga Special Economic Zone – factories which had been in fact already operating for almost two years at that time. The ceremonial opening was planned for July 2016, then for August, and eventually happened two more months later. Officially, the reason for the delay was that Zeybekci was dismissed from his ministerial post just after the Su-24 “accident”, and the event was held after he was re-appointed in summer 2016 by the new Prime Minister Binali Yildirim.²⁰⁷ Second, in December, when the Turkish Prime Minister (and Zeybekci again, too) visited Kazan and attended a business forum there, a memorial to a Tatar-Turkish statesman and scholar Sadri Maksudi was revealed – after it had been covered by a wooden construction since the previous December, when it had been originally due to be revealed. No official explanation of this delay was offered.²⁰⁸ It is rather apparent, though, that both of these postponements were caused by the conflict between Moscow and Ankara and the resulting adverse conditions for displays of bonds with Turkey in Russia's regions.

Diagnostic – Time to move forward

In the frame of the four speeches analysed in this third phase of Tatarstani-Turkish relations, again in a more favourably inclined diplomatic environment, Minnikhanov spoke of the overcoming of a difficult period and the need to return to

²⁰⁷ Mys'ko, Vlas, “Turetskiy ministr: ‘Khochu podcherknut’: Rustam Minnikhanov yavlyaetsya i moim prezidentom!..’,” *Biznes Online*, October 10, 2016.

²⁰⁸ Goloburdova, Natalya, Aleksandr Gavrilenko, “Prem'er Turtsii o svoem ministre: ‘Kogda ya sprashivayu, gde on, otvechayut – v Tatarstane’,” *Biznes Online*, December 7, 2016, <https://www.business-gazeta.ru/article/331114> (accessed July 16, 2017).

work again, to bridge the gap created by the rupture. Describing the bonds between Tatarstan and Turkey, he chose to point out the cultural and linguistic proximity to emphasize the importance of the cooperation, but returned to the habit of seeking its potential in economic sphere.

As mentioned above, the head of Tatarstan participated in Putin's meeting with Erdogan, his ministerial entourage, and several other involved men from politics and business – a meeting that directly followed Erdogan's and Putin's face-to-face meeting on the 9th August, 2016. Commenting on the meeting, Minnikhanov for the first time described the events that led to the conflict:

You know, nobody is able to predict where and what happens. It is a great tragedy, of course, that the Russian fighter jet had been shot down and the pilot died. Of course, we had greatly sympathised during those events. Russia and Turkey are neighbours. What had happened is a serious loss both for Russia and Turkey. I think that reason has triumphed. The President of Turkey approached our President Vladimir Putin.²⁰⁹

Even though he mentioned the “tragedy” of the Su-24, he continued to refrain from blaming anyone, but interestingly described the developments as a “serious loss” for both countries, apparently quickly leaving the causes in favour of the consequences. It is also noteworthy that Minnikhanov implicitly lauds the Turkish side for the rapprochement, when he said that “reason [had] triumphed” after the “President of Turkey [had] approached our President Vladimir Putin”. These words are the closest to revealing what Minnikhanov really thought of the conflict, and are in line with the tone of his other statements related to conflictual themes – according to Minnikhanov, disagreements are to be overcome, not sought, and stirring up conflicts is a nuisance. It is apparent that according to him, Putin's reaction to the incident had been unnecessary and it was right that it was over.

When Minnikhanov returned to that topic in December, during the meeting with the Turkish Prime Minister, he came back to his more traditional tone, using rather vague expressions and avoiding voicing his specific opinions:

²⁰⁹ Speech 8, August 9, 2016, Moscow.

It is very important that despite the difficult period between our countries the situation has normalized and we have to actively start to work [RM smiles slightly – author]. For this there are the conditions, and the relationship between the President of the Russian Federation Vladimirovich Putin and the President of Turkish Republic Mr. Erdogan allows us to move forward.²¹⁰

Compared to the pre-crisis period, during which the President of Tatarstan spoke of the friendship between heads of Russia and Turkey, the change towards relationship that “allows us to move forward” is striking, but not surprising given the most recent history. The wording regarding “difficult period” and “normalized” situation, however, is back to Minnikhanov's standards of dodging saying unpleasant things.

During this visit of Prime Minister Yildirim to Kazan, Minnikhanov also mentioned Tatarstan's cultural, linguistic, and historic ties to Turkey several times. At a business forum in Kazan's town hall, attended among others by Minnikhanov, Yildirim, and minister Zeybekci, the head of Tatarstan emphasized Turkey is a principal partner and designated their mutual bonds:

The Turkish Republic is one of the principal foreign partners of our Republic regarding trade, economic, and investment cooperation, and our cultural relations. [...]

Well we are historically very close, and in language, and our religion, our cultures. With Mr. minister we talk, he speaks Turkish and I speak Tatar without an interpreter. We have tried this strategy already with the Prime Minister too. I consider this one of our competitive advantages too.²¹¹

While revealing a statue of Sadri Maksudi, a leader of Muslim deputies in pre-war *Duma* and later an advisor to Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and deputy of the Turkish Republic's parliament – a figure important for both Turkish and Tatar history – Minnikhanov brought up the common values, saying:

We are united not only by shared language and religion, but also by shared values, history, and shared culture. Today, we met here to reveal a

²¹⁰ Speech 10a, December 7, 2016, Kazan.

²¹¹ Ibid.

memorial to a great figure, a man who served as a unique bridge, uniting Tatarstan and Turkey.²¹²

These passages are from speeches given the same day; their tone, however, is different. In the former excerpts,²¹³ the historic, cultural, and linguistic proximity are framed as a useful resource for further economic cooperation, as demonstrated by the way they enable Minnikhanov to communicate with his Turkish partners without translation – and the circumstances, under which he mentioned this, suggest that it makes easier especially the planning of joint projects (in trade, investment, etc.), just like in the first period. The President even pointed out Tatarstan's love for Turkey, advocating for the policies of close cooperation. Unlike in the first period, and similarly to the second, Minnikhanov mentions religion as a bond, although this time – just like with culture, history, and language – more as a means than a value.

In the latter excerpt, however (speech 10b), language, religion, culture, history, and shared values stand on their own. After all, it was an occasion related to common culture and history, while the preceding one was on a business forum, and although Minnikhanov seemed to be addressing above all the visiting politicians, the economy was at stake. We should not discard his remarks about culture just because they were made on a culture-related occasion – the sole fact that it was decided to celebrate Maksudi during such a high-level visit bears significance.

Analysing these speeches we can see that in his description of the situation and of the Tatarstani-Turkish relations, Minnikhanov kept on placing Turkey among Tatarstan's principal partners, and, in honouring a figure important for both Turks and Tatars, he highlighted the historic and cultural bonds between the partners. Even his remarks on shared religion signal a turn towards highlighting values without connecting them to business. Besides, he repeated that after a difficult period it was time to get back to work. Speaking directly after the breaking point in ties between Ankara and Moscow, Minnikhanov spoke more openly and implicitly suggested that Putin should not have

²¹² Speech 10b, December 7, 2016, Kazan.

²¹³ Speech 10a, December 7, 2016, Kazan.

reacted so harshly to the “tragedy” of the Su-24 – in effect staying true to his mantra of the need of cooperation, which he emphasized in the previous phases.

Motivational – Hope and Gratitude

Leaving aside inviting investors on directly business-related occasions, Minnikhanov's speeches carried two messages addressed straight to the audiences: hope, for the mending of ties to continue; and gratitude to the Turkish who had trusted in the Republic – be it investors, representatives of the government, or President Erdogan himself.

After the (according to Minnikhanov's judgement) very productive Putin-Erdogan meeting in Saint Petersburg, the President of Tatarstan emphasized hope that the development would follow in the direction set up there.

A very productive meeting took place. I do hope all the agreements that were reached will be implemented.²¹⁴

Minnikhanov stressed this once more at the end of his commentary:

Everything that happened at the meeting was very positive. I do hope this black chapter in the history of Russia – Turkey relations is over.²¹⁵

By expressing his approval of the rapprochement and hope that things would continue to evolve the established way, he encouraged all involved to work for that goal. Considering Minnikhanov's personal involvement and lobbying for this goal, his hope that the warming would last only makes sense. Such an outcome was very important for Tatarstan's long term involvement with Turkey, and Minnikhanov himself had invested a lot into that relationship.

On the remaining two occasions, almost exactly two and four months later, the head of Tatarstan moved from voicing hope to revealing his gratitude. He was thankful to:

²¹⁴ Speech 8, August 9, 2016, Moscow.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

our friend Minister [of Economy Zeybekci], who has been here already repeatedly and maximally cooperates on bringing modern enterprises in our country,²¹⁶

as well as to the investors, as Minnikhanov wished

to have as many such projects here in Tatarstan as possible,²¹⁷

hinting at a Turkish glass factory he had been opening with Zeybekci at the Alabuga Special Economic Zone. But his gratefulness reached the uppermost echelons of Turkish politics, too:

I express great appreciation to the government of the Turkish Republic for the attention to the development of our cooperation.²¹⁸

And similarly, opening his speech to a business forum attended by Turkish Prime Minister Yildirim, he specified this even more:

Let me welcome the Prime Minister of Turkey, mister Binali Yildirim, and a representative Turkish delegation here in Kazan, and thank the President of Turkey, Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdogan, for the attention to the development of relations with the Republic of Tatarstan.²¹⁹

It is noteworthy that Minnikhanov did not express his thankfulness to Yildirim personally during the Prime Minister's visit to Kazan, where he arrived directly after meeting Putin in Moscow, choosing rather to thank directly President Erdogan despite him not being present. More interestingly, the President of Tatarstan did not thank Putin and the government of the Russian Federation.

During the crisis, Minnikhanov seemed to appreciate that the Kremlin did not act against running Turkish investments, but this omission in the third phase of relations seems to contrast quite starkly with the repeated gratefulness to Turkey's government, and president Erdogan specifically. However, it is in line with his previous statements suggesting that it was the Turkish who made reason triumph when they approached

²¹⁶ Speech 9a, October 8, 2016.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ Speech 9b, October 8, 2016.

²¹⁹ Speech 10a, December 7, 2016, Kazan.

Putin. Taking into account that Zeybekci and the Turkish general consul attributed the success of the rapprochement in large part to the head of Tatarstan personally, the implied resentment in Minnikhanov's speeches could be interpreted as a sign of discontent with Putin's diplomacy.

Comparably to the first analysed period, Minnikhanov attended the business-related events with the obvious ambition of attracting trade and investment in the Republic. He went into most detail speaking after opening the Turkish glass factory in Alabuga:

Today in the Republic there work 10 Turkish factories, there's a lot of joint enterprises in energy, construction, automotive industry, petrochemistry, agriculture, healthcare, and others. [...]

We also invite Turkish companies to participate in our infrastructure and logistic projects; we support the broadening of involvement of medium and small businesses.²²⁰

He finished this address by thanking his audiences in Turkish, and the December speech at a business forum was concluded with a “welcome” in Turkish.²²¹ The approach to potential investors was very close to the way he had been inviting businesses to Tatarstan before the crisis, this time stressing Tatarstan's interest in smaller businesses as well. Despite indicating certain disharmony with the centre, Minnikhanov stayed true to his role on the international scene.

Turning to his audiences, Minnikhanov returned to his pre-crisis policy of inviting businessmen to co-work with Tatarstan that he was offering first as a republic open to deep cooperation with Turkey, as well as an entrance for the Turkish entrepreneurs to the vast Russian market. Another strong feature of his addresses was gratitude. He expressed his thankfulness for the work on the preservation and development of relations between Tatarstan and Turkey to Turkish businessmen, who retained their trust to the Republic, and to the echelons of Turkish politics, too, for joining Minnikhanov's efforts to get the relations back on track. Similarly, his

²²⁰ Speech 9b, October 8, 2016.

²²¹ Speech 10a, December 7, 2016, Kazan.

expressions of hope that the relations will continue to have space to develop are not only a sign of his appetite for collaboration with the Turks, but also of his concern over the long-term outcome of his own efforts in this field. This concern proved to be strong enough to incite unusually open – however, in fact, very subtle – display of the head of Tatarstan's discontent with Moscow's foreign policy.

Prognostic – Restoring Economic Cooperation

Regarding the desired shape of relations between the Republic of Tatarstan and the Turkish Republic, the need for cooperation on investment, various projects and businesses came to the fore in Minnikhanov's speeches in the third period. The President pointed out that a number of factories had been working and entrepreneurs had been motivated to cooperate, and remarked that the perspective for cooperation is substantial. He did say that Tatarstan wanted to become a bridge connecting Turkey with Russia, however, the shadow of the rupture between Putin and Erdogan was hanging over Minnikhanov's discourse and the wording of his addresses corresponded to that.

During the ceremony of opening Sisecam Company's glass factories in Alabuga in October 2016, Minnikhanov lauded the faith entrusted to the Republic by the firm glass factory:

Thank you to the Sisecam Company that trusted us and made huge investments resulting in these two enterprises. They are the most modern enterprises, highly productive. And of course, we will continue all kinds of cooperation so that given the enterprises reach the regime of work given by the business plan. And I hope that there should be many such projects.²²²

The notion of trust harks back to the time when cooperation was jeopardized after the shooting down of the Russian Su-24, and Minnikhanov emphasized the need to remain trustworthy. In this way, it is related to the above-discussed hope that the major obstacles are gone, and to the gratitude for collaboration in keeping the contacts alive.

²²² Speech 9a, October 8, 2016.

Simultaneously, the President linked the fruitful cooperation to future goals, as an example of a successful policy and as an illustration of what his aims, thus turning a gripe of the past conflict into an opportunity to restart doing business.

With the same goal in mind, Minnikhanov sought to limit the damages of the conflict by belittling its negative tone:

Yes, we have stood a little still for one year, we talked about it with my colleague, we have rested, and now it is time to actively work.²²³

The notion of “rest” is a clear understatement, as well as saying that they had “stood a little still” in the preceding year. By downplaying the significance of events that had threatened to cut the ties altogether, Minnikhanov tried to hush the fear of such complications prevailing again, as well as to retain a feeling of linearity and stability in the relations. And by encouraging to “actively work” again, he framed the events as an opportunity to give the cooperation a new impulse. And, as he pointed out, both sides would welcome the impulse. Speaking after the Saint Petersburg meeting of Putin with Erdogan and his entourage of ministers and businessmen, Minnikhanov stressed the need for collaboration:

I was there and saw many ministers and entrepreneurs. I know they want to cooperate as much as we do. We want to cooperate. We have 10 finely operating Turkish companies. Our investors. They put in a lot of money in these ventures. Of course, we should resume the projects that were suspended.²²⁴

And resuming suspended projects would be just the beginning. During Zeybekci's visit, Minnikhanov stressed that:

This visit is a nice reserve for the restoration of full cooperation between the Republic and Turkish partners. Economy, healthcare, other fields. [...]

I believe the perspective of our cooperation is huge.²²⁵

²²³ Speech 10a, December 7, 2016, Kazan.

²²⁴ Speech 8, August 9, 2016, Moscow.

²²⁵ Speech 9b, October 8, 2016.

With this quote, we see a return of Minnikhanov's advocating for one of his favourite paradiplomatic tools: personal visits. He mentioned it in October and emphasized it again in December, in presence of Zeybekci and Prime Minister Yildirim:

I can say that, after all, we also love Turkey very much, I am often there and in few days we plan to visit. [...]

We have visited a lot of Turkish regions; we know a lot of directors and governors. We approach every project that is realized by Turkish companies in our Republic very seriously. Together with you, we bear the responsibility for their success and of course, today's visit is the next impulse, because all those projects were realized in the last five or six years after the visit of the then-Prime Minister. Mr. Erdogan visited our Republic and all this work followed.²²⁶

The head of Tatarstan has been travelling abroad often, and he wanted his audiences to understand how important this practice had been – and would be – for the development of the Republic.

In the light of Minnikhanov's repeated thankfulness to the Turkish government and Erdogan personally for the effort in mending Russo-Turkish and Tatarstani-Turkish relations, his reminder that “all this work [had] followed” after Erdogan visited Tatarstan seems to be another nod in that direction. The repeated references to Erdogan – be it the importance of his past visit or expression of gratitude for his work on the development of mutual relations – can be a result of Minnikhanov's attempt to please the Turkish President, or, more likely, to persuade the public in Tatarstan of the usefulness of this contact and to advocate for their cooperation.

Minnikhanov was trying to persuade not only the home audience of the benefits of close ties between the Republic and Turkey, but the Turkish, too. Talking after the ceremonial opening of the factory in Alabuga, he explained that Tatarstan wants to help Turkish companies enter the Russian market:

²²⁶ Speech 10a, December 7, 2016, Kazan.

We want our Republic to become a bridge for the entrance of Turkish business to the huge Russian market. Tatarstan is ready to provide all the necessary conditions for this.²²⁷

Apart from this mention, however, the ambition to participate in the progression of mutual relations between Turkey and Russia was absent from Minnikhanov's talk in the period when reconstructing the ties post-crisis was a prime concern.

The Russian Federation received a lot less attention in that period in general, which leaves a lot less space to evaluate Minnikhanov's stance on the position of Tatarstan within the Federation. Taking into account the little that he did say, as well as evaluating what he did *not* say, we can assess some details though. Most of all, Minnikhanov did not speak of bilateral relations in regards to ties between Tatarstan and Turkey; neither did any of his comments imply exaggeration of the Republic's role on the international scene. Although not as frequently as in the first phase, he did verbally position Tatarstan's part within the Russo-Turkish relations. However, in doing so, he offered the Turkish sort of a backdoor to the Russian market, an easier way to get in – it is questionable whether it was on behalf of Russia or in order to sweeten the invitation for Turkish businessmen, who could otherwise be less interested in cooperation with Tatarstan itself.

Tatarstan's relation to the Turkish, as represented by Minnikhanov, remained strong and centred on economic cooperation also within this phase. This partnership was to be facilitated by shared culture, history, and religion, and a related language – regardless of the fact that only around a half of Tatarstan's population are the Tatars who share these traits with the Turks. However, the values seemed to receive more attention for themselves, without always being utilized for easier economic cooperation. Moreover, the feeling of gratitude for the will to continue the relation between Turkey and the Republic, based on Minnikhanov's own work to allow it, was expressed very strongly, contrasting with the cooler stance towards the Russian government.

Overall, these speeches' impressions of Russia and its government were not very favourable. Minnikhanov seemed to be slightly frustrated by Russia's diplomacy – most

²²⁷ Speech 9b, October 8, 2016.

likely because it crossed with the interests of his own paradiplomacy. Especially considering Minnikhanov's record of avoiding direct comments on conflictual international politics issues, the fact that this impression shone through in some of his remarks shows that it was rather strong. His deference to Erdogan and the Turkish government had been there before the crisis, too, but the context of slight resentment towards Moscow shines a different light on it, specifically given the repeated expressions of gratitude to Ankara for the mending of the mutual relations.

3.4 *The developments*

The strongest observation, and the most important one, is that not much had changed in the way Minnikhanov was defining the relation between the Republic of Tatarstan and Turkey. Of course, there are some changes to point out; there has been some development. Minnikhanov did reflect the changing conditions, or the diplomatic shift of the Moscow-Ankara axis. The developments and changes will be described below, but the message here is that despite all the nuances, the head of Tatarstan kept on referring to the Turkish in an overall positive way, avoiding confronting or accusing them; on the contrary, encouraging further cooperation – notwithstanding the current position of Moscow.

Describing the Tatarstani-Turkish relations, Minnikhanov often sought to characterize the potential of mutual cooperation in economic terms. Especially in the first phase, most remarks were made in context of the deepening of collaboration in trade and investment; “projects” – signalling those in economic sphere – were at the core of most of the speeches from the pre-conflict period, and they were present even in the speeches from the latter two phases. During the crisis, they served as an argument for the continuation of the partnership, and that the trust given to Tatarstan and Russia by the entrepreneurs was not to be betrayed. After relations started to improve again,

Minnikhanov quickly returned to calling Turkey a “principal partner”²²⁸ and moved from encouragements to preserve the fruitful work to calling for the deepening of partnership again.

The linguistic, cultural, and religious proximity of Tatars and Turks was another recurring topic, in fact, often alongside economy – Minnikhanov used those bonds to advocate for the partnership and especially to make the partnership more appealing to potential economic partners. It was apparent especially in the first phase, but it came back in the third. However, an interesting development had taken place: when the ties were jeopardized by the rapid cooling of Russo-Turkish relations, the President of Tatarstan turned to emphasizing these bonds for themselves, instead of just trying to utilize them for economic profit. And despite returning to stressing the cooperative potential those ties offer in trade after the worst part of the crisis was over, he also chose to celebrate a historic figure connecting Turkish and Tatar (and Russian) history by specifically pointing out the deep value of close language and culture, and shared history and religion. The mentions of shared religion, virtually absent from Minnikhanov's pre-crisis discourse, point towards a turn to non-economic values in the relations as well – which is not to say, however, that religion would start to play a stronger practical role in the ties.

Considering details, among the apparent changes was the absence of remarks related to the flights connecting Turkey with Tatarstan and to the representative offices in Kazan and Istanbul, in which Minnikhanov repeatedly took pride in the first phase. The operation of the Turkish consulate in Kazan and Tatarstani representative office in Istanbul was not interrupted, but charter connections between Russia and Turkey were cancelled due to the shooting down of the fighter jet. However, Minnikhanov did not return to the topic even though flights were renewed in September 2016.²²⁹ We could

²²⁸ Speech 1, November 27, 2014, Moscow; Speech 10a, December 7, 2016, Kazan.

²²⁹ “Kak reagiruet turisticheskoe soobshchestvo na soobshchenie Rosaviatsii? Voznikaet panika!” *Biznes Online*, April 11, 2017, <https://www.business-gazeta.ru/article/342638> (accessed July 10, 2017), “Charter connection between Russia and Turkey restored,” *Russian Aviation Insider*, September 5, 2016, <http://www.rusaviainsider.com/charter-connection-between-russia-and->

speculate as to why that was so, but the omission of these topics did not change the sense of the speeches at all – thus it is plausible to say that the head of Tatarstan came to the conclusion that it is not a necessary or primary characteristic of the relations.

When directly addressing audiences, Minnikhanov's main concern was to attract investors. It was very apparent in the pre-crisis period, as well as in the period after. During the crisis it was not the case – for the rather obvious reason that attracting investment at a time of Russian-imposed sanctions on Turkish business was out of the question. After all, Tatarstan is a region of the Russian Federation, and Minnikhanov's paradiplomacy could not directly oppose the official stance of the Kremlin. The second component of Minnikhanov's appeals to audiences was certainly a deference to the Turkish – both businessmen and the government – which was absent during the crisis, but came back even stronger after. The second phase was, from a motivational point of view, centred to appeals on the preservation of contacts and an emphasis on cooperation – an approach typical of Minnikhanov's attitude to dealing with international relations' complications.

Regarding the meaning and direction of the relations, an interesting development transpired. While in the first period Minnikhanov repeatedly stressed that he works on behalf of Russo-Turkish relations, in the third period the mentions of Russia are toned down to a minimum. Minnikhanov merely said that Tatarstan wants to offer Turkish businessmen the chance to enter the “huge Russian market”²³⁰ – a notion that does not even completely imply anything positive for the Federation – and implicitly ventilated some of his gripes with the central government. Moreover, notions of interregional cooperation – frequent before the Su-24 incident – completely disappeared. On the other hand, while in the first phase Minnikhanov had the tendency to exaggerate Tatarstan's position vis-à-vis Turkey, placing the Republic into a state-like context, in the third phase nothing of that sort happened.

turkey-restored/ (accessed July 10, 2017), and Meyer, Henry, Ilya Khrennikov, “Russia Warns Airlines of Possible Halt to Turkey Charter Flights,” Bloomberg Politics, April 10, 2017, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-04-10/russia-warns-airlines-of-possible-halt-to-turkey-charter-flights> (accessed July 10, 2017).

²³⁰ Speech 9a, October 8, 2016.

The circumstances under which the speech from the second period took place are responsible for it really standing out. There are a lot of differences that come up while analysing it next to the rest of the addresses. It is not surprising, but it does not automatically mean that Minnikhanov was passively accepting Putin's policies – the fact that Tatarstan's paradiplomacy is conducted within the frame of Russia's foreign relations means that Minnikhanov had to respond to the current political situation. Therefore, not all the disparities that set this speech apart lead to a revelation that the character of Tatarstan's paradiplomacy changed in that period. It is also necessary to take into account the fact that this speech was not issued in relation to any (para-) diplomatic affair – unlike all the others. We can see different topics coming to the fore, in relation to the future and direction of the relations, but ones that are, in fact, in line with the long-term purposes: the head of Tatarstan emphasized the need to cooperate, retain all the contacts, and, most of all, remain trustworthy and reliable – in preserving the conditions for Turkish businessmen who invested in Tatarstan.

Overall, interesting developments did take place between the first and third phases. The most noteworthy are the fact that cultural bonds tying Tatarstan to Turkey acquired a greater value in Minnikhanov's discourse under the threat of a longer-lasting disruption of relations between Russia and Turkey, and, most of all, the evolution of Minnikhanov's rhetoric regarding the Russian central government. During the restoration of Russo-Turkish relations, the President of Tatarstan showed certain distress with regards to Moscow, most likely stemming from his frustration with the crisis, and central diplomacy vastly complicating one of the key areas of Tatarstan's paradiplomacy. This contrasted with the displays of loyalty to the Moscow-led foreign policy from the pre-crisis period and the firm placement of his activities within the framework of Russian ties to Turkey.

The simultaneous disappearance of demonstrations of loyalty and exaggerations of the Republic's position in international politics can be revealing that Minnikhanov had been balancing one with the other, but after the crisis, his disenchantment with Putin's government led him to sacrifice his possibly provocative remarks on “bilateral” relations between Tatarstan and Turkey rather than praise Russian diplomacy towards Ankara.

However, as was mentioned above, the main tune of Minnikhanov's discourse remained the same throughout all the stages: Tatarstan wanted to cooperate with the culturally related Turkey as intensively as possible. This points towards an independent definition of the Republic's paradiplomatic goals. That does not mean that Tatarstan was (or could be) doing whatever its leader wanted – however, Minnikhanov's rhetoric, while most of the time in accordance with Russian diplomacy, did counter it in some aspects.

Finally, it was not only by rhetoric that Minnikhanov was following his paradiplomatic goal of collaborating with Turkey and Turkish entrepreneurs. Using internal channels – presumably informal, since there are not many direct sources of information – he was lobbying on behalf of those aims in the Russian government, thus pursuing his paradiplomacy through attempts to influence the national – all-Russian – diplomacy.

Conclusion

The analysis of Rustam Nurgaliyevich Minnikhanov's speeches has revealed that the goals of Tatarstani paradiplomacy remained constant, regardless of the contemporary character of Russia's relations to Turkey, and so did the definition of the links tying Tatarstan with Turkey. The analysis has also shown some developments and differences in Minnikhanov's rhetoric throughout the examined period, but the main message is clear: however were Moscow's relations to Ankara changing, Kazan kept on defining Turkey as its partner and taking a positive position towards it. That is a crucial finding, because it reveals a factor of autonomy in Tatarstan's paradiplomacy, despite the authoritarian character of the Russian government.

The President of the Russian Federation expressed his will to break up Russia's ties to Turkey, creating an obstacle for Tatarstan's long-term paradiplomatic aims. But Tatarstan did not quietly accept the rupture and did not tear its own ties to Turkey. After all, an important aspect of Minnikhanov's paradiplomacy is that he utilizes his international contacts not only on behalf of the Republic, but also to legitimize himself as the strong leader of a strong region, so quietly abandoning the course could damage the image of his consistency. All the more so that he had been using an identity element – culture and language – to advocate for the extension of mutual collaboration. Correspondingly, Tatarstan has been active in the international Turkic organizations – such as the International Organization of Turkic Culture (TÜRKSOY), which, in 2014, selected Kazan to be the “Culture and Arts Capital of the Turkic World”. Besides (as Minnikhanov himself pointed out), Turkish investment contributed its significant share to the development of Tatarstani economy, created a vast number of jobs, and has been responsible for a noteworthy part of the Republic's tax revenue. The relations between Tatarstan and Turkey are not only a part of Minnikhanov's paradiplomatic discourse; they do have direct and concrete implications for Tatarstan's society.

Minnikhanov's work on behalf of the preservation and/or restoration of the Russo-Turkish relations during the crisis, publicly appreciated and pointed out by both the Turkish Minister of Economy and Turkish Ambassador to Russia, is perfectly in line with the findings of the discourse analysis: Tatarstan continued to promote close

cooperation with Turkey even at a time when Moscow had a strongly negative outlook on the country.

However, during the second phase of the examined period – the phase characterized by a crisis in the relations of Russia and Turkey – Minnikhanov had to abandon the use of his preferred paradiplomatic tool: the meetings with high representatives of the Turkish Republic (not coincidentally the tool that allows him to present himself alongside with state-level foreign politicians on ceremonial occasions). He also spoke about the relations with Turkey only once during this eight-month-long phase, a very low frequency compared to the other phases. On that occasion, he chose not to specify the reasons or the sources of the conflict, referring rather to the words of President Putin and otherwise staying true to his positive tone, thus avoiding the threat of upsetting either Putin or the President of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

With respect to the research questions outlined in the first chapter, it is possible to conclude that the Russian Federation does influence the paradiplomacies of its regions. This conclusion supports the findings of other researchers. After all, a region has to respect the binding policies of the state it is a part of, which is valid in external affairs as well as in internal policies. Thus, when a state's diplomacy changes direction, paradiplomacies of its units need to take it into account even if the previous direction suited them better. That, though, does not imply that the central government clamps down on paradiplomacy and does not leave any space for it, or that the region always fully complies with the foreign policies of the centre.

Interestingly, the analysis has revealed that the studied subject of an authoritarian federation did exercise a paradiplomacy more or less independent from the centre, or downright opposing the federal diplomacy, without provoking a conflict with the centre. Existing literature was suggesting that in states that lack freedoms, the conduction of paradiplomacy could be causing problems. The case of Tatarstan's relations to Turkey during the Russo-Turkish diplomatic conflict, however, shows that it is not necessary the case. On the contrary, in the third phase, it was Minnikhanov who seemed to actually resent the central government for the preceding developments in its diplomacy, not the other way round.

Minnikhanov's (behind-the-scenes) work on the restoration of the damaged Russo-Turkish relations is an example of a region pursuing its paradiplomatic goals

through influencing the foreign policies of the centre. Such examples have been described before, but not in an authoritarian state. Interregional contacts between units of states with damaged or problematic mutual relations have been described, too, and also involving authoritarian states (for example in the People's Republic of China), but in those cases, it was the centre's incentive aiming to ease off the tensions. In the analysed case, it was Tatarstan's bottom-up initiative.

It cannot be ruled out that Putin, too, was satisfied with the fact that Tatarstan was trying to preserve the ties with Turkey during the conflict, because he had not planned to break the ties permanently. That is only a speculation, however, since there is no information available regarding the course of Minnikhanov's negotiations. Moreover, the discourse analysis does not support this version, because Minnikhanov's resentfulness towards the centre in the third phase suggests a certain frustration that seems to be stemming from Putin's policies towards Turkey. To satisfactory answer such questions, and other questions related to the informal side of centre-regional relations in authoritarian states, it is necessary to investigate the informal structures and channels connecting the centre with the regional leaders – a very complicated task with regards to states with strong leaders, but weak institutions.

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