BUILDING A SPHERE OF INFLUENCE IN THEIR BACKYARD:
A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF
TURKISH AND RUSSIAN SOFT POWER

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ABSTRACT

BUILDING A SPHERE OF INFLUENCE IN THEIR BACKYARD:
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TURKEY'S AND RUSSIA'S SOFT POWER

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This thesis analyses how Russia and Turkey under the governments of Vladimir Putin (2000 to date) and Tayyip Erdoğan (2003 to date) respectively, understand and implement the concept of soft power to construct/re-affirm their zones of influence in their shared neighbourhoods with the EU. Building on existing literature, this thesis argues that, in its original formulation, the concept of soft power has liberal biases that complicate its application to non- or partially liberal states, such as Russia and Turkey. A different definition rooted in some concepts by the political theorist Antonio Gramsci – especially, 'hegemony' and 'common sense' is proposed. This revised definition is operationalised through soft power narratives and applied it through the empirical analysis of two case studies – Armenia for Russia and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) for Turkey. This thesis, thus, carries out: I) a comparative analysis of the commonalities and differences between Turkish and Russian understandings and use of soft power, and II) an empirical assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of these narratives in the two specific case studies. This thesis aims to contribute to the soft power literature through a theoretical reflection about the concept and its empirical application in the case of Turkey and Russia.

Keywords: Soft Power, Identity, Turkey, Russia, Foreign Policy

ÖZ

ARKA BAHÇEDE BİR NÜFUZ ALANI İNŞA ETMEK:
TÜRK VE RUS YUMUŞAK GÜCÜNÜN KARŞILAŞTIRILMALI BİR ANALİZİ

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Bu tez Vladimir Putin (2000'den günümüze) ve Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (2003'ten günümüze) yönetimindeki sırasıyla Rusya ve Türkiye hükümetlerinin AB ile paylaştıkları komşu bölgelerinde "yumuşak güç" kavramını kendi nüfuz alanlarını inşa etmek/yeniden tayin etmek için nasıl anlayıp uyguladıklarını analiz eder. Mevcut literatüre dayanarak bu tez, özgün formülasyonunda "yumuşak güç" kavramının Rusya ve Türkiye gibi liberal olmayan ya da kısmen liberal olan devletlere uygulamasını karmaşıklaştıran liberal önyargılara sahip olduğunu savunmaktadır. Siyaset kuramcısı Antonio Gramsci tarafından geliştirilen – özellikle "hegemonya" ve "ortak akıl" gibi – bazı kavramlarda kökleşmiş farklı bir tanım önerilmektedir. Bu gözden geçirilmiş tanım, "yumuşak güç" anlatılarıyla işlevselleştirilmektedir ve iki vaka çalışmasının ampirik analizi yoluyla uygulanmaktadır – Rusya için Ermenistan ve Türkiye için Kuzey Kıbrıs Türk Cumhuriyeti (KKTC). Bu tez, dolayısıyla: I) Türkiye'nin ve Rusya'nın "yumuşak güç"ü anlamaları ve uygulamaları arasındaki ortaklıklar ve farklılıkların karşılaştırmalı bir analizini ve II) iki belirli vaka çalışmasında bu anlatıların güçlü ve zayıf yönlerinin ampirik bir değerlendirmesini yapmaktadır. Bu tez, "yumuşak güç" literatürüne, kavram hakkında ve onun Türkiye ve Rusya vakalarına apirik olarak uygulamasına teorik bir bakış açısı yoluyla katkıda bulunmayı amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yumuşak Güç, Kimlik, Türkiye, Rusya, Dış Politika

To my family, especially to my niece Carla,
who was born roughly at the same time as this thesis.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AA	Association Agreement
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa
CSTO	Collective Security Treaty Organization
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
DCFTA	Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement
EaP	Eastern Partnership
EEU	Eurasian Economic Union
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EU	European Union
EOKA	National Organisation of Cypriot Fighters
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GONGO	Government Organised Non-Governmental Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IR	International Relations
IS	Islamic State
JDP	Justice and Development Party
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NDB	BRICS New Development Bank
PKK	Kurdistan Workers' Party
RoC	Republic of Cyprus
TIKA	Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency
TMT	Turkish Resistance Organization
TRNC	Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus
UN	United Nations
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UK	United Kingdom
UR	United Russia
US	United States
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WWII	World War II

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

1.1. Background and overview

My thesis analyses Russia's and Turkey's soft power under the governments of Vladimir Putin (2000 to date) and Tayyip Erdoğan (2003 to date) respectively. It aims to unpack how these two countries understand and implement the concept of soft power to construct/re-affirm their influence in their regions. Building on existing literature on soft power, I argue that in its original formulation (Nye 1990, 2004, 2011), the concept of soft power has liberal biases that complicate its application to non- or partially liberal states, such as Russia and Turkey. Following the academic work of Zahran and Ramos (2010) – who claim that integrating insights by the political theorist Antonio Gramsci into the concept of soft power allows for a more neutral analysis (Zahran and Ramos 2010: 24) – I propose a different definition of soft power rooted in some Gramscian concepts – especially, 'hegemony' and 'common sense'. I operationalise this revised definition through soft power narratives and apply it through the empirical analysis of two case studies – for Russia: Armenia's accession to the Russia-led regional integration project, the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU); for Turkey: the suspension of the 2014 peace negotiations in Cyprus. The thesis' main results: I) a comparative analysis of the commonalities and differences between Turkish and Russian understandings and use of soft power, and II) an empirical assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of Turkey's and Russia's soft power narratives in the two specific case studies.

The concept of soft power was coined by Joseph Nye (1990) and refers to the ability of a state to achieve its objectives through attraction or co-option rather than coercion or economic inducements. Nye (2011: 20-21) defines soft power as the 'ability to affect others through the cooptive means of framing the agenda, persuading, and eliciting positive attraction in order to obtain preferred outcomes.' The power of attraction of a state stems from the appeal of its culture, political values, and foreign policies (Nye 2004, 2011). Since its inception, the concept gained popularity to the extent that 'few scholarly concepts have transcended the ivory towers of academia as vigorously as the concept of soft power'

(Gallarotti 2010: 2). A growing number of states – including the United Kingdom (UK), the United States (US), China and Saudi Arabia, to name a few –claim to have incorporated soft power policies into their foreign policy tools. Despite its prominent usage, however, the concept needs further conceptual and methodological refinement. This is particularly true when analysing the foreign policies of non-Western and non-liberal states, due to the strong bonds of Nye's original formulation of the concept with universal liberal values and US foreign policy. According to Nye (2004: 11), democracy and independent civil society are important elements shaping soft power; furthermore, political values and foreign policies are more persuasive when they are *universal*, contrary to the ones are seen as either narrow or parochial, and therefore are far less likely to produce soft power. If a 'critical and uncensored civil society' (Nye 2013) is an indispensable condition for a country to exercise soft power, can countries that apply severe constraints to freedom of expression claim to have soft power?

My research addresses this fundamental question. It assesses Russia's and Turkey's soft power through a redefined soft power definition, which incorporates Gramscian concepts such as 'hegemony' and 'common sense', following the work of the critical scholars Zahran and Ramos (2010). It also shows the deep connection between hard and soft power. Russia and Turkey claim[1] to use soft power capabilities in their foreign policies, whether it is through language programmes, student exchanges, or external aid. Many states including liberal democracies commonly use these soft power capabilities. However, I demonstrate throughout my analysis that Russia and Turkey are increasingly challenging the established concept of soft power based on liberal values; instead, they are adapting it to their political systems, which are increasingly similar. Indeed, the reasons for comparatively studying Russia and Turkey's foreign policies are manifold. First, both countries share an imperialist past and are crucial players in the international arena. Alongside other states such as India and China – they have managed to re-establishing themselves as major political players while seeking recognition for their past as great powers and salient civilisation poles.

[1] References to soft power are made, for instance, in the 2016 Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation, which defines soft power is 'an integral part of efforts to achieve foreign policy objectives' thorugh 'the tools offered by civil society, as well as various methods and technologies – from information and communication, to humanitarian and other types'. (Russian MFA 2016) The website of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on the other hand, describes specifically Turkey's soft power as consisting of three features: Democracy, Economy and Trade, while its sources include Turkey's liberal visa regime, its history and capacity to inspire the Muslim world, and Turkey's development aid policies. (Benhaïm and Öktem 2015: 13) More quotes from Turkish and Russian official documents and politicians will be provided throughout the thesis.

Sometimes, they are labelled as (re)emerging or rising powers[2], that is, states that I) hold a reasonable amount of power; II) see themselves as rising in international relations; and III) look at the Western-dominated system from the outside (Hurrell 2006). Second, both countries have similarly highly centralised governments, with a strong leader and an increasingly shrinking space for dissent, civil society and minority organisations. Both countries fit in the category of 'illiberal democracies' (Zakaria 1997) – that is, democratically elected regimes 'routinely ignoring constitutional limits on their power and depriving their citizens of basic rights and freedoms' (Zakaria 1997: 22). Zakaria points out that electoral democracy and constitutional liberalism are different, but related concepts. In 'illiberal democracies', although democracy is formally present, civil societies face severe constraints – i.e. lack of civil liberties – and therefore are prevented from active participation in the decision-making process. While Putin has almost consistently contested Western values and dominance, in the first phase of his government, Erdoğan signalled his wish to comply with the standards on democracy and the rule of law of the European Union (EU).[3] Today, though, both states are part of 'a growing number of rising, often illiberal, states that do not see a US-created order as consistent with their interests or reflective of their power' (Boyle 2016: 37), and therefore wish to challenge the foundations of the US and EU-championed international order. In fact, a growing number of academic and press publications started making a direct comparison between the Turkish and the Russian leaders over the last few years, whether in terms of their 'similar logics of power accrual and maintenance' (Öktem & Akkoyunlu 2016: 470), their strict control over the Internet (Parkinson et al. 2014), the widespread anti-American sentiments among both populations

[2] Usually, the literature divide states into the categories of small, middle and great powers depending on their capabilities to act and project power (hard and soft) in international relations. Further categorizations look at states as superpowers, great powers, regional powers and small states. Detlef Nolte (2010) conceptualises regional powers addressing the differences with alternative concepts such as middle powers. A regional power is essentially defined as a state a) 'which articulates the pretension (self-conception) of a leading position in a region that is geographically, economically and political-ideationally delimited; b) which displays the material (military, economic, demographic), organisational (political) and ideological resources for regional power projection; c) which truly has great influence in regional affairs (activities and results)' (Nolte 2010: 893).

[3] According to Morozov and Rumelili (2012: 29), Russia and Turkey challenged, each in its own way, the 'EU's power to define the normative meaning of Europe'. Turkey aims to decentre European identity by contesting Europe's self-perception to be a multicultural space. Russia, on the other hand, with its 'uncompromising stance' (Morozov and Rumelili 2012: 29) reinforcerces the image of Europe as a liberal-democratic political community. The normative contestation and interaction between Turkish, Russian and European identity-formation processes becomes also visible in Russia's and Turkey's soft power narratives examined in Chapter Four of my thesis.

(Warhola & Bezci 2013: 4), or because in both countries 'forms of democracy have been suborned by majoritarian nationalism, bolstered to varying degrees by the security state' (de Bellaigue 2016). Third, both countries are generally seen as having little or ineffective soft power or relying more on hard power. Ignoring their soft power understanding and impact, however, would lead to a partial vision of their power strategies.

Furthermore, the analysis of my case studies reveals that it is very difficult to disentangle hard and soft power and, often, the two dimensions reinforce mutually. The liberal biases of the concept of soft power, which this thesis aims to address through a reformulation of the concept, contribute to this oversight. Lastly, both countries are of crucial importance to the EU. While they still have strong historical, political, trade links to the EU, both are now diverting from the 'European path'. Their activities and ambitions in their neighbourhoods, which overlap with the EU's to a great extent, impact the EU's significantly.

In order to study Turkey's and Russia's soft power, in the theoretical chapter, I suggest a re-formulation of the concept of soft power, drawing on the academic literature that analysed soft power in light of used the Gramscian concepts of hegemony and common sense, especially Zahran and Ramos (2010). In Gramsci's hegemony, consensus-building is, together with coercion, fundamental for a dominant actor to maintain its hierarchical advantage. Influencing what is considered to be 'common sense' – that is, the 'most widespread conception of life and morals', a traditional and local worldview Gramsci (1971: 326) – is also part of this process. In fact, soft power can be viewed as a key element of mechanisms of hegemony understood as an 'expression of broadly based consensus manifest in the acceptance of ideas, supported by material resources and institutions'. (Morton 2007: 113) I define soft power as 'the ability to exert influence in such a way that particular policies, worldviews and narratives are framed as "common sense", paving the way for the establishment of power relations.' This approach allows us to depart from Nye's conceptualisation of soft power linked to 'universal' liberal values, which makes it difficult to apply the concept to countries that do not share them.

In my thesis, I choose to operationalise soft power not only in terms of specific institutions and policies (such as language policies or international aid organisations) but also in terms of narratives, as suggested by Roselle et al. (2014). Barnett (1999: 23) defines a narrative as a 'story that is joined by a plot', containing indications of what defining moments shaped a

country's past and should determine its future. Narratives are important both as tools in the collective identity-making processes and as an analytical category, allowing researchers to enhance their understanding of a country's domestic and foreign policy. (Roberts 2006) The recent IR 'narrative turn' led to a significant embrace of narratives as a fundamental research tool (Roberts 2006: 703) and has 'greatly improved our understanding of how narratives influence state policy choices'. (Subotić 2016: 11) Narratives can be constructed through official discourse (speeches, foreign policy concepts et cetera) that manage to impose themselves internationally as 'natural'. Measuring accurately in an empiricist way a volatile and diffuse concept such as soft power is not possible, as I acknowledge in Chapter Two. I aim to assess through process-tracing how soft power worked in two specific case studies, which I detail and justify in Section Four of this introduction.

1.2. Research objectives and questions

Through this study, I aim to grasp a better understanding on how Turkey and Russia construct/re-affirm their zones of influence through soft power narratives and, to a lesser extent, policies such as language and cultural policies, international aid, etc. The EU's PRIMO ITN project supported my research[4], which – despite focusing on Turkey's and Russia's foreign policies – takes into account the impact the EU neighbourhood and enlargement policies. Not only do the EU, Turkey and Russia share common 'neighbourhoods' and zones of influence (the Western Balkans, the South Caucasus, the countries included in the EU's Eastern Partnership), but they also face many common global and regional security challenges. To gain a deeper understanding of the dynamics occurring in these regions, it is, therefore, crucial to understanding the motivations and ambitions of actors such as Turkey and Russia, which play an important political and economic role in those areas.

[4] PRIMO is a global Marie Curie Initial Training Network funded by the European Commission studying the rise of regional powers, its impact on international politics and, specifically, its implications for EU foreign policy. According to its mission statement, 'PRIMO studies the actions, relations, processes and mechanisms of BRICS states' interactions, both in their own regions and with well-established powers, multilateral institutions and non-state actors. This knowledge is highly relevant for the formulation of European foreign policies and strategies in multilateral institutions.' For more information, please visit the PRIMO website http://www.primo-itn.eu/about-primo/

In light of the twofold nature of soft power as both an analytical category and a category of practice, this research has both conceptual and empirical objectives. Conceptually, the project aims to de-westernise soft power. I argue that Nye's neoliberal conception of soft power is Western-centric, as it implies the presence of liberal values to exert soft power. These biases make it difficult to apply Nye's concept to illiberal democracies. According to Nye (2013), countries like Turkey and Russia, where illiberal policies constrain civil society, will fail to succeed to exert genuine soft power. Is this the case for these two countries? Moreover, by providing empirical evidence – although with limited generalizability claims – my analysis of the practical application of soft power in high-profile political instances helps to shed light on the nature of soft power as an analytical category.

The questions guiding this research are: how can we conceptualise and operationalise soft power to analyse all countries, liberal and 'illiberal democracies'?; How does the soft power of Turkey and Russia work in practice?; What are the main similarities and differences between Turkey's and Russia's soft power, and how can we explain them? Answering these questions will help strengthen the literature on soft power.

1.3. Contribution to the literature and policy relevance

My research aims to contribute to the literature on power, regionalism and global International Relations (IR). It contextualises a concept created and developed in the West and adapts it to the foreign policies that two increasingly relevant non-Western regional powers, Turkey and Russia, apply in their neighbourhood (specifically in the south Caucasian Republic of Armenia and in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus).

Despite some recent academic interest for the soft power of some non-Western actors, comparative studies are scarce (but see, for instance, Hongying Wang & Yeh-Chung Lu 2008; Hayden 2012), while there are no studies explicitly comparing Turkish and Russian soft power narratives and policies. The expected result of this thesis is thus a comprehensive and innovative analysis of the 'soft dimension' of Turkish and Russian power strategies.

My case studies, explained in detail below, concern Russia's relation with Armenia and Turkey's relation with the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). The geographical focus of the case studies relates to the capital importance of these countries to both Turkey and Russia, but also to the EU. The policy relevance of the research becomes especially evident in light of the recent crises involving the three actors (Turkey, Russia, and the EU) in their neighbourhoods, such as the conflict in Ukraine (started in 2014 and ongoing at the time of writing) or the failure of the last Cyprus reunification negotiations in Geneva in 2017. Soft power is also a pillar of EU foreign policy. This study will contribute to a better understanding of both the conceptual and practical sides of Turkish and Russian soft powers. Hence, it will also help to better 'tailor' EU's policies towards these countries.

1.4. Case studies

The selected case study for the analysis of Russia's soft power in my thesis is Armenia's accession to the Russia-led regional integration project, the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU). In September 2013, Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan declared that he would not sign the Association Agreement to achieve more political and economic integration with the EU as planned, but Armenia would join the EEU instead. This announcement caught Brussels by surprise since it represented a shift in Armenia's foreign policy, which in recent years had quite consistently advocated integration with the EU. How can we explain the role of Russia in this outcome? Both material and immaterial factors are at play. If on the one hand, Armenia depends on Russia regarding the economy and security-wise, it is also worth noticing the broad historical and cultural ties with Russia and strong public support for the EEU, conditions that might enable Russia's soft power. For instance, public support for the EEU is high in Armenia: an opinion poll from the Eurasian Development Bank from 2014 found support for the EEU among 64% of the population. To what extent did ideational and cultural factors account for Armenia's decision? In short, how did Russia's soft power impact this outcome? For the analysis of this case study, I rely on the elite interviews that I have conducted in Yerevan, St Petersburg and Moscow. In particular, I draw upon the insights that I have gained thanks to a three-month-visiting fellowship at the St Petersburg State University, Russia, as a part of the PRIMO mobility scheme from April to July 2016.

The political outcome I select for assessing Turkey's soft power is the suspension of the 2014 peace negotiations in Cyprus[5]: why did they fail? How did Turkey influence that outcome, especially concerning shaping the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC)'s interests and negotiating position? The TRNC is an entity that is not recognised internationally as a state. Not only is Turkey the only country that recognises TRNC, but it also contributes substantially to its economy and security. As a matter of fact, since the 1974 military operation[6], Turkey has been acting as the chief security and economic provider for the TRNC. Starting from the 2014 outcome, my analysis proceeds backwards to trace the influence of Turkey on TRNC foreign policy decisions, in order to understand the evolution and impact of Turkey's soft power narrative and instruments in the region, and how it overlaps or collide with other relevant actors in the area, primarily the EU and Russia. In the framework of this case study, I have conducted interviews with policy-makers, businesspeople, academics and civil society actors in Ankara and Lefkoşa.

Both selected case studies are relevant at different levels. Firstly, the cases are domestically relevant to Turkey and Russia: TRNC is an internally relevant political issue in Turkey because ethnic Turks inhabit it and Ankara harbours material interests and status in the region; as Viktor Panin, Head of the Russia-based Research Institute for Strategic Studies argues Armenia is Russia's only strategic ally in the South Caucasus.[7] These case studies

[5] Northern Cyprus (*Kuzey Kıbrıs*) is offically referred by its government and Turkey as the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). Since it is recognised internationally only by Turkey, TRNC is considered to be part of the Republic of Cyprus by the international community and simply referred to as 'Northern Cyprus'. In my thesis, I will refer to it as TRNC.

[6] The Cyprus dispute is also referred to as the Cyprus conflict, Cyprus issue or Cyprus problem. All these labels refer to the ongoing partition of the island into two parts: TRNC in the North and the Republic of Cyprus (RoC) in the South. Turkey's military actions in 1974 and current presence on roughly one-third of the territory in the north are labelled in different terms: the Turkey's government calls it 'Cyprus Peace Operation', while the RoC referes to it as 'Turkish invasion and continuing occupation 36.2% of the territory of the Republic of Cyprus'. See: Government of the Republic of Cyprus, 'Core document on Cyprus drawn up in accordance with General Assembly resolution 45/85 and the consolidated guidelines for the initial part of the reports of States parties (document HRI/991/1) Available at:
http://www.olc.gov.cy/olc/olc.nsf/all/97D28762FA1E293342257A9100317D3C/$file/CORE%20DOCUMENT%20-%20FINAL.pdf?openelement
In my thesis, I will refer to it as Turkey's 'military operation'.

[7] Arka News Agency, Armenia remains Russia's only strategic ally in South Caucasus, 'Russian political analyst says', 3 November 2017. Online:

indeed allow an analysis of the behaviour of both Turkey and Russia in their respective spheres of influence, areas where they play or aim at playing a dominant international role. Since the South Caucasus and Cyprus were once part of the Soviet Union and the Ottoman Empire respectively, the cases will contribute to the literature of 'holding-together regionalism': the integration of countries that until recently were part of a single political entity (Libman and Vinokurov 2012: 2).

Secondly, the cases have cross-country relevance, as both Russian and Turkish interests historically coexist in both regions. Turkey, for instance, froze its relations with Armenia and closed its borders after the war in Nagorno-Karabakh out of support for Azerbaijan, and has a longstanding controversy over the nature of the so-called 'Armenian genocide'[8] in 1915. How did these negative relations with Turkey impact Armenia's decision to join the Eurasian Economic Union? Equally, Russia has historically been active in the Republic of Cyprus, based on economic, trade, religious and cultural links with Greek Cypriots.

Thirdly, the cases hold relevance to the EU. The EU is active in both the South Caucasus (with its Eastern Partnership policy) and Cyprus (TRNC being de jure part of the EU by being part of the Republic of Cyprus[9]). Liberal values (democracy, the rule of law, market economy) are at the core of the EU's soft power narratives, which may conflict with the ones of other actors in the same regions. To what extent do the role and policies of Turkey and Russia support or collide with the EU's? How do increasing illiberalism in Turkey impact its relations with TRNC, potentially hampering the EU's reunification efforts?

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http://arka.am/en/news/politics/armenia_remains_russia_s_only_strategic_ally_in_south_caucasus_russian_political_analyst_says/

[8] The nature of the events (especially whether they can constitute a genocide or not) is object of a fierce controversy between Turkey and Armenia, which will not be dealt within the scope of this thesis. In my thesis, I only consider these events in their relevance and impact on Armenia's processes of identity-formation and foreign policy-making, without endevouring to ascertain whether it can be considered as a genocide or not. From now on, these events will be referred to as the 'so-called "Armenian genocide"'.

[9] Cyprus joined the EU on 1 May 2004 as a de facto divided island. As stated in the website of the EU Representation in Cyprus, the EU fully supports the current negotiations between the leaders of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities, which aim to reach a comprehensive settlement leading to the reunification of the island and establish a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation in which the communities would enjoy political equality. The EU acquis is not valid in TRNC at the moment, but has been suspended 'pursuant to Article 1(1) of Protocol 10, in the areas of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus does not exercise effective control'. See Council Regulation (EC) No 866/2004 of 29 April 2004 on a regime under Article 2 of Protocol 10 to the Act of Accession. Available at: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2004/866/2015-08-31

Finally, the cases are relevant for the literature of soft power because they show the strong link between soft and hard power. In both instances, Russia and Turkey derived their strongest soft power narrative from hard power, especially the military and economic might that allows them to act as big brothers vis-à-vis Armenia and TRNC, respectively. Hence, the analysis of these case studies can help enhance the soft power concept.

1.5. Methodology

Researchers, who understand power as a relation and not only as a matter of tangible capabilities, find it problematic to assess it or to establish a causal relation between inputs and outcomes. Soft power is particularly challenging, due to its multi-dimensional, volatile and diffuse nature. In fact, 'not only are soft power resources intangible, but their impacts are also intangible in addition to being diffuse and long-term. This is why many analysts rely on public opinion surveys or indicators that suggest the workings of soft power but cannot directly observe them'. (Mukherjee 2014: 50) My research engages with this methodological debate; it proposes a two-step process of soft power assessment. Firstly, I identify Turkey's and Russia's central soft power narratives and policies. Given the theoretical orientation of my research, which considers soft power as intrinsically related to discourse and identity projection, I give soft power narratives more importance relative to specific soft power organisation and policies. Secondly, I select two high-level political instances (one for Turkey and one for Russia), to assess through the process-tracing method the ability of Turkish or Russian soft powers to influence a favourable political outcome.

In the first part, I conduct an extensive analysis of official documents, such as official speeches and foreign policy concepts, to identify and delineate three main soft power narratives for each country. Political discourse analysis, academic literature on Russian and Turkish foreign policy, as well as insights from my elite interviews, guide the selection of the narratives. Indeed, I have carried out elite interviews – explained later in this section – to politicians, high-ranking officials, selected researchers and civil society actors during my fieldwork in Russia (April-July 2016), Armenia (February 2017) and TRNC (March 2017). Given the centralised and personalistic foreign policy-making process in both countries, I

focus mainly on the speeches of Russian and Turkish presidents and prime and foreign ministers, although at times, when relevant, I do quote some other prominent government members. The narratives could be more or certain times different; sometimes they overlap to the extent that it becomes difficult to tell one narrative from the other.

Furthermore, in some cases, the narratives currently used by United Russia (UR) and Justice and Development Party (JDP) are a continuation or evolution of older narratives. However, my primary interest lies in unpacking how the UR and JDP created and/or used these narratives, as well as how changes at the domestic, regional and international levels affect the use of these narratives. The focus is on political discourse, defined as 'the text and talk of professional politicians or political institutions, such as presidents, prime ministers and other members of government, parliament or political parties, at the local, national and international levels'. (van Dijk 1997: 12) I apply political discourse analysis (van Dijk 1997) to written texts, including transcriptions of official speeches, foreign policy concepts, press releases etc. In most cases, they are available in English in the governments' websites. I tried to overcome language barriers – for example, the impossibility to access to non-English Armenian media outlets through insights from my face-to-face interviews with experts and background talks.[10] Political discourse analysis places great importance on the political context and the concept of power. Indeed, what I want to unveil here is the reproduction of political 'power, power abuse or domination through political discourse' (van Dijk 1997, 11), focusing on a specific form of power, that is, soft power. The analysis could differ depending on whether one thinks of narratives regarding actions with (possible) effects or as reflections of the inner states of the speakers, i.e., their motives. While motives refer to an actor's goals, actions have a social-relational meaning, identifiable regardless of the actor's motives by the members of a certain cultural community (Weber quoted in Burger 1977: 127). In my thesis, I try to assess both aspects: in the third chapter, 'Russian and Turkish Soft Power Narratives', I delve into the reasons behind them, therefore focusing on the sender rather than the receiver of the narratives. In Chapters Four and Five, I focus on the effects of the narratives, namely to the way the targeted audiences perceive them.

For the empirical analysis of the effects of these narratives, I make use of process-tracing, which managed to establish itself as one of the most promising qualitative methodologies. (George and Bennett 2005; Collier 2008; Beach and Pedersen 2013; Bennett and Checkel

[10] Background talks are informal chats with locals, who may not be expert on the topic, but can help to gain a deeper understanding of the general context within which the outcome took place.

2015). This methodology is used to carry out within-case analysis based on qualitative data to establish a causal process that leads to specific outcomes. Its ontology is one of 'complex causality', rather than 'causality as regularity'. The question this research asks is how does X (soft power) produce a series of conditions that come together in some way (or not) to produce Y (a favourable outcome) in a specific instance?

Nye himself (2010: 3) indicates process tracing as the most suitable methodology for the two existing models of how soft power works – direct and indirect. In the former, leaders may be attracted and persuaded by the benignity, competence or charisma of other leaders. The latter, on the other hand, is a two-step model in which public and third parties are influenced, and they, in turn, affect the leaders of other countries. This research focuses on the first type of soft power (direct). Concentrating on the elites, especially political ones, has two main advantages: first, it allows a more straightforward understanding of how foreign policy is conducted, given to the prominent role of political elites. Second, it will enable overcoming possible language limitations, due to the likelihood of adequate knowledge of English among political elites. On the contrary, focusing on 'publics' would require advanced language skills such as to conduct surveys and focus groups in the local language. Despite the focus being on the elites, at times I rely on secondary sources, especially public opinion polls conducted by international and Turkish and Russian polling centres. I also capitalise on my experience living in Turkey and Russia, as well as my fieldwork in Armenia and TRNC to nuance my analysis and have a broader and more comprehensive picture on the effects of soft power on the society of the analysed country, too.

Beach and Pedersen (2013) outline three distinct types of process tracing: theory-testing, theory-building and explaining-outcome. I use explaining-outcome process tracing, which aims to explain a particularly relevant outcome, working out all the various factors that contributed to it. It is a case-centric, rather that theory-centric approach, therefore the claims for the generalisability of the results of the study are limited. However, such a detailed analysis casts light on the ways soft power works and can (or cannot) influence an outcome by delving into all possible factors (related to both soft and hard power) that might have impacted the outcome. Furthermore, improved historical explanations, even if context-specific, can help enhance theory. (George and Bennett 2005: 148) The analysis proceeds inductively, 'in a manner more analogous to historical methodology or classic detective work, working backwards from the outcome by sifting through the evidence in an attempt to

uncover the causal mechanism that produced the outcome' (Beach and Pedersen 2013: 169). Among the research techniques employed by process-tracing analysis, in-depth face-to-face elite interviews have a prominent role in my thesis. Interviewing is one of the most common methods used by social researchers: 'The decision to interview implies a value on personal language as data' (Nigel 2010:1) and attention to the potential significance of context. Seeking 'expert opinion' does indeed enable us to understand complex processes and relations governing the political process in a relatively easy and direct manner. Given my interest in power in international politics, political elites are the main target of my interviews. Developing a clear, unambiguous definition of 'political elites' can prove challenging as this concept can encompass different dimensions that may vary according to the specific context. In 1956, Wright Mills described the 'power elite' as 'composed of men *[sic!]* whose positions enable them to transcend the ordinary environments of ordinary men and women; they are in positions to make decisions having major consequences'. (Wright Mills 1956: 3) Referring specifically to the Iranian political system, Zonis (1971: 6) adopts an empirical and behavioural definition of political elites as those members of society who exercise and possess political power to a greater degree than others. Both definitions speak to a relational understanding of power (the so-called 'first face'), defined by Dahl (1957) as the ability of A to get B to do something that B would not otherwise do.

Dexter (1970) defined elite interviewing as a process targeting those *directly* involved in the political process. It is possible to take a stricter definition of 'involvement' in the decision-making process (government members and MPs being the primary object of study) or a more extensive one, including actors that have a less direct, but sometimes equally or even more significant impact on the decision-making process. In this regard, business, media, and cultural elites (as opinion-shapers) would also feature in this wider definition of political elites. This latter approach – which I adopt here – may help us to overcome the position/power gap, that is, the gap between a person's professional title (often the main way a researcher has to position a person in a social hierarchy) and the actual power which that person exerts. By widening the pool of respondents (talking not only to officials but different stakeholders involved in or with proven expertise on the decision-making process of each specific case), I aim to obtain a more detailed picture of the actual functioning of a political system. Face-to-face interviewing may be appropriate where the depth of meaning is important, and the research is primarily focused on gaining insight and understanding (Ritchie and Lewis 2003: 138) and is the preferred interview type in this research. However,

I consider the option of carrying out Skype interviews in instances where face-to-face interviews prove to be very difficult, for ‘follow-up interviews’ or for background talks. The selected type of technique is semi-structured interviewing. Semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to prepare questions ahead of time and, hence, to appear competent and prepared. While providing reliable and to some degree comparable qualitative data, they also allow informants the freedom to express their views in their terms.

Furthermore, more flexibility allows a more tailored questionnaire, adjusting questions to match the expertise of the interviewee. The success and validity of an interview rest on the extent to which the respondent's opinions are truly reflected. This might prove to be difficult in the case of state officials or politicians, who might tend to mirror the ‘official view' on the events they are asked to comment on. Denscombe (2007) stresses the so-called ‘interviewer effect’, that is, how people respond differently depending on how they perceive the interviewer: ‘In particular, the sex, the age, and the ethnic origins of the interviewer have a bearing on the amount of information people are willing to divulge and their honesty about what they reveal’. (Denscombe 2007: 184) This problem is very dependent on the nature of the topics discussed. To put the interviewee at ease, it is important to state at the beginning of an interview what the purpose and topics are, to discuss issues of confidentiality and anonymity, and to agree on the usage of a recording device. I carried out all of these procedures in the interviews for the purposes of this research in accordance with METU’s ethical guidelines.

1.6. Structure of the thesis

The analysis unfolds comparatively. After the introduction, Chapter Two reviews the literature on soft power analyses the concept of soft power in depth and set forths its operationalisation. On the one hand, it describes Nye’s formulation and its main gaps, proceeding with a broader analysis of the power debate and the ‘seminal concepts’ that influenced – directly or indirectly – the soft power concept. On the other hand, it proposes a modified definition of soft power to make it operationalisable for all countries, not only for the countries identified as ‘liberal’ by Nye. In Chapter Three, I analyse the foreign policies of Turkey and Russia under Erdoğan and Putin, especially focusing on the type of change

that these two leaders' governments brought about in the two countries. In particular, I wanted to show the illiberal evolution that happened in both countries domestically and how it impacted their foreign policy, too; furthermore, I start the analysis of Russia and Turkey's soft power understanding and application through a review the academic literature. This analysis further unfolds in Chapter Four, which identifies Turkey's and Russia's main soft power identities, to establish possible points of contact and differences between the two countries. Chapters Five and Six analyse the two selected case studies: for Russia, Armenia's decision to join the EEU; for Turkey, the suspension of the 2014 peace negotiations in Cyprus. The conclusion summarises and further analyses the thesis' main results. While it reflects critically on the limitations of my study, it also highlights the originality of the project and opens up new research avenues for future studies, which may tackle different case studies or compare Russia's and Turkey's soft power strategy to another country's.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The concept of soft power – coined by Joseph Nye – has been used by scholars and especially practitioners of IR for more than 25 years now. Its study is of capital importance for academic reasons, but it has crucial policy implications, too. As far as academic questions are concerned, it is important for enhancing the general understanding of power, which is a pivotal, but highly debated concept in IR. As for its policy implications, if soft power is the ability to achieve political ends through attraction and preference-shaping (Nye, 2011), it is not surprising that many countries are striving to bolster or restore it. Furthermore, some argue that in a world where the use of force is becoming costlier (both because of financial and political constraints) or less efficacious, contemplating forms of non-coercive power is increasingly important (Bially Mattern 2005; Ding 2010; Gallarotti 2011). The concept, however, has its detractors. For instance, some of its critics refer to it as 'soft theory' (Gallarotti 2011) and claim that its use presents scholars with several conceptual and methodological problems, especially when it comes to the application of the concept to states other than liberal democracies.

This chapter makes an in-depth description of the concept of soft power. At the same time, it bridges the Gramscian approach to soft power suggested by Zahran and Ramos (2010) and the operationalisation of soft power through narratives suggested, *inter alia*, by Roselle et al. (2015) in order to study the soft power of both liberal and illiberal countries. The first section of this chapter focuses on the latest formulation of the concept by Joseph S. Nye in his 2011 book *The Future Of Power*. The second section tries to look at the bigger picture, by placing soft power in the general power debate and digging especially into three concepts that inspired Nye; these 'seminal concepts' are Max Weber's charisma, Steven Lukes' third face of power, and Antonio Gramsci's hegemony. The third section looks into the two main gaps of the concept, namely the difficulty of operationalising and 'measuring' it, and the difficulty of applying it to illiberal states. Finally, the fourth section seeks to find a suitable theoretical framework to de-westernise and operationalise the concept of soft power. I argue that a Gramscian understanding of soft power, coupled with the study of soft power narratives, can pave the way forward to the analysis of the soft power of illiberal states.

2.1. Joseph Nye's soft power

What is soft power? Since he created the concept (Nye 1990), Joseph Nye came back to it in many essays and books (see for instance Nye 2004; 2008) with the aim of fine-tuning and expanding it. In one of his most recent books (*The Future of Power)*, Nye (2011: 20- 21) offered a longer, more formal definition of the concept.[11] Fully defined, 'soft power is the ability to affect others through the cooptive means of framing the agenda, persuading, and eliciting positive attraction in order to obtain preferred outcomes.'

Often misused as a 'synonym for anything other than military force' (Nye 2011: 81), Nye argues that the term actually stands for a particular means of influence: the one that a country can achieve through its culture, its values and domestic practices; and the perceived legitimacy of its foreign policies (the three sources of soft power). Nye carefully distinguishes soft power from propaganda, namely 'the conscious, methodical and planned decisions to employ techniques of persuasion designed to achieve specific goals that are intended to benefit those organising the process'. (Taylor 2003: 6) Indeed, Nye (2011) states that the credibility of the soft power actor is crucial when it comes to enhancing its legitimacy: if a country appears to be acting out of a narrow self-interest, it is likely to be seen as doing propaganda, rather than exerting soft power, and that would but harm the state's image. Soft power is not just about persuasion or the ability to convince people by arguments. Persuasion is close to the agenda-setting power. But soft power goes a step further: it is the power to *attract* that is usually coupled with acquiescence. Attraction is complex and very difficult to measure. In some instances, it might even not be positive – for example, Nye mentions the attraction that India exerted on Great Britain in the nineteenth century but led to colonial subjugation rather than soft power. (Nye 2011: 92) However, the attraction envisaged by Nye's soft power is always positive, closer to the concept of 'allure'.

According to Nye, persuasive power is based on attraction and emulation and associated with intangible power resources such as culture, ideology, and institutions. Cooper (2004: 173) also emphasises the importance of legitimacy for the concept of soft power: state

[11] In order to avoid confusion and overlaps, I will use the most recent definitions provided by Nye in his book *The Future of Power*, instead of picking up different formulations from his past works. Later on in the chapter, I present my suggested definition of the concept.

activities need to be perceived as legitimate to enhance soft power. Nevertheless, the difference between tangible and intangible resources is not what differentiates hard from soft power. For Realists, power can also stem from some intangible sources: one can think, for instance, of Waltz' 'competence'. Nye himself (2011: 21) recognises that the relationship between tangible and intangible power resources 'is not perfect. Intangible resources such as patriotism, morale and legitimacy strongly affect the military capacity to fight and win. And threats to use force are intangible, even though they are a dimension of hard power.' Hence, resources commonly linked to soft power can produce hard power behaviours. Conversely, 'a tangible hard power resource such as a military unit can produce both command behaviour (by winning a battle) and co-optive behaviours (by attracting), depending on how it is used' (Nye 2011: 29).

To better understand Nye's concept, it is important to look at its 'genesis'. The next section traces the origins of soft power by asking the following questions: what place does soft power occupy in the long-standing IR debate about power? What concepts in social sciences influenced Nye or can help analysts to grasp and apply the concept of soft power better? The answer to these questions about soft power's past will contribute to enhancing its future as an analytical category.

2.2. Looking back: an analysis of the power debate and the 'seminal concepts'

The origins of the concept of soft power' can be traced back well before Nye published his book *Bound to Lead* (Nye 1990). In his analysis of power in international politics carried out during the interwar period, Edward H. Carr already argued that power over opinion is not less essential of military and economic types of power, given to the 'broadening of the basis of politics, which has vastly increased the number of those whose opinion is politically important.' (Carr 2001: 120) Once analysed the concept formulated by Nye, it is necessary to look at the broader picture: the debate on soft power is indeed embedded into the more general debate on power, and several concepts in social sciences had an impact on its formulation.

The next two sub-sections firstly touch upon the main approaches on power, and then explore what I call the 'seminal concepts', that is, concepts formulated by other authors before that have affinities with and seem relevant to the study of soft power. These sections cannot be exhaustive – the debate on power is incredibly rich of contributions, and it would be impossible to mention or extensively cover all of them; they rather aim to frame the discussion to the most relevant ideas that help a better understanding of soft power.

2.2.1. The debate on power

Power is one of the most studied, but also controversial concepts in IR (Baldwin 2013, Gallarotti 2011). The discipline has been concerned with it from its very start. as a matter of fact, the development of a 'power theory' is seen by many as parallel to the development of Realism: indeed, 'ever since Carr delivered his devastating rhetorical blow against the "utopians" and claimed power for "realism," the discipline of international relations has tended to treat power as the exclusive province of realism.' (Barnett and Duvall 2005: 40) But Realism does not have the monopoly of the study of power; other theoretical approaches in IR have tried to grasp the essence of this concept, although it is not an easy task: power is one of the most widely used concepts, but there is also a certain lack of conceptual clarity and the danger of conceptual overstretch.

The definition of power changes according to the scholarly tradition adopted. Until relatively recently, certain tangible factors (population, territory, wealth, armies, etc.) would be the main elements defining the power of a state. This approach serves as a basis for 'elements of national power approach' described by Morgenthau in his book *Politics Among Nations*, where states are seen as power-maximisers and seeking to produce a balance of power. This approach was further developed by other distinguished Realist scholars such as Waltz or Mearsheimer, which see 'power resources' or 'capabilities' as the ultimate element of a country's power strategy. For instance, Mearsheimer (2001: 55) believes that 'power is based on the particular material capabilities that a state possesses.' For the scholar, these material capabilities are essentially 'tangible assets', such as energy resources or the number of sophisticated weapons, that determine a nation's military strength and, ultimately, its power.

This viewpoint is challenged by the 'relational power approach', which sees power as a type of causation, a relation in which actor A alters the behaviour – broadly understood in order to include beliefs, expectations, preferences etc. – of B. (Baldwin 2013) This tradition de-constructs power and sees it as multi-faceted, multi-dimensional concept. Belonging to this tradition, the political scientist Dahl (1957: 202-203) gave one of the most famous definitions of power: 'A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do.' A classical categorisation of power that well synthesises decades of debate on the issue divides power into four 'faces.' The first face of power contemplates success (the achievement of the desired outcome) in the decision-making process. The second face highlights the ability of managing the agenda, both including and excluding the issues to be treated. The media, for instance, do have this ability. These first two faces of power follow Dahl's definition of power as something that can be used to get someone to do something that he would not do otherwise. Conversely, the third face of power – which will be depicted in more detail in the next section – describes how power can allow actor A to shape the preferences of actor B in order to achieve an outcome. The fourth face of power claims that power is expressed diffusely through the discourses that create social meaning and make society possible. According to Digeser (1992), power is not an exercise carried out by interested agents, but a discursive process through which agents and their interests are produced in the first place.

In a very influential article, Barnett and Duvall (2005:45) claim that cross-fertilisation, that is, drawing upon various conceptualisations of power produced by different theoretical schools, is the best approach to 'move away from perpetual rivalry in disciplinary "ism" wars and toward dialogue across theoretical perspectives.' According to the scholars, power is the 'production, in and through social relations, of effects that shape the capacities of actors to determine their circumstances and fate.' The authors put the accent on the targets of power policies (the 'Bs') and their fate, and de-construct the social relations through which power takes place (it can be interaction of specific actors or social relations of constitution) and their effects (specific/direct or diffuse/indirect). In doing so, they create a 'taxonomy of power' that divides power into four concepts: compulsory, institutional, structural, and productive. Although more precise to a certain extent, these four concepts retrace the aforementioned categorisation of 'four faces' of power.

The debate on power, still ongoing among IR scholars, as well as the concept of soft power built upon some important concepts generated in the past. In what follows, I focus on three concepts elaborated in the Twentieth Century that have connections and seem relevant to the study of soft power.

2.2.2. Seminal concepts

This glimpse of the debate of power was instrumental in framing the concept of soft power theoretically. Theories do not happen in a vacuum, and the development of the concept of soft power owes a great deal to some ideas elaborated by past authors. This sub-section focuses on three ideas in particular: Max Weber's charisma, Steven Lukes' third face of power and Antonio Gramsci's idea of hegemony.

Weber (1978) divides authority into three types: traditional, charismatic, and legal-rational. Traditional authority is legitimated by the sanctity of tradition (for example, feudalism). Legal-rational authority is empowered by a formalistic belief in the content of the law (legal) or natural law (rationality). Obedience is not given to a specific individual leader - whether traditional or charismatic – but a set of uniform principles. An example of legal-rational authority is bureaucracy (political or economic). On the other hand, we have charismatic authority when a leader can inspire others with his or her mission and vision. Therefore, the individual must have certain extraordinary (real or perceived) characteristics. Weber cited the head of a new social movement, and one instilled with divine or supernatural powers, such as a religious prophet, as examples of charismatic leaders.

The Weberian 'charisma' recalls the concept of soft power, and indeed Nye recognises that charisma is a form of soft power. But he also argues that charisma alone does not explain the full picture. In current usage, 'the word charisma has become a vague synonym for "personal magnetism" rather than an operational concept'. (Nye 2006: 5-6) The 'inadequate explanatory value of charisma alone' (Nye 2010: 61), led leadership theorists in the 1970s and 80s to formulate a broader concept of 'transformational leader,' one that is able to mobilise power for change by appealing to their followers' higher ideals and moral values rather than baser emotions of fear, greed, and hatred. Therefore, charisma is only part of the transformational leader's toolset. Leaders should also have 'an element of "intellectual stimulation" – broadening followers' awareness of situations and new perspectives – and

"individualized consideration" – providing support and developmental experiences to followers rather than treating them as mere means to an end.' (Nye 2006: 5-6) This transformational, inspirational leader will, according to Nye, rest more on soft rather than hard power resources.

According to some scholars (Baldwin 2013, Pudaruth 2017), Nye's concept of soft power is also closely related to Lukes' third face of power in that 'the more powerful actor/s or group/s can go to the extent of shaping the wishes, preferences, and interests of others' (Pudaruth 2017: 3). Lukes (1974, 2005) argues that the third dimension of power consists of deeply rooted forms of political socialisation where actors are led to follow (sometimes unconsciously) the will of the power-projecting country, even against their best interests. Power as domination – the third dimension – contemplates how the powerful states secure the compliance of weaker ones. The very relevant difference between the two ideas becomes now clear. Lukes, a Marxist, believes that this process of preference-shaping is ultimately another, subtler form of domination. It installs a false consciousness among the most vulnerable actors (the power-recipient actors, or the Bs). A typical example of this approach would be the idea that the ruling class persuade the working class that what the ruling class wants is what is best for them, too. Therefore, what is in place is a process of manipulation leading others to do something they might not want to do by changing their desires and aspirations. Soft power might be therefore seen as 'soft domination', following Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony, which also relates closely to the third face of power (Bially Mattern 2005).

The third seminal concept is Antonio Gramsci's hegemony. As a Marxist, Gramsci created the concept of cultural hegemony in his *Prison Notebooks*, published in Italy in 1948 and translated into English in 1971. In Gramscian terms, hegemony means the success of the dominant classes in presenting their definition of reality, their view of the world, in such a way that other classes accept it as 'common sense'. (Donoghue 2018: 2) Gramsci (1971: 326) defines 'common sense' as the 'most widespread conception of life and morals', a traditional and local worldview. Although he underscores the passivity with which people accept a particular worldview as common sense, contrary to the active role that he ascribes to intellectuals, he also asserts that every social stratum, not only the lower ones, has its own 'common sense'. Hence, hegemony is a way to establish domination through material and immaterial (including discursive) elements. However, hegemony differs from domination, as

the latter is exercised directly through the state apparatus, and as such it speaks to the opposition State/Civil Society; hegemony, on the other hand, refers to the control exercised by the dominant group throughout society. As the supremacy of a social group manifests itself as 'intellectual and moral leadership' as well as 'domination', any groups who present an alternative view are marginalised: 'The "normal" exercise of hegemony on the now classical terrain of the parliamentary regime is characterized by the combination of force and consent, which balance each other reciprocally, without force predominating excessively over consent'. (Gramsci 1971: 155) While the coercive power of states legally enforces punish groups who do not "consent" either actively or passively, the 'spontaneous' consent given by the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant group 'is "historically" caused by the prestige (and consequent confidence) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production' (Gramsci 1971: 12).

Nye (1990) acknowledges the importance of Gramsci's concept, but he seems to reject its 'element of adversarial manipulation, which would be an illiberal means of generating compliance–i.e., fooling subordinate nations. Hence, there is most definitely a strong conflict of interests in this radical vision of power' (Gallarotti 2011: 15).

On the contrary, soft power generally does not present such a strong conflict of interests: Nye's conviction of the existence of 'universally good' values, such as democracy and the rule of law, that are beneficial not only for the As, but also for the Bs. This can be a problem when trying to apply soft power to illiberal states. The next section addresses this gap; but firstly it touches upon another analytical shortcoming of the concept, that is, the difficulty to assess – let alone 'measure' in positivist terms – soft power, due to its volatile nature.

2.3. 'Soft Theory'? The two main gaps of soft power

The concept of soft power has been drawing criticism from many fronts. Leslie Gelb (2010: 69), for instance, argues that soft power has become too inclusive, as it 'now seems to mean almost everything': since economic coercion and military power have been introduced 'through the back door,' soft power now includes not only such elements as leadership,

persuasion, and values, but also concepts like 'military prowess.' On the other hand, sceptics from the realist front argue that soft power is not an effective foreign policy tool. For example, Gray (2011: ix) states that hard power must remain the essential instrument of policy as soft power is unsuitable for policy directions and control as it relies too much on the foreign countries' perception.

Others treat the concept as a synonyms of culture, and highlight the problems of using it as a means to achieve a country's interests: the historian Niall Ferguson (2003) dismisses soft power as 'non-traditional forces such as cultural and commercial goods', by which he means the influence of big brands like Coca-Cola or Levi's. He believes that in the formulation made by Nye, soft power is too 'soft' to obtain real results, and when it becomes strong, namely cultural imperialism, its driving force is actually hard power: 'Soft Power is merely the velvet glove concealing an iron hand.' (Ferguson 2004: 24) In fact, some believe that what Nye and Neoliberals call soft power is nothing but a masked cultural imperialism. (Ferguson 2003, 2004; Bially Mattern 2005) Lukes argues that Nye 'simply says that the US, as an agent with power, must be more strategically effective in wielding its soft power and "projecting" its values' (Lukes 2005: 487). Concerning the basic concept of culture, Janice Bially Mattern (2005: 591), for example, points out that a country's attraction and a country's culture are not natural but constructed. She believes that by relying on an essentialist notion of culture and identity, Nye communicates a benign picture of US hegemony and does not allow the capturing of 'not-so-soft' aspects of soft power (such as perpetuating dependence of the power-recipient states on the power-projecting ones). Drawing upon dependency theory – according to which 'the economy of a certain group of countries is conditioned by the development and expansion of another economy, to which their own is subjected' (Dos Santos 1971: 226) – we could also make the point that sometimes what pushes the power-recipient states to follow the power-projecting ones is the lack of political and economic alternatives. If dependency is recognised as a structural feature of the current world order, then weaker actors find themselves facing a binary choice: either to integrate to the structure of the capitalist international economy or to face political and economic exclusion. In this sense, distinguishing the effects of soft power (free choices taken by the power-recipient states) from the structural lack of alternatives might prove difficult, showing the strong bond between hard power and soft power.[12] The next two sub-sections continue to expose critical readings of soft power and linger over two gaps in

[12] This is also highlighted in the analysis of my case studies in Chapters Five and Six.

particular: the difficulty of assessing soft power and the difficulty to apply the concept to the analysis of illiberal states' foreign policies.

2.4. How hard it is to assess soft power

A problem highlighted not only by academicians but also policy advisors and policy-makers is the difficulty of quantifying soft power and assessing its effectiveness. Soft power research is increasingly advancing non-conventional ways to deal with these issues, ways that go beyond the conventional metrics (diplomatic infrastructure, cultural output, number of international students, et cet.). They see soft power as a discursive mechanism, whose assessment should take into account factors like emotions, expectation or even affection. (Solomon 2014; White 2011) Engaging with this methodological debate is key to improve the usability of soft power as an analytical tool and to apply it to non-Western, non-liberal countries. The main issue at stake seems to be the difficulty in assessing the effectiveness of soft power. Even if certain aspects of soft power activities can be measured, its effectiveness presents more problems. One reason for that is that 'as it pertains to political values, soft power as an analytic category is in itself highly problematic, given the fact it is interwoven with discursive struggles over political identity.' (Hall 2010: 206) Furthermore, a formal adherence to the political values of the power-projecting countries does not translate automatically in foreign policy outcomes.

The truth is that we currently lack precise instruments to assess the impact of soft power policies: 'A fundamental knowledge base for modelling soft power issues does not exist, even among experts. Nor is it possible to pin down experts on specific data points required by a model. The result can be a model with a false level of precision that would not be a dependable predictor of future events.' (Deane and Harlow 2009: 6) This creates problems for all soft power researchers, but also for policy-makers, who cannot have a direct validation of the effectiveness of soft power policies. Gallarotti (2011: 39) tries to warn policy-makers of the complexity inherent to the process of soft power. Many of the benefits of soft power are in fact 'indirect and longer term: two signature characteristics of

complexity. This, in turn, makes the benefits of such soft power that much more difficult to ascertain and evaluate.' He also claims that such benefits are pervasive, and in the end, it is worth seeking to implement soft empowerment strategies. However, he is not very successful in illustrating how to achieve these benefits. According to Gallarotti (2011: 39), the process requires 'more thorough evaluation and a pronounced commitment on the part of decision-makers to fully scrutinise the relative effectiveness of policy options bearing on the use of power resources.'

Todd Hall (2010) points out that this scarce 'usability' of soft power in the academia is due to its very nature. He claims that despite its popularity and although certain attributes entailed in it indeed enhance its attraction as a category of practice, the concept of soft power does not match the parameters of categories of analysis. The terms 'category of practice' and 'category of analysis' were originally delineated by the sociologists Brubaker and Cooper (2000). The former describes the 'concepts that seem intuitive to social actors, in the sense that they reflect common folk assumptions that actors make about how the world functions and what constitute valid ontological categories.' These are categories that might vary depending on the social context, such as the concept of 'criminality'. Conversely, 'categories of analysis' are the 'experience-distant categories used by social analysts', which 'try to identify objects or groups of phenomena according to similarities rooted in shared, specifiable attributes or mechanisms that are discrete from the outcomes they are purported to explain.' He carries on explaining why the concept is popular as a 'category of practice': it is a concept that has a political utility, through which is possible to explain the predominance of the US even when its material capabilities are shrinking relative to other emerging powers, and it allows at the same it to market its values very well.

In place of a theory of soft power principally based on attraction, which is very ambiguous, he suggests instead to 'disaggregate the concept into separate "soft powers", each with a discrete pathway of influence.' (Hall 2010: 207) These concepts are institutional, reputational, and representational power. All three of them are linked to Nye's formulation but are easier to operationalise: for instance, we can use the membership of an organisation as an independent variable to measure the institutional power, surveys for the reputational, and use discourse analysis for measuring the representational one. This is certainly a useful de-construction of the concept of soft power that helps to operationalise it, but it represents some of the general issues linked to the academic use. For instance, polls can 'measure the existence of trends in potential soft power resources, but they are only a first approximation

for behavioural change in terms of outcomes' (Nye 2011: 95). Moreover, some authoritarian governments might control public opinion, making the results of polls less reliable. For some countries, polls might even be not available. Therefore, over-reliance on indexes and polls for the study of soft power is problematic. As I argue in the following two sections, an operationalisation through soft power narratives helps researcher capture the key features of the concept through a constructivist-discursive framework and operationalise it. By analysing soft power in relationals, intersubjective terms (i.e. how certain narratives are received) instead of or in addition to measuring 'objective' military, economic, and cultural resources and by avoiding a clear demarcation between soft and hard power, scholars can assess the effectiveness of a country's soft power, regardless – as the next section explains – of that country's democratic credentials.

2.5. The soft power of illiberal countries

One of the most debated issues about soft power is its applicability to non-liberal, even authoritarian countries. Over the past decade, studies over the soft power of China, Russia, Turkey and even Saudi Arabia have proliferated. These countries are different among themselves, but they all have in common a non-liberal, in some cases even authoritarian, form of government. They have increasingly adopted the rhetoric of soft power in their public discourse, sometimes emulating US and EU policies and style of cultural and public diplomacy.

However, is it possible to speak of a Russian or Chinese soft power? The concept was created around American foreign policy, and it seems intrinsically linked to democratic values. Following Nye's definition explained in the previous section, soft power has three main sources: an appealing culture, political values that it reliably upholds, and foreign policy that is imbued with moral authority. Nye also leans toward *universal* values over *parochial* ones (Nye 2004: 11), but – as Bially Mattern (2005: 588) highlights – he does not elaborate on why universal values are the 'right' ones. What happens, then, when values projected by a country are not liberal and democratic? Here there is certain ambiguity in the literature.

On the one hand, Nye (2011) does acknowledge the soft power potential of states like China or Russia. We can certainly say that China, for instance, achieves enhancing its soft power mainly through hard power means, particularly economic power. This is evident in the developing world, especially in Africa, where huge Chinese developmental aid is granted with almost no political conditionality, but it leads to China's access to energy resources (Sun 2014). At the same time, China's authoritarian institutions and political values could also be attractive to political elites in other authoritarian states. The mix of economic development and lack of political freedoms cementing the ruling elites and their supporters may constitute an attractive model for many autocratic leaders in Africa and elsewhere.

On the other hand, conciliating the non-liberal outlook of some wannabe soft power actors with a vision of soft power being based on liberal values looks difficult. In a recent article, Nye (2013) declares that Russian and Chinese leaders do not get what soft power really is, therefore they are not able to exploit its potential. According to Nye, whereas much of America's soft power is produced by civil society, not from the government, in the case of China and Russia the Communist Politburo and the Kremlin respectively are the main soft power actors. If civil society is meant to be the main actor enhancing a country's soft power, how can it do so in countries that impose severe political constrictions on freedom of expression and civil society organisations' activities?

Other scholars criticise the very idea of 'attraction', which is at the heart of Nye's concept. Hall (2010) argues that 'attraction' is not a suitable causal mechanism upon which to soft power can act as a category of analysis. Kivimaki (2014) claims that 'attraction' is not a good fit to the analysis of Chinese soft power. As a consequence of that, recent Anglo-American studies suggest that China's soft power strategy has failed the country. However, China's approach and means to implement soft power are different from those of the US; therefore, Chinese soft power strategy cannot be evaluated using Western standards and need to be geographically and historically contextualised. 'The idea of soft power as the power of "attraction" is historically specific and belongs to the structure of international relations after World War II. (…) In such a structure, soft power affected preferences (by means of attraction) regarding communism and capitalism. (…) However, beyond a historically specific context, soft power can be anything that compels countries to do things that the user of soft power wants them to do' (Kivimaki 2014: 6-7).

The next section deals with the matter of the applicability of soft power to illiberal states in more detail. Building on alternative readings of soft power, and especially on the Gramscian concept of hegemony, it proposes a refined definition of the concept and its operationalisation through soft power narratives.

2.5.1. De-westernising soft power

This 'unfitness' of soft power when analysing illiberal countries is a highly debated issue. There seems to be a growing awareness of the unsuitability of Nye's concept when dealing with non-Western and non-liberal powers, and the need to find new appropriate theoretical lenses to decouple the concept from the form of liberal democratic government typical of the US. Wilson (2015: 287), for instance, believes that both China and Russia, due to their shared legacy of adherence to Communism, consider that the West's soft power tools are an existential threat, and conceive soft power policies as the 'outcome of state initiatives rather than the product of an autonomous civil society'.

Looking at alternative critical readings of soft power might be useful to unpack illiberal states possible alternative understandings of soft power. For instance, Digeser (1992) builds on a Foucauldian notion of power to elaborate on the above-mentioned 'fourth face of power'. In this form of power, subject, agency and structure are inextricably intertwined, and pervasive power networks in society make it difficult to determine what objective interests would be (Gallarotti 2011). Talking specifically about soft power, Zahran and Ramos (2010) suggest integrating Gramscian insights and especially the concept of hegemony. Nye (1990; 2002) refers to the concept by Gramsci but fails to deeply integrate it in the theoretical elaborations of soft power or to engage in a debate with Gramscian scholars. (Zahran and Ramos 2010) However, using 'hegemony' presents some advantages for the theoretical refinement of soft power. In their article, Zahran and Ramos (2010: 23-24) claim that using hegemony enables us to: I) recognise the intrinsic link between coercion and consent, hard and soft power, through the interaction of material (for instance, military forces) and immaterial factors (ideas or narratives); II) de-Westernise soft power by dropping the 'universal values' implied by Nye and acknowledging the 'existence of a struggle over ideas and institutions in the international system'. (Zahran and Ramos 2010: 24) As explained in

the second section, hegemony focuses on the creation of a consensus around some ideas and values, which then become common sense. According to Gramsci (1971: 362), ‘every philosophical current leaves behind it sediment of "common sense"; this is the document of its historical effectiveness. Common sense is not rigid and immobile but is continually transforming itself, enriching itself with scientific ideas and with philosophical opinions, which have entered ordinary life. Common sense creates the folklore of the future, that is, as a relatively rigid phase of popular knowledge at a given place and time’. Using this Gramscian notion allows us to depart from Nye’s conceptualisation of soft power linked to ‘universal’ values, which make it difficult to apply the concept to countries which do not share them: ‘A more neutral analysis would recognize that any set of principles and values cannot be universal: ideas are always relative, they originate in a given society or culture, they are not absolute and usually mean different things for different people.’ (Zahran and Ramos 2010: 24) Following this approach, soft power would be the ability to influence international discourses in such a way that particular policies, worldviews and narratives are framed as ‘common sense’, therefore paving the way to the establishment of power relations. This view directly implies that soft power, as phrased by Nye, is a just a ‘softer’ way to use universal values as a way to maintain or restore a dominant role in the international arena. Indeed, Nye himself acknowledges that the US ‘benefits from a universalistic culture’. (Nye 2004: 11) His description of soft power, however, fails to recognise the basic Gramscian notion that coercion and co-optation are in practice inseparable. Due to its focus on the actual process of consensus-building rather than on the specific value-outcome, the concept of hegemony is very useful to understand and apply soft power in the case of illiberal democracies.

Other scholars, despite not formally adhering to any Gramscian views, have also started to operationalise soft power in terms of narratives that manage to impose themselves internationally as ‘natural’. Not only does this path offer a getaway from the Western-liberal biases of Nye’s formulation of soft power, but it also provides an easier way to operationalise soft power instead of relying on the ‘controversial’ (Kivimaki 2014) concept of ‘attraction’. For instance, Hall (2010: 210) proposes to disaggregate soft powers in various conceptualisations rooted in different mechanisms; one of them, representational power, is the ‘ability of states to frame issues, advance their own interpretations, and consciously seek to shape the beliefs of others. (…) Successfully perpetuating such frames of reference helps states in their efforts to shape international debates to their advantage. Representational

power can thus be measured by comparing the message a state is attempting to propagate with the degree to which its target audiences accept the way it is framed.' (Hall 2010: 210)

Roselle et al. (2014) call for greater attention to communication in IR and argue that the concept of strategic narrative gives us useful insights on the study of soft power, especially regarding how influence works in a new media environment. Even if Nye himself argues that international affairs have become a matter of 'whose story wins' (Nye, 2013), he does not – according to the authors – 'explore the nature of narratives or attempt to explain how a narrative becomes persuasive to target audiences' (Roselle et al. 2014: 71). They individuate three levels of narratives - 'International System Narratives', 'National Narratives' and 'Issue Narratives', which: (1) describe the structure of the world; (2) project the stories of individual states; and (3) provide interpretations of various 'problems' and suggest possible solutions. Ultimately, they argue, these strategic narratives enable political and military leaders the means to legitimise internationally war, conflict or peacebuilding.

Focusing specifically on Russian soft power, Feklyunina (2015) proposes a social constructivist take on soft power by anchoring it to the concept of 'collective identity'. Building on Roselle et al. (2014), she suggests a fourth narrative, that is, a collective identity narrative, which is not limited to an individual state or a nation, but uses other markers to construct a shared understanding of common interests based, for example, on ideological ('we — supporters of Communism'), or civilisational markers ('we — European nations'). In order to assess whether soft power is at work in a relationship between two or more states, the scholar suggests to investigate the extent to which the discursively constructed collective identity projected by the first state is accepted or rejected by different audiences in the second state, and by examining the ability of these audiences to affect the process of foreign policy decision-making (Feklyunina 2015: 1).

Therefore, there is a need to go beyond Nye's concept to study how all countries, whether they have liberal or illiberal governments, use soft power. Following the Gramscian approach to soft power suggested by Zahran and Ramos (2010), I propose a modified concept that gives more recognition to the hierarchical features of soft power and focuses on: i) the process of consensus-building, rather than on the content of the values of the power-projecting country; and ii) an analysis of soft power narratives, carried out in the following

chapter, which shows a possible way to frame and operationalise the concept in an effective way.

2.6. Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was twofold. On the one hand, it has described soft power through the analysis of Nye's formulation and its main gaps, but also through a broader analysis of the power debate and the 'seminal concepts' that influenced – directly or indirectly – the genesis of the soft power concept. On the other hand, it has sought to redefine the concept and the way it is operationalised to fit the analysis of all countries, not just liberal democracies. For this purpose, it has combined Gramscian insights – especially the concept of hegemony, as suggested by Zahran and Ramos (2010) – and the study of soft power narratives.

Building on Gramsci's concept, and utilising Zhran and Ramos' analysis I define soft power as the 'ability of a state or a group within the state to influence international discourses in such a way that certain policies, worldviews and narratives are framed as "common sense", therefore paving the way to the establishment of power relations'. This way, soft power can be operationalised through the analysis of narratives, as already suggested by Roselle et al. (2014) and Feklyunina (2015). Through this approach, I have tried to reconcile two areas that were not previously linked. In fact, while Zahran and Ramos (2010) did not specifically use their Gramscian approach for illiberal countries (they were writing about US foreign policy) and largely neglected the question of how to operationalise soft power, authors who did focus on this type of countries (like Feklyunina) seem to ignore the contribution of Gramscian theory (especially in terms of consensus-building) to their analysis of soft power through identity narratives. In this chapter, I have aimed to bridge this gap and, therefore, pave the way to an enhanced understanding of soft power and its use when analysing illiberal states' foreign policies. In Chapter Three, I am going to elaborate on why Russia's and Turkey's foreign policies can be characterised as 'illiberal'.

CHAPTER 3

RUSSIA'S AND TURKEY'S FOREIGN POLICY: THE ILLIBERAL TURN

This chapter reviews Russia's and Turkey's foreign policies – focusing on soft power – under the governments of the current Russian and Turkish Presidents Vladimir Putin and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, respectively. Both men have been holding key governmental positions – both acting as presidents or prime ministers for over a decade (since 2000 for Putin[13], since 2003[14] for Erdoğan). The period of their governments constitutes the timeframe of my thesis. The aim of this chapter is twofold. On the one hand, it tracks the evolution of Russia's and Turkey's foreign policies, underscoring these countries' illiberal and personalistic turn at the domestic level. This review does not aim to build an exhaustive timeline of events related to Russia's and Turkey's foreign policies, but only to spot some prominent academic readings of how these countries' foreign policies evolved during Putin's and Erdoğan's governments. Secondly, in this chapter, I start the analysis of how Russia and Turkey specifically understand and implement soft power. This analysis further and substantially unfolds in the following chapters, which analyse the soft power narratives and the two selected case studies, Armenia for Russia and the unrecognised TRNC for Turkey.

The illiberal nature of Russia's and Turkey's governments needs further elaboration. In this thesis, Turkey and Russia are defined as 'illiberal democracies' (Zakaria 1997), namely democratically elected regimes 'routinely ignoring constitutional limits on their power and depriving their citizens of basic rights and freedoms' (Zakaria 1997: 22). In these types of regimes, although democracy is formally present, civil societies face severe constraints – i.e. lack of civil liberties – and, therefore, are prevented from actively participate in the decision-making process. As mentioned in the introduction, Russia and Turkey have similarly highly

[13] Prior to that, Putin was Prime Minister and Acting President (due to the resignation of President Boris Yeltsin) from 1999 until the beginning of his first presidency in 2000, while Erdoğan served as Mayor of Istanbul from 1994 to 1998.

[14] Erdoğan won the general election in 2002, but he could not take office due to a previous conviction for inciting religious intolerance in 1998. The JDP government, led by the party's co-founder Abdullah Gül, annulled Erdoğan's political ban, allowing him to run in the by-election the following year. Gül subsequently resigned and Erdoğan became Prime Minister on 14 March 2003.

centralised governments, with a strong leader and an increasingly shrinking space for dissent, civil society and minority organisations. Both countries showed some elements of convergence over the last few years, whether in terms of their 'similar logics of power accrual and maintenance' (Öktem & Akkoyunlu 2016: 470), their strict control over the Internet (Parkinson et al. 2014), the widespread anti-American rhetoric (Warhola & Bezci 2013: 4), or because in both countries 'forms of democracy have been suborned by majoritarian nationalism, bolstered to varying degrees by the security state' (de Bellaigue 2016). Several authors explicitly refer to Turkey and Russia as illiberal democracies (Göl 2017; Kirişci 2016a; Türkmen-Dervişoğlu 2015; Börzel 2015; Isaac 2017). For instance, Göl (2017: 958) maintains that the 'promising "Turkish model"', a mix of economic development and democratic reforms, turned into authoritarian rule and, similar to Russia, gave rise to illiberal democracy: 'Erdoğan's authoritarianism is not a new type of political Islam, but old-school nationalism combined with illiberal democracy, as seen in Putin's Russia'. (Göl 2017: 964) According to Kirişci (2016a), Turkey wants to build a new international order together with actors, primarily Russia, that 'challenged, if not worked to undermine, the values of the international liberal order'. Under these conditions, 'It is no wonder that Turkey is increasingly called an "illiberal democracy" at best'. (Kirişci 2016a) Börzel (2015) points to the attractiveness of illiberal regional powers, saying that 'Putin's "sovereign or illiberal democracy" has found supporters outside, and increasingly also inside, Europe'. (Börzel 2015: 525) Other scholars (Başkan 2015; Esen and Gümüşçü 2016; Özbudun 2014; Golosov 2011; Gel'man 2014) use different – but similar in content – terms, such as 'electoral authoritarianism' (Schedler 2015) – namely, authoritarianism but with a formal democratic facade – or 'competitive authoritarianism' (Levitsky and Way 2010) – that is, hybrid regimes combining democratic rules (i.e. regular direct elections) with authoritarian governance (including the repression of dissent and control over media).

This illiberal turn in both countries, widely recognised by the literature, cannot but impact their foreign policies. Putnam (1988) famously unpacked the strong nexus between the domestic and international dynamics. According to Putnam, domestically, interest groups lobby the government to make it adopt favourable policies, and politicians use those groups to consolidate their power. Internationally, governments seek to 'maximise their own ability to satisfy domestic pressures, while minimising the adverse consequences of foreign

developments (Putnam 1988: 434).[15] At the same time, despite this illiberal turn, both Turkey and Russia have incorporated soft power in their foreign policy, creating new structures and explicitly referring to this concept. For instance, former Turkish President Abdullah Gül, in office from 2007 to 2014, stated:

> once you succeed in raising and realising your standards, then you start being followed very carefully by other countries; you become an inspiration for them. And once that happens, what matters is to combine your hard and soft power and translate it into virtuous power—for your immediate environment for your region, and for the whole world (in Tepperman 2013: 7).

In the words of Makarychev (2018: 138), non-Western countries – including Russia, Turkey, India or China – are developing and globally promoting their non-military strategies, which 'unleashed a variety of illiberal interpretations of soft power'.

How can increasingly illiberal governments claim to utilise a concept that Nye (1990) created in the context of liberal democracies? This is a crucial question that I seek to answer throughout the thesis. Despite the liberal biases of the concept, emphasised in Chapter Two, non- or partially democratic regimes can also generate soft power, based on values that are not necessarily seen as part of the liberal tradition. For instance, Gallarotti and Al Filali (2012: 237) claim that in Saudi Arabia, the 'basis of political soft power at the domestic level is an absence of political discontent within the system of government and its policies'. In that case, the ability for creating and maintaining a politically stable environment becomes a soft power asset. Talking about Russia's undemocratic domestic practices, Babayan (2015) notes how it is not rapid economic development or democratic values that attracts emulators, even without active regime promotion: 'being disappointed in Europe's competitiveness and democratic models, former democratic frontrunners such as Hungary may openly revert to "Putinesque" practices of centralizing power and silencing dissent'. (Babayan 2015: 450) Providing a governing model that is emulated by other countries can add to a country's soft

[15] In addition, Foreign Policy Analysis scholars show how foreign policy may be contested both vertically (between elites and masses) and horizontally (among elites) and that these conflicts reverberate throughout the foreign policy decision-making (Cantir & Kaarbo 2012: 5). While undoubtedly relevant, the thesis does not give prominence to the role of civil society groups, focusing rather on the elites. Consistently, this chapter also focuses on elites and particularly on the role of Putin and Erdoğan, whose role in planning the respective countries' foreign policy is increasingly direct and personalistic (Tuassig 2017; Gümüşçü 2016).

power; so, even if that model is not a liberal democracy, countries can still enjoy a sort of authoritarian allure.

By proposing a soft power definition[16] that focuses on the process of consensus-building around the discourse and images spread through Turkey's and Russia's soft power narratives, regardless of their content, I aim to show how Turkey and Russia borrow, interpret and apply a concept that was developed in a very different context. This chapter starts with a review of Turkey's and Russia's foreign policies; after that, I start describing the peculiarities of Turkey's and Russia's soft power approach and institutions, mainly referring to the academic literature. Although I operationalise soft power mainly through narratives, which I analyse in the chapter 'Russian and Turkish Soft Power Narratives', a review of the institutions is nonetheless important because it points at the main targets and means of Russian and Turkish soft power. The conclusion sketches some important similarities in the evolution of Russia's and Turkey's foreign policy and soft power.

3.1. The foreign policy of the Russian Federation under Putin

Given the time-frame of this research, this section focuses on the years of Putin's government (2000 to present days). However, references to past leaders and foreign policy schools are inevitable, as they contribute to show the evolution (regarding both continuity and change) of Russian foreign policy in the Putin era. Different domestic interpretations of the identity and role of Russia in the world have been shaping Russian foreign policy since the fall of the Soviet Union, and should, therefore, be taken into account. In particular, the West has been contributing to shaping Russia's identity for centuries, representing its significant, powerful 'Other'. (Neumann 1996) According to Krastev (2015), post-Soviet Russia's foreign policy is a

> strange mix of conservatism and resentment: Russia is a pro-status quo power because it valued its position as a successor of one of the Cold War superpowers, as attested by its permanent

[16] Soft power is defined as the 'ability of a state or a state's ruling elite to influence the international discourse such that certain policies, worldviews, and narratives are framed as "common sense", paving the way to the establishment of power relations'. See Chapter Two 'Literature Review and Theoretical Framework', p.11.

> seat in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC); at the same time, it resents the fact that the current world order is anchored in Western institutions like the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and the European Union.

The literature on Russian foreign policy commonly refers to three main foreign policy schools present in Russia after the Cold War; these schools reflect Russia's controversial relation with the West and its intrinsic struggle over national identity. These schools are composed of academics and practitioners that contributed to foster the debate around crucial foreign policy issues and directions. Due to the highly centralised decision-making process in place since the start of Putin's rule, these schools' impact on actual policies has decreased[17]. Their analysis is however important to assess how Russia's foreign policy has evolved over time. Tsygankov (2006) offers a widely used categorisation of the leading foreign policy schools, labelling them as integrationists, great power balancers and great power normalisers (or 'pragmatists').[18] Across Russia's long history, integrationists have claimed Russia's similarity with the Western civilisation, viewed as the closest and most viable model of progress. Early integrationists sought to present Russia as a loyal member of the family of European monarchies. After Peter the Great's reforms in the early 18th Century, Russia tried to integrate itself in the modern system of European states by adopting its very rules: the institutions of sovereignty, balance of power, dynasticism, and international law. At the same time, it tried to take an active part in wars, disputes, and resolutions of them. For instance, Watson (1984) sees Russia's penetration into Central Asia and its modernising presence there in a 'modern', European, civilising light. Costa Buranelli (2014) focuses on how such export of ideas to Central Asia was used by Russia to provide itself with a full European, civilised identity. However, he argues that, even if Russia was outside the European International Society, it was certainly situated in a peripheral tie, and was not seen as fully conforming to the European standard of civilisation. This highlights how 'a standard of civilisation did not exist only between 'the West and the rest', but also within the 'West' itself. (Costa Buranelli 2014: 384) It was in the years immediately after the collapse of the Soviet Union that integrationists – among whose there were many members of Russia's

[17] Kortunov, A., President of RIAC Moscow. Meeting with the author. Rome, May 2018.

[18] Alternative labelling for these schools exist, but their essence remains virtually unchanged. For instance, Andrew C. Kuchins and Igor A. Zevelev (2012) define the three main groups as Pro-Western liberals (or Westernisers); Great power balancers, (focusing on Russian national interests in the context of the balance of power); and Nationalists Neo-imperialists (or Eurasianists), namely proponents of regional domination and ethnic nationalists.

business elites and liberal media – were more popular. Inspired by liberal theories of interdependence, they argued that the 'natural' affinity of their country with the West was based on such shared values as democracy, human rights, and the free market. This approach was not very successful in the 2000s. Despite Putin's strong desire for inclusion in the international community and selective engagement with the West, his 'great power thinking' guided his strategy from the start: the concept of great powerness (*derzhavnosti*) that would guide Russia's revival in the 21st Century (Secrieru 2006: 300) is at odds with integrationists' principles.

The second school identified by Tsygankov, 'balancing', acknowledges the necessity for Russia to engage with the emerging economies in Asia, without disregarding political, but mostly economic cooperation with relevant Western partners. (Tsygankov 2006a: 154) This perspective claims that Russia should not emulate any pre-determined models such as the Western one. Insofar as Russia is a different geopolitical and cultural entity, Russia should instead become a model itself, a pole of independent power in a multipolar world, motivated primarily by its interests, as advocated by Yevgeny Primakov, the second foreign minister of the Russian Federation and a former chief of foreign intelligence. (Primakov 1999). Primakov's plan, as Tsygankov explains, was for Russia to counterbalance the West, particularly the United States, by 'entering into alliances with non-Western nations, such as China and India; by modernising Russia's economy; and by strengthening its ability to organise and control the post-Soviet space. Limited cooperation with the 'strongest' (i.e., the West) was envisaged, but by absolute equality of power (Tsygankov 2006a: 154). This perspective speaks to the classical approach of multi-vector foreign policy and can be seen as instrumental in allowing Russia to foster its interests by creating new alliances in the East while preserving its old links with the West. Indeed, in the eyes of the Kremlin, China stands out as the key alternative to Russia's relations with the West, in a time where the latter are profoundly strained due to several international crises.[19] However, this view presents some shortcomings. In particular, critics of this view regard the alliance with China as unbalanced (at best) and as dangerous (in the worst case scenario). Given China's economic role on the international stage, Russia's relation with China is bound to develop by economic and

[19] This was made clear by Russia's decision to conclude, shortly after the announcement of Western Crimea sanctions, the longstanding negotiations that characterised the Russia-China gas deal. The Kremlin depicted the deal as epochal and crucial to the Russian economy, but it proved to be economically more favourable to China, and not able to replace the role of the EU as a consumer of Russian gas.

potentially political asymmetry. Having identified a strong degree of ambivalence in Russia's turn to China, the academic community has come up with a new conceptual and practical framework; Russia would act as a Euro-Pacific power, that is, taking advantage from political and economic engagement in Europe and the Asia-Pacific without becoming too dependent on China (Koldunova 2015). This intellectual debate, however, had limited impact on the foreign policy decision-making because of the relatively closed nature of Russia's foreign policy decision-making machinery centred on the Kremlin (Koldunova 2015: 390).

The third foreign policy school, 'Great-power normalisation', emerged as a critic response to Primakov's balancing foreign policy, seen by critics as too ambitious and anti-Western. As Primakov's former supporters began to withdraw their support, the balancing school became driven by nationalists, who sought to reintegrate the former Soviet territories based on ethnic and historical considerations. In this context, the normalisers remained philosophically close to the balancers but shifted the means of achieving their goals. The new Pragmatist consensus was summarized in the influential Council for Foreign and Defense Policy's ''Strategy for Russia: An Agenda for the President—2000." Pragmatists 'found Primakov's vision of a multipolar world to be outdated and potentially confrontational, and the cost exorbitant. Instead, the authors proposed the concept of ''selective engagement". (…) Regarding the former Soviet area, the authors recommended a ''considerable revision" of policy, which would involve abandoning ''pseudo-integration at Russia's expense" and the ''tough defence of our national economic interests"' (Tsygankov 2006: 156).

By the late 1990s–early 2000s, as Russian Westernisers had been primarily marginalised, the dominant discourse interpreted Russia's great power status as enjoying geopolitical equality with the West. The late 2000s–early 2010s, on the other hand, saw a growing emphasis on Russia's civilizational distinctness, its normative superiority vis-a-vis the declining West and its special responsibility for maintaining stability in the post-Soviet area (Tsygankov 2010).

The Putin Presidencies (2000-2008 and 2012-to date), combined with Dmitry Medvedev's Presidency (2008-2012), witnessed the advancement of both discourses, coupled over the years with other elements, depending on the contingencies. Following Yeltsin's resignation in 1999, Putin adopted a new foreign policy concept, providing a new comprehensive vision of Russia's new foreign policy goals. (Lo 2008) The document has several primary areas of

focus but generally aims to reinforce Russia's position as a great power with global influence and continuously emphasises the importance of sovereignty and close regional ties.[20] According to Trenin (2014: 37),

> Putin's view of the world and Russia's role has undergone significant changes over the years. Putin began as 'a would-be ally of the US and a champion of Russia as part of Europe. He went on to assert Russia's independent role, still within the broader Euro-Atlantic world. Later, he reached out to America and Europe for help with modernisation. And eventually, he became convinced that Russia's true destiny was as a separate geopolitical entity, even as a unique civilisation.

Putin does not consistently stick to one of these schools but shows an eclectic approach to foreign policy. Koldunova (2015) stresses how the emergence of a 'mixed' foreign policy discourse – combining the three main foreign policy views and characterised by a series of fluctuations and tensions – marked Putin's presidencies: 'In 2000, Putin first stressed the idea that Russia was a Eurasian power. (...) In 2012, however, Putin also stated that Russia was a part of Greater Europe, with vital interests in Asia' (Koldunova 2015: 382-383).

Apart from this 'mixed' approach, Russian foreign policy under Putin is marked by internal power configurations, and especially by the concentration of power in the hands as a single powerful leader and guarantor of order. Trenin (2014) labels this highly personalistic political system as neo-tsarist. Legitimacy is formally acquired through the democratic process, although various techniques are employed to ensure public acquiescence. The influence of the president, the 'modern-day tsar', on foreign policy is 'virtually absolute'. (Trenin 2014: 37) This is clear when looking at the party supporting Putin, United Russia (UR). UR is by far the largest, all-national political party of Russia's 20-year post-Soviet experience, with no other post-Soviet Russian party possibly matching its electoral success. (Roberts 2012: 226) And yet Putin did not hesitate to distantiate himself from the party when he considered that the latter's decreasing popularity would harm his image. Even more, Putin seems to treat UR, a party which 'was founded and exists solely to support him, more as a necessary nuisance than as an asset' (Fish 2017: 69). For instance, Putin ran as an independent candidate at the March 2018 presidential elections in an attempt to gain more

[20] The Foreign Policy Concept Of The Russian Federation. Approved by the President of the Russian Federation V.Putin. 28 June 2000. Available at: https://fas.org/nuke/guide/russia/doctrine/econcept.htm

popular support. This strategy had already been adopted in the past (during the 2004 presidential elections) and responded to the goal of detaching the image of the President from one of the political institutions and, above all, parties. Russian citizens, in fact, highly distrust parties, which are seen as protecting and representing the interests of some influential groups (oligarchs, businesspeople) to the detriment of citizens. (Secor and O'Loughlin 2005: 79). An opinion poll by the Levada Center confirms the distrust[21]: in 2017, only 19% of Russians had complete confidence in political parties and 27% in local authorities; in comparison, 75% of respondents fully trusted the President. The image of Putin as a good president hindered by greedy bureaucrats is indeed widespread in Russia. Putin eventually won the March 2018 election with over 75% of the votes.

Other groups such as businesspeople impact Russian foreign policy. In particular, oligarchs played a prominent political role, especially in the 90s, when they contributed to the democratic transition after the fall of the USSR. (Ryabov 2008) During the times of Putin's predecessor, Boris Yeltsin, oligarchs played an active role in politics indeed, going openly into the government or Duma or financing political parties. (Shinar 2015: 583) When Putin became president in 2000, he led a 'systematic assault on independent actors', chiefly the media and the oligarchs (Ryabov 2008), who were seen as threatening his power. Today, oligarchs prefer to develop exclusive relations with the authorities and use ties to further their own businesses (Ryabov 2008) but remain essentially out of politics. Thus, it is safe to affirm that in such highly centralised and top-down system, the worldviews and leadership style of Putin is what crucially matter in the definition of the Russian national interest and the foreign policies. Several studies[22] focused on Putin's personality and ruling style, seen as mainly shaped by his past as KGB agent and careful political marketing, and how these elements impact relation with Western leaders such as German Chancellor Angela Merkel or the former Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi. Another key element, which defined Russia's foreign policy is the evolution of relations with the West. During Putin's rule, Russia enjoyed some moments of cooperation, followed by moments of crisis. Analysts commonly stress the cyclical nature of Russia's relations with the West, as well as how the

[21] Available only in Russian: https://www.levada.ru/2017/10/12/institutsionalnoe-doverie-3/?fromtg=1

[22] For instance, see Julie A. Cassiday and Emily D. Johnson, 'Putin, Putiniana and the Question of a Post-Soviet Cult of Personality', *The Slavonic and East European Review*, Vol. 88, No. 4 (2010), pp. 681-707 and Andrew Foxall, 'Photographing Vladimir Putin: Masculinity, Nationalism and Visuality in Russian Political Culture', *Geopolitics*, Vol. 18, Iss. 1, 2013.

Russian ‘Self’ has been defined through the prism of Western expectations (Kaempf 2010: 313). However, divergence over the Libya intervention of Spring 2011, the war in Syria and especially in Ukraine caused the worsening of the relations, whose gloomy nature seems very difficult to revert at the moment.

3.2. Soft power ‘the Russian way’

To date, Russia appears to be more confident using hard power measures to pursue its neighbourhood interests, in particular trying to dissuade neighbours from a closer relationship with the EU. Most of the five countries in the EU's Eastern Partnership (especially Georgia and Ukraine) have experienced Russian hard power in recent years. However, over the last few years, Moscow has also been trying to boost its power of attraction in its neighbourhood and beyond cultivating its cultural and historical links through specific soft power policies such as language programmes and commemorations of events of shared history, such as the USSR victory in WWII. Russia’s efforts to exercise soft power may be seen as a response to the ‘colour revolutions' in Georgia and Ukraine (Popescu 2006) and to counter the democracy promotion activities of the EU and US. While there has been some discussion about soft power in Russian official and academic circles, which sought to analyse the concept and adjust it to Russia, the major focus of Western academia remains on a few cases, and primarily on the US and the EU. This oversight leads ‘not only to a major gap in the academic literature and to an overall lack of understanding of how other actors use and adapt the concept of soft power, but also – as the example of the currently ongoing crisis in Ukraine demonstrates – to a misunderstanding of Russia’s foreign policy thinking, motivations, and actions' (Osipova 2014: 58).

Three prominent studies (Hill 2006, Tsygankov 2006b and Popescu 2006) brought the topic of Russian soft power to the attention of Western scholars and policy-makers. Other think-tank and academic studies followed although the topic has not received the attention it deserves, due to the assumption of Moscow's reliance on hard power. Kornilov and Makarychev (2015: 241) maintain that Russia's discourse on soft power vacillates between its two conceptual interpretations. It can be seen either as a universal instrument that each state uses internationally or as a country-specific tool which allows room for the contrivance

of a Russian version of soft power to distinguish it from the Western one.' In the first case, Russia would be obliged to look at the Western example and reproduce, if not imitate, their successful soft power policies. In the second case, it would have to produce a conceptual alternative to the mechanisms of soft power practised by countries which are considered to be competitors or rivals by the Kremlin, primarily the US and the EU. This dilemma reveals, according to Kornilov and Makarychev (2015: 241), some inconsistency in the Russian discourses on soft power:

> On the one hand, the Kremlin accuses the West of using soft power to interfere in the domestic affairs of third parties, which renders it illegitimate in the eyes of the Kremlin. (…) On the other hand, Russia's soft-power institutions are explicitly based on their Western homologues. The Russia Today TV channel has been modelled on the BBC; the Russia Beyond the Headlines project started with the Washington Post and the Daily Telegraph; the Russian World Foundation is referred to as a Russian version of the British Council or the Goethe Institute.

Makarychev (2018: 137) defines soft power in Russia as a bunch of 'non-military policies projecting specific dimensions of Russian power resources beyond Russia's borders, including communication and propaganda, the promotion of the Russian World as a global civilizational platform, religious diplomacy, memory politics and an external spillover of Russian conservative agenda'. This definition captures several of the elements of Russia's soft power – from conservatism to the concept of 'Russian World – analysed in this thesis and reflected in the narratives analysed in the following chapter. While it does go beyond the liberal values usually linked to the majority of soft power definitions, it does not emphasise the process of consensus-building around policies and values, a process which is central to the definition I adopt in this thesis.

These studies indicate what the main strengths and limitations of Russian soft power, which appears to be 'strong and limited at the same time' (Tsygankov 2013) are. Among the strengths, there are both ideational and material factors: the civilisation discourse; the successful economic recovery that Russia experienced in the first decade on the 2000s (boosted by its energy revenues); deep economic and social ties with neighbours, the significant Russian minorities scattered in post-Soviet countries (the so-called 'Russian world', consisting of 20 to 30 million people, are the main target of Russian soft power

policies[23]); and powerful, Kremlin-friendly media outlets.[24] Russia has also been promoting a new model of regional economic and political integration to counter the EU's, the Eurasian Economic Union[25], which came into effect on January 2015 and it was initially meant to lead to a political union down the line (Putin 2011).

Some of the soft power strengths of Russia – such as the discourse about the Russian civilisation in contraposition to the Western one – also constitute its main soft power limitations. Russian political model can appeal to like-minded leaders, who can emulate authoritarian practices while putting off liberal ones. The economic crisis, due to Western sanctions and falling oil prices, undoubtedly impacted Russia's soft power negatively: for example, Russia's stagnant economy reduced the attractiveness of the EEU, in which Russia plays a leading role. (Tafuro Ambrosetti 2018) By the same token, Russia's 'resilience' and its image as a 'victim of Western mistreatment' crafted by Russian state-friendly media, can appeal and inspire anti-American audiences. Russia's media frequently portray sanctions, for instance, as a Western attempt to weaken Russia and to punish Moscow for defending its legitimate political interests in its neighbourhood and beyond.

3.2.1. Russian soft power institutions

Over the last decade, there has been a proliferation of Kremlin-backed organisations that implemented soft power policies with varying degrees of success. The post-Soviet space is the chief theatre where these policies are staged. In particular, Russian minorities and 'compatriots' are key audiences, to whom the Kremlin has increasingly sought to reach out. The term 'compatriots', crucial for Russia's 'big brother' narrative and explained in detail in

[23] According to the webpage of the Russkiy Mir Foundation, the 'millions of ethnic Russians, native Russian speakers, their families and descendants scattered across the globe make up the largest diaspora population the world has ever known'. Russkiy Mir 'About Russkiy Mir Foundation' https://russkiymir.ru/en/fund/ The following chapter on narratives sheds light on the Russian minorities' role for Russia's soft power, especially in the section 'Russia as a big brother'.

[24] These soft power narratives, institutions and policies will be explored in more detail later in the chapter.

[25] This aspect of Russia's soft power is analysed in more details in the chapter 'Armenia in the Eurasian Economic Union: what role for Russia's soft power?'

the following chapter, encompasses ethnic Russians, citizens of the Russian Federation as well as individuals connected to Russia by culture or family background, according to the Federal Law on State Policy of the Russian Federation with Respect to Compatriots Abroad. [26] The main forum for interaction between 'compatriots' and Russian state authorities is the World Congress of 'compatriots', which meets every three years and is attended by the President of Russia and other state leaders.[27] In addition to those congresses, a global thematic conference of 'compatriots' takes place in Russia on a yearly basis.[28] There has been an effort lately to give a more organised institutional structure to these meetings, and in general to cooperation with the homeland, and in 2005 a World Coordination Board of Russian 'compatriots' and a Coordinating Country Councils were established.[29]

The promotion of the Russian language in the host countries have always been central, and it is mainly pursued by the activities of the *Russkiy Mir* Foundation. The Foundation was established by the government in 2007 and can be defined as a quasi-governmental organisation. Apart from promoting the Russian language, it aims at 'reconnecting the Russian diaspora with its homeland through cultural and social programs, exchanges and assistance in relocation'. Policies against the 'falsification of history' or measures to defend 'compatriots'' rights against national governments.[30] Linguistic projects are high on the agenda of the Foundation. According to the its webpage, the organisation supports and implements a 'wide range international education and public awareness programs as well as special campaigns and competitions aimed at increasing interest in the study of Russian language, culture and history as well as promoting cooperation among the most active and creative representatives of *Russkiy Mir* throughout the world.' Seminars for Russian language teachers, concerts of traditional Russian music, internship for international students

[26] Available only in Russian: Федеральный закон о государственной политике Российской Федерации в отношении соотечественников за рубежом, 23 July 2010

[27] Russkiy Mir 'About Russkiy Mir Foundation' https://russkiymir.ru/en/fund/

[28] Ibid.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid.

studying Russian, commemorations of historical events such as the Great Patriotic War or Anniversary of Yuri Gagarin's flight are some examples of the organisation's activities.[31] The Foundation also participates in the organisation of the World Congress of Russian 'compatriots'.[32]

Rossotrudnichestvo – the Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States, 'compatriots' Living Abroad and International Humanitarian Cooperation – is another important organisation created in 2008 through which the Kremlin also seeks to create a shared identity in the post-Soviet space based on common language, religion and history. (Tafuro 2014) There is a partial overlap between the activities implemented by *Rossotrudnichestvo* and the *Russkiy Mir* Foundation. *Rossotrudnichestvo*'s projects are also partly devoted to the promotion of the Russian language, which is rapidly declining in the business and cultural life of neighbouring countries. It also carries out frequent commemorations of key episodes of Russia's history, making full use of the rhetoric of fraternity and the nostalgia for the 'glorious past' and especially for the Soviet empire. The agency is also known as 'RusCooperation' because it is meant to play a crucial role in the field of international humanitarian cooperation. The peculiarity of Russia as a donor is that it is, in fact, a 're-emerging' donor: 'the Soviet Union was one of the largest donor countries in the world, and Russia's period as an aid recipient was relatively brief' (Larianova et al. 2014: 1).

Until very recently Russia was providing international aid multilaterally, through international organisations such as the World Bank. But in 2013 *Rossotrudnichestvo* was given the mandate to lead Russia's switch from a multilateral to a bilateral Assisting International Development (AID) approach, with the Kremlin pledging to increase its AID budget from the current 0.03 percent of Russia's GDP to 0.1 percent by 2020 (Larianova et al. 2014: 17). Such an increase seems however unlikely, given the short and medium-term economic prospects for Russia. In the countries pertaining to the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) – priority region for Russia and at the same time in other foreign countries – *Rossotrudnichestvo* is intended to be the main instrument of Russia's soft power, due to the fact that it is in this region where the 'compatriots', one of the main sources and

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid.

recipients at the same time of Russia's soft power potential, are more numerous. The defence of the rights of 'compatriots' is indeed very high on the organisation's agenda. The alleged aggravation of the situation of the 'compatriots' abroad; the limitations in their participation in the social and political life of host countries; the assimilation of the Russian-speaking population and language laws restricting the use of Russian; the disunity of 'compatriots'' organisations: they all represent the driving forces behind the *Rossotrudnichestvo*'s activities.

The Russian Orthodox Church is an autonomous institution; however, since it has been working very closely with the Kremlin lately to reach out to the 'Russian world', it is worth including it in the analysis. The Russian government and the Russian Orthodox Church have been deepening their ties, both at the domestic and international level. As for the domestic level, the Church obtained some important victories, such as long-awaited access to the public education system and the military. But the Church has also been actively 'participating in shaping and executing Russia's foreign policy not only in the Near Abroad specifically but more generally across the European continent and beyond. By welcoming this exclusive Russian Orthodox Church function, the government has enabled a paradoxical situation whereby a secular state openly advocates on behalf of Orthodoxy and traditional values abroad' (Blitt 2012: 89). At the third World Congress of 'compatriots' Living Abroad, former President Medvedev praised 'the role of the Russian Orthodox Church and our other traditional confessions in reviving the spiritual unity of 'compatriots' and strengthening their humanitarian and cultural ties with the historical homeland and expressed his intent to 'certainly continue contacts between the state and appropriate confessions.' (DECR 2009) Although Medvedev referred to other 'traditional confessions', the 'special relationship' with the Moscow Patriarchate is evident and provides both players with tangible benefits:

> the government benefits from the Russian Orthodox Church's efforts as a willing partner in reinforcing Russia's "spiritual security", which in turn boosts available channels for the projection of Russian power. On the home front, the government ensures that religious groups or "sects" deemed by the Russian Orthodox Church to constitute a threat are sufficiently repressed (Blitt 2012: 108).

During the last five years, the Patriarch Kirill and other high-level personalities of the Church have been delivering several speeches spelling out their vision of what the Russian

civilisation and post-Soviet integration should be based upon. According to the Patriarch, the spiritual element is crucial. (Stepanova 2015: 120) He declared that the 'Russian world' is not the world of the Russian Federation or the Russian Empire, but it 'comes from the Kievan Christianization. (…) It is a special civilisation, which comprises people who now call themselves different names: Russians, Ukrainians, and Belarusians. This world may also include people (…) who have taken the cultural and spiritual component of this world as their own.'[33] The Church has deep bonds with both the *Russkiy Mir* Foundation and *Rossotrudnichestvo* (Blitt 2011; Stepanova 2015). The Russian language version of the *Russkiy Mir* website lists more than 17 main objectives of the foundation (beyond those already cited), including interaction with the Russian Orthodox Church and other religions in promoting Russian language and Russian culture. These references are not present on the English version of the website (Blitt 2012). Some authors (Blitt 2011; Stepanova 2015) believe that the same concept of *Russkiy Mir* has been one of the key priorities of Patriarch Kirill. Many news releases of speeches and trips of religious authorities are reported on the web pages of the two organisations, while Russian Orthodox priests habitually perform rites of blessing at recently opened Russian Centres and *Rossotrudnichestvo* offices. Events and roundtables on spiritual and value-based topics – like the Symposium on the topic of traditional values held in the London office of *Rossotrudnichestvo* on February 2014 – are also very common.[34]

The promotion of spiritual and conservative values and the attempt to reach out to the community of believers scattered all over the world is certainly not a prerogative of the Russian Orthodox Church. On the contrary, it is rather a straightforward feature of mainly all Churches, and so is the occasional collaboration with state authorities. But the close relation that the Moscow Patriarchate and the Kremlin (and the government-funded organisations *Russkiy Mir* and *Rossotrudnichestvo*) have been developing throughout the last few years speak to a new and consistent strategy to reach out to the 'Russian world'. This strategy is beneficial to both players, because it increases their influence and further legitimize their

[33] Interfax 2014, Patriarch Kirill - Idea of 'Russian world' not means of enslaving Ukraine, 8 September 2014 http://interfax-religion.com/?act=news&div=11499

[34] Natalya Mihailova 'Traditional Values in an Era of Globalization' Symposium takes place in London, *Pravmir*, 24 February 2014 http://www.pravmir.com/traditional-values-era-globalization-symposium-takes-place-london/

role among the Russian population. The next sections describe Turkey's foreign policy and soft power under the JDP, to draw a comparison with Russia.

3.3. Turkish foreign policy under Erdoğan

The end of the Cold War bore important consequences for Turkey. These were far less dramatic compared to Russia, which faced gigantic socio-political and economic transformations after the fall of the Soviet Union; but this period represented one of the key international structural shifts that triggered the changes that we have witnessed in Turkish foreign policy, including its activist stance on the global arena. (Tezcur and Grigorescu 2014: 257) During the Cold War, Turkey was seen as a buffer state against the expansion of the communist threat (Müftüler-Baç 1996; Atamaca 2014; Eralp, Göksel and Lindgaard 2017). The fall of the Iron Curtain seemed to reduce Ankara's geopolitical importance (Eralp et al. 2017); on the other hand, the emergence of new states in the Balkans, the Caucasus, and Central Asia presented both new opportunities and challenges for Turkey (Sayarı 2000). For instance, Turkey proposed the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Zone in 1990 and gave new impetus to the Economic Cooperation Organization involving Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, and five Central Asian Republics in 1992. (Tezcur and Grigorescu 2014: 260) However, domestic issues linked with the political and economic instability during the 1990s and the inability to resolve the Kurdish questions undermined 'foreign policy initiatives that would become more sustainable with the AKP's coming to power' (Tezcur and Grigorescu 2014: 257).

The end of the Cold War also brought Turkey and the EU gradually closer, with the European Council's Helsinki Summit in 1999 – in which Turkey was granted the EU membership status – being a 'turning point' (Özcan 2008; Sözen 2010; Eralp et al. 2017) for Turkish foreign in the post-Cold War era. Not only did Turkey's EU candidacy since 1999 prompt Turkish political and legal reforms and intensify the Europeanisation process domestically (Müftüler-Baç 2005: 16), but it also 'profoundly alter' (Aydın and Açıkmeşe 2007: 263) Turkish foreign policy as well. For instance, without the EU membership prospects, 'it would have been difficult to imagine Turkey opening the doors to an internal

debate on the "Armenian issue" or the shift in the dialogue on Cyprus from a confrontational line to a win-win discourse' (Aydın and Açıkmeşe 2007: 263). These profound transformations, largely overlapping with the JDP government, are analysed in the following section.

The coming to power of the JDP represented a watershed moment in Turkish politics[35], being the JDP a 'context shaper', that is, an actor able to 'redefine the parameters of what is socially, politically and economically possible for others'. (Alaranta 2017) According to Heper (2013), Erdoğan continued the Turgut Özal Economic Revolution (1983-1993) that allowed a new entrepreneurial middle class to flourish, but it was under Erdoğan that this new middle class started to play a major role in the Turkish economy and polity. (Heper 2013: 141) The EU membership negotiations and the start of the JDP rule translated into a more proactive and multidimensional foreign policy, which constitutes an 'integral part of Turkey's transformation under the AKP'. (Keyman and Gümüşçü 2014: 70) Indeed, the JDP brought about a new geopolitical vision, more focused on the immediate region of Turkey. Professor Davutoğlu – Chief Adviser to the Prime Minister from 2002 to 2009; Minister of Foreign Affairs from 2009 to 2014; Prime Minister of Turkey from August 2014 to May 2016 - created the concept of 'strategic depth'[36]. According to this concept, Turkey possesses geographical depth and historical depth given its historical, social, cultural, and geo-economic ties with its immediate neighbours. He argues that this gives Turkey a unique place and the responsibility to play an active role in its region. This concept marked a shift from the country's defensive geopolitical legacy and Kemalist diplomatic tradition, which focused on the nation-state as the most important reference point within the geopolitical culture of Turkey. (Yeşiltaş 2013: 680) Many accused Davutoğlu's new approach of being inspired by neo-Ottomanism. (Kale, Dimitriadi, Sanchez Montijano, Süm 2018: 9) Murinson (2006: 947) claims that the origin of the concept can be traced to Özal's neo-Ottomanism and 'the multi-dimensional' foreign policy of the Erbakan government. In the Balkans, Türkeş (2016: 2011) claims that 'the overconfident JDP leadership attempted to the ratchet-up

[35] Abundant references to how Erdoğan and other prominent JDP members depict the relevance of their party to the transformation of Turkey will be made in the following chapter.

[36] This concept will be analysed more in detail in the chapter on Turkish soft power narratives.

implementation of its neo-Ottomanist foreign policy'. However, Davutoğlu has vigorously refused the term neo-Ottomanism on different occasions.[37]

The JDP's foreign policy approach developed through different phases. In their assessment of Turkey-EU relations, Eralp et al. (2017) identify three main periods — 1999-2007; 2007-2013 and 2013 to 2017 — that can be useful when assessing the changing Turkish foreign policy. The above-mentioned Helsinki Summit marks the most important date in the first period, with the start of the EU effect on Turkey's foreign policy. The early 2000s saw a process of Europeanisation of Turkey (Öniş 2008; Demirtaş 2015) indeed. In this period, the 'transformative leverage of the EU over Turkey augmented substantially in all critical policy areas' (Öniş and Kutlay 2016:15) or, at least, a marked 'pattern of cooperation with the possibility of convergence in terms of outcomes of the EU-Turkey relations' (Eralp et al. 2017: 5) was clearly observable. During these years, Turkish foreign policy was still essentially pro-Western, although more pro-EU than pro-US, as Tezcur and Grigorescu's (2014) analysis of voting patterns in the United Nations General Assembly shows. In an attempt to incorporate the 'strategic depth' concept into its foreign policy, Ankara pursued a multilateral approach in its region (especially in the MENA and Western Balkan regions) and intense cooperation with the EU. It also started expanding its presence beyond its 'traditional' areas of interest – the Balkans, Central Asia and the Middle East – to reach Africa. The JPD put to full use the new Africa policy designed in 1998 by the Turkish government. Between 2002 and 2013, the number of Turkish embassies in Africa grew from 19 to 34 and Turkey initiated trade-focused dialogues with many African leaders. (Balci 2015: 7) After the 9/11 terrorist attacks, Turkey's image increasingly assumed the contours of 'mediator', 'bridge' or even the only 'Muslim democracy'[38] in the region, to the extent that, since 2005, Turkey has been a key sponsor of the UN's "Alliance of Civilizations", an initiative of the former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and co-sponsored by the

[37] The Economist, 'The Davutoglu effect: All change for foreign policy'. 21 October 2010 https://www.economist.com/node/17276420
Daily Sabah, 'FM Davutoğlu: Why are we referred to as neo-Ottomans?' 4 March 2013 https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/2013/03/04/fm-davutoglu-why-are-we-referred-to-as-neoottomans

[38] Please, see the following chapter on narratives for a more detailed analysis of these roles and images.

Governments of Spain and Turkey aiming to address 'the roots of polarization between societies and cultures today'.[39]

The period 2007-2013 saw some important domestic developments. In 2009, the JDP started the so-called 'resolution process', based negotiations between state officials and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)[40] and the implementation of reforms ensuring the recognition of the cultural and political rights of Kurds. (Yeğen 2015: 2) At the same time, however, political rights started to shrink, with a severe regression of freedom of expression and the press (Saatçioğlu 2014 in Eralp et al. 2017:8). This period also witnessed the emergence of a new myth of youth in Turkey: 'the myth of a pious generation, aimed at replacing the previous myth of modern and national youth, prevalent in Turkey's political culture since the nineteenth century and reinforced by the Kemalist Republic' (Lüküslü 2016: 1). Eralp et al. (2017) see these years as a transition period: the JDP's pro-EU, secular discourse turned into one where the EU is downplayed. At the same time, the role the then-Prime Minister Erdoğan and the impact of religion in Turkish foreign policy starts to grow exponentially, to the extent that claims that Turkey was becoming 'electoral authoritarianism of a more markedly Islamic character' (Özbudun 2014: 155) started to take ground. According to Görener and Ucal (2011), by weakening the impact of traditional domestic constraints on the power of the civilian authority, Turkey's EU-driven democratisation process strengthened the position of the prime minister. This, in turn, allowed Erdoğan's political and religious worldview to impact Turkey's foreign policy increasingly; his role grew to the extent that some argue that the main task of the Turkish foreign policy establishment, including the then Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu, was making up for Erdoğan's gaffes in foreign policy (Kinzer 2010 in Görener and Ucal 2011: 376). Key internal and international dynamics (the rise of Erdoğan's authoritarian rule, the decreasing leverage of the EU and key events such as the Arab Spring and the inception of the Syrian War in 2011) marked a turn to an increasingly unilateral and interventionist foreign policy, which aimed at turning Turkey from a state of marginal importance into a 'centre country' (Robins 2013). Indeed, Davutoğlu took the Arab Spring as an opportunity for Turkey to lead a new order in the Middle East, promoting, for instance, an ideological commitment to the

[39] The United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC), 'Who We Are' https://www.unaoc.org/who-we-are/

[40] Since 1984, the PKK has been almost continuously involved in an armed conflict with the Turkish state, mainly in order to achieve an independent Kurdish state.

cause of the Muslim Brotherhood. (Kirişci 2016a) According to Ennis and Momani (2013: 1137), the uprisings brought a 'sense of urgency' to the Turkish foreign ministry, which felt that it had to enhance its 'newfound prestige' through an 'increased soft power'. Things unfolded differently, however, and Turkey did not manage to impose itself as the leader of the Arab world (Kirişci 2013; Oğuzlu 2013; Gürzel 2014).

The last period examined covers the years 2013-2017. Serious domestic events upset the population and posed a challenge to the JDP's power. In 2013, the Gezi protests saw hundreds of thousands taking the streets to protest the proposed demolition of the Gezi Park in Istanbul and turned into a protest against the government, which was repressed disproportionately by the police. Between 2015 and 2017, a series of bloody terrorist attacks targeting civilians took place, mainly in Ankara and Istanbul, perpetrated by either Kurdish or Islamic terrorist groups. In July 2016, a section of the Turkish army unsuccessfully launched an operation in several cities to topple the government. In the 15 July failed coup attempt in 2016, the official sources report that 265 people were killed in the clashes that followed attempt[41]. All of these events, together with the recrudescence of the conflict in Syria and the massive inflow of refugees to Turkey[42], impacted Turkish foreign policy, which went from the Davutoğlu's 'Strategic Depth' to '"power-pragmatic realism" wrapped in rhetoric reminiscent of "the Islamic-Turkish Synthesis" of the 1980-Coup' (Eralp et al.: 19).

These events also impacted Turkey's soft power narratives, as the following chapter will argue. A prominent element of rupture with the past was the resignation of the person who is commonly viewed as the 'architect of Turkey's soft power'.[43] In 2016, Davutoğlu had to step down as Turkey's Prime Minister – a move that was allegedly 'masterminded' by Erdoğan

[41] Reuters, 'Death toll rises to 265 in failed Turkey coup: official', 16 July, 2016 https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-security-casualties/death-toll-rises-to-265-in-failed-turkey-coup-official-idUSKCN0ZW132

[42] According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) data, in 2017 there were over 3.5 million refugees in Turkey, the world's largest refugee population. More than 90% of refugees live outside of camps in urban and peri-urban areas. https://reliefweb.int/report/turkey/unhcr-turkey-factsheet-october-2017

[43] The Economist, 'Dreams from their fathers. Turkey's canny foreign minister seeks to pursue delicate diplomacy all around'. Jul 23rd 2009 http://www.economist.com/node/14098427.

(Şahin 2017: 12). Shortly after, the JDP General Congress elected Binali Yıldırım as the party's Chairperson and Turkey's Prime Minister. The reasons for this dismissal were largely ascribed to a power struggle within the JDP, and especially to clashes with Erdoğan (Şahin 2017: 12). Djavadi (2016) claims that given 'Davutoğlu's burgeoning reputation outside of Turkey and his recent prominence on the Turkish political scene', Erdoğan might have perceived the prime minister as a direct challenge, in light of his plans to turn Turkey in a one-man presidential system[44]. Following Davutoğlu's dismissal, Turkey's foreign policy made several U-turns. In particular, Ankara started normalising relations with Israel and Russia, strained after the 2010 Israeli attack on the Turkish humanitarian boat/flotilla Mavi Marmara[45] and the Turkish downing of a Russian war jet flying near the Syria-Turkey border in 2015. These events speak to a 'new degree of pragmatism' (Kirişci 2016b), which is also clear in Turkey's involvement in the Astana process with Russia and Iran. As a matter of fact, Turkey's interests in Syria diverge greatly from the ones of its partners in the Astana process, for instance when it comes to the future of Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad: while Russia and Iran defend his role in post-war Syria, Turkey's called for Assad to step down and backed rebels fighting to oust him[46]. Nevertheless, the three partners are ready to compromise to maintain their partnership, and Turkey gave up its initial goal to overthrow of Assad focusing instead on avoiding the emergence of a Kurdish autonomous region in the north of Syria.[47]

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[44] See also Tim Arango and Ceylan Yeginsu, 'How Erdoğan Moved to Solidify Power by Ousting a Pivotal Ally' The New York Times, 5 May 2016
https://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/06/world/europe/ahmet-davutoglu-turkey-prime-minister.html

[45] A group of boats had been sent by Humanitarian Relief Foundation, a conservative NGO with ties to the Turkish government, and had that government's 'tacit approval to embark on a humanitarian trip to challenge Israel's blockade on Gaza'. (Kirişci 2016)

[46] See, for instance: Reuters, 'Turkey's Erdoğan calls Syria's Assad a terrorist, says impossible to continue with him'. 27 December 2017 https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-turkey/turkeys-Erdoğan-calls-syrias-assad-a-terrorist-says-impossible-to-continue-with-him-idUSKBN1EL0W5
Reuters 'Turkey tells Syria's Assad: Step down!' 22 November 2011
https://www.reuters.com/article/us-syria/turkey-tells-syrias-assad-step-down-idUSL5E7MD0GZ20111122

[47] Alexander Christie-Miller, 'Turkey's policy shift in Syria reflects new priorities'. *The National*. 16 April, 2018 https://www.thenational.ae/world/mena/turkey-s-policy-shift-in-syria-reflects-new-priorities-1.722147

Therefore, Turkey's ambitions under the JDP to become a powerful regional power were both enhanced and constrained in different periods by domestic, international and regional dynamics. In the words of Robins (2013: 382), Turkey remains a 'double gravity state': a 'plausible yet volatile actor on the edge of the subsystems of continental Europe and the Middle East'. This was particularly evident in Syria, where Turkey's initial unilateral policies gave way to a more pragmatic approach and an unlikely – but still solid at the time of writing – partnership with Russia and Iran.

3.4. Turkey's soft power

Starting especially from the second half of the 2000s, Turkish soft power grabbed more and more scholarly attention, and several academic and think tank studies appeared (Bilgin and Eliş 2008; Beng 2008; Altunışık 2008 and 2011; Oğuzlu 2007 and 2013; Çandar 2009; Kalin 2011; Yörük and Vatikiotis 2013; Demiryol 2014). Some policies during the early years of the JDP rule can explain this interest, as Turkish foreign policy became increasingly multilateral and proactive in the resolution of its own as well as its neighbours' conflicts.

Turkey under the JDP pursued the rapprochement with Greece – which had started in the late 1990s – and supported the UN-backed attempts to settle the Cyprus issue. In the Balkans, Turkey increasingly started enhancing its political, economic, and cultural influence in the Balkans, also increasing its mediation efforts: Turkey improved its ties with Serbia and promoted the Trilateral mechanism[48], namely meetings between Turkey-Serbia-Bosnia in Istanbul[49], with the aim of overcoming political disputes and foster regional development. In this period, Turkey also sought an improvement in relations with Armenia and Kurds of Northern Iraq. All of these improved Turkey's image, which shifted from being 'a "post-

[48] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, Relations between Turkey and Serbia. Available at: http://www.mfa.gov.tr/relations-between-turkey-and-serbia.en.mfa

[49] In the latest meeting, Erdoğan hosted Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic and Bakir Izetbegovic on 29 January 2018. See: ANSAmed, 'Trilateral meeting Turkey-Serbia-Bosnia in Istanbul. Focus on regional cooperation and investment. 29 January 2018 http://www.ansamed.info/ansamed/en/news/sections/politics/2018/01/29/trilateral-meeting-turkey-serbia-bosnia-in-istanbul_dad94a62-9ffe-46a8-b345-82fa97d640bd.html

Cold War warrior" or a "regional coercive power" to a "benign" if not "soft" power' (Kirişci 2009: 29).

Scholars and pundits usually ascribed this 'soft' shift to a mix of domestic and regional conditions. At the domestic level, the economic boom overlapping with the JDP rule and the process of democratisation mentioned in the previous section was key in allowing Turkey to both feel more confident and to be presented as a model. Of course, the two phenomena have strong links, as the increased cooperation with the EU helped foster and modernise Turkish economy and develop Turkish civil society by directly funding projects or through interactions with European civil society groups and people-to-people contacts. As a result, Turkey was increasingly viewed as successful in its region. For instance, according to a TESEV survey (in Altunışık 2011) respondents in many Arab countries, who were facing increasing socio-economic stagnation and political authoritarianism, declared to view Turkey's continuing political and economic transformation quite positively. According to the Gallup Balkan Monitor in 2011, in many Balkan countries, such as Kosovo, Albania, Macedonia, and Montenegro, people have very positive attitudes towards Turkey. Even when looked at the public opinion in Serbia, young Serbs (ages 15-24) perceive Turkey as "friendlier" than their older counterparts. (Dursun-Ozkanca 2016) Internationally, Turkey's EU accession process is both seen as a *reason* behind Turkey's 'soft shift' and one of the main *assets* of Turkish soft power, especially evident in the rapprochement with Greece and the mediation in Cyprus (Öniş and Yilmaz 2008), in the Middle East (Oğuzlu 2007; Altunışık 2008) and in the Balkans (Bechev 2012; Demirtaş 2015). On the one hand, the accession process drove an increase in the use of economic and cultural soft power instruments because Ankara came to realise that its hard power capabilities were seen as hindering the EU's integration process, so it had to reinvent itself drawing from the EU's own foreign policy model. (Oğuzlu 2007: 90) On the other hand, the fact that Turkey was seen as one of the most Europeanised among other south-eastern European states was also an asset that Turkey used to legitimise its image of *primus inter pares* (Demirtaş 2015:137). This was supporting the image of Turkey as a 'Muslim democracy'[50], combining Islam and secularism. For instance, Turkey was seen as contributing to regional stability in the Middle East by helping to spread the European norms and values, to the extent that many Europeans regarded Turkey as 'acting as a European country in the Middle East, rather than as a Middle Eastern country in Europe' (Oğuzlu 2007: 91). This was adding up to Turkey's prestige in

[50] This image is analysed in detail in Chapter Four on Turkey's soft power narratives.

the region: according to the TESEV 2010 survey, more than half of the respondents in the Arab world supported Turkey's accession process and thought that this had positive repercussions for the region as a whole (Altunışık 2011: 2). Hence, in a way, the EU membership process was instrumental to increase Turkey's prestige and in achieving Turkey's own foreign policy goals, not directly related with the membership process.

Apart from its economic success and the prestige and democratisation stemming from the EU membership process, Turkey's main soft power sources derive from its culture, history and geography. The latter two elements, in particular, have great importance in Turkey's soft power narratives analysed in the next chapter. As for culture, Turkey started to use its language, lifestyle and media products as soft power assets. TV shows and soap opera such gained popularity in the Middle East, the Balkans, and some (predominantly "Turkic") Central Asian republics. According to Cevik (2014: 78), these soap operas' influence is such that they turned into 'non-governmental public diplomacy tools representing Turkey globally'. In the Middle East, 78 percent of the respondents in the TESEV poll in 2010 said they watched a Turkish TV series. According to Altunışık (2011: 2), the popularity of these series triggered an increase in the numbers of Arab tourists to Turkey. These series speak not only to Turkey's cultural influence but also to economic and political attractiveness, given that they predominantly project a Western and modern lifestyle. (Cevik 2014) Bechev (2012: 144) highlights the mix of sentimentalism and family drama and glamorous lifestyle that increased Turkey's soft power in the Balkans, even in societies such as Bulgaria, Greece or Serbia, that historically share negative views towards Turkey. In their study of the soap opera *Colonialism*, Yörük and Vatikiotis (2013) argue that Turkey's 'ambiguous identity' explained why its cultural products, particularly soap operas, become popular for both Western and Middle Eastern audiences: 'They appeal to the nostalgia for the lost tradition, the externalized Orient, and the demoded religious values in the Greek audience, while representing the dream of an achievable degree of modernity, Westernization, and secularization to the Arabic middle classes' (Yörük and Vatikiotis 2013: 2379).

Some JDP policies during the last few years sparked a debate on the evolution of Turkish soft power. This debate overlaps with the third and last periodisation of Turkey's foreign policy examined in the previous section based on Eralp et al. (2017). This third period started off with the Gezi protests in 2013, which represents a turning point toward a more illiberal Turkey domestically and a more unilateral foreign policy. The significance of the protests

went well beyond an *ad hoc* struggle driven by environmental concerns. As Atay (2013: 39) remarks, the origin of the demonstrations is 'cultural and rooted in the worries of the secular people of the country about the shrinking ground of their lifestyle as a result of government pressures'. The protests mark a shift for Turkish soft power, too. The harsh way in which the government suppressed the protests in Istanbul and other cities caused 11 fatalities and several thousand injuries and originated strong reservations about the sustainability of the positive image and expectations about Turkey abroad (Oğuzlu 2013: 11). Turkey's 'image problem' after the 'Authoritarian response' to the protests (Seibert 2014) has arguably decreased its soft power in the region and beyond: several international media outlets (DW, Foreign Policy, New York Times…)[51] condemned the repression and posed serious questions about the credibility of Turkey's democratic commitment. According to Elman (2013: 5), the government reaction to the protesters' demands – which focused on domestic politics but also related to the country's approach to foreign policy – provided a considerable challenge to the European institutions and government because it confirmed Ankara's 'departure from European norms. (Elman 2013: 5) This is clear with the spreading of the idea in some circles in Europe that 'Turkey's rhetoric of democracy contrasts with failures of democracy at home'. (Bryant & Hatay 2013: 17) Some scholars (Oğuzlu 2013; Gürzel 2014) contend that the Arab nations perceived this crisis as a sign that the JDP government was not a democratic party and Turkey was no longer viewed as an inspiration. However, given that most Arab countries are not classified as democracies, a counterargument could be made that non-democratic governments in the neighbourhood could regard the Turkish government's reaction to the protests as a legitimate attempt to reestablish order and stability, challenged by the protesters. The next section will explore the main institutions created or used by the JDP government to project soft power.

3.4.1. Turkish soft power institutions

[51] Steven A. Cook, Michael Koplow 'How Democratic Is Turkey? Not as democratic as Washington thinks it is'. Foreign Policy. 3 June 2013 http://foreignpolicy.com/2013/06/03/how-democratic-is-turkey/
Seyla Benhabib, 'Turkey's Authoritarian Turn', The New York Times, 3 June 2013 https://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/04/opinion/turkeys-authoritarian-turn.html
Thomas Seibert. 'Turkey's image problem after Gezi Park'. DW. 28 May 2014 http://www.dw.com/en/turkeys-image-problem-after-gezi-park/a-17665508

The JDP strategy to exert soft power prompted the creation of new institutions or renewal of existing ones. These institutions include: The Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency (TİKA); the Turkish Red Crescent (Kızılay); the Ministry of Tourism and Culture; the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; TRT (Turkish Radio and Television Institution); the Yunus Emre Foundation, and other institutions performing diplomatic, economic and cultural activities. In what follows, I am going to touch upon the most relevant among these institutions. In order to increase the effectiveness of Turkey's efforts the coordination among the soft power institutions, the Office of Public Diplomacy under the Prime Minister's Office was created in 2010. (Kalin 2011) As explained in the Official Decree creating the institution (in Kalin 2011: 8), 'in today's world, where national and regional problems can easily take on a global dimension, a more efficient coordination, cooperation, and decision-making mechanism is necessary among public policy institutions in regard to developments in the information and communication technologies, opportunities and threats emerging in the international arena'. The Office overviews the coordination among public agencies and civic organizations in three main areas – university programs, political communication activities, and media promotion activities – to ensure an 'accurate and effective promotion and presentation of Turkey'. (Sancar 2015: 16) Khan (2012: 18 - 19) claims that the Turkish prime ministry created the Office of Public Diplomacy to manage a 'charm offensive' and to 'tell Turkey's new story'. The degree of effectiveness of the Office's promotion strategies, however, is debatable. Sancar (2015: 17) claims that the most significant shortcoming of the office is that public diplomacy in Turkey is a relatively new concept and it is 'used rather interchangeably with public affairs within the domestic target audience'. Furthermore, the Office's social media accounts on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube have a low number of followers, 'hampering the desired results of reaching a wider audience'. (Sancar 2015: 17) The Office's official website[52] has an English version, but when being attempted to be reached it is mostly out of service. This is very telling of the difficulties of the Office to reach out to foreign non-Turkish speaking audiences.

Given the relevance of external aid policies for soft power, over the last years, the activities and salience of the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA) have increased.

[52] https://kdk.gov.tr/en/ My last attempt to access it was on 6 June 2018.

TIKA was established in 1992 to address the development needs of the Turkic (Turkish-speaking) Republics after the disintegration of the Soviet Union. According to its website[53], 'since 2002, TIKA has increased its activity and visibility through the development assistance operations carried out abroad along with the momentum of new foreign policy expansions of the Turkish Government and Turkey's improving level of development', reaching 8 billion USD of development aid in 2017[54] compared to about 85 Millions of USD in 2002. In the Balkans, the TIKA's activities ranged from cultural and religious ones (funding the restoration of Ottoman buildings and various conferences on the Ottoman legacy) to infrastructural investments (such as drinking water distribution systems).

TIKA's activities in the region helped to increase 'not only the sphere of influence of Turkey but also contribute to Ankara's visibility by the local populations and distinguish it from other regional countries that could not afford such an extensive aid programme'. (Demirtaş 2015: 134) Ipek (2015: 190) argues that it was a combination of ideational forces and material interests that caused the significant increase in TIKA activities since the early 2000s: 'Although Turkey engaged in similar foreign policy activism in the 1990s and the early 2000s, (...) the turning point for policy change was the convergence of strategies to advance material interests and normative ideas in determining the criteria for constituting soft power as an instrument of foreign policy, a factor that was missing in the previous period'.

Similar to Russia, Turkey has been engaging with its citizens abroad since the 1960s. This engagement has evolved and, under the JDP, Turkey has been revising its policy towards its citizens abroad via 'both discursive references and policy changes and is on its way to establishing a coherent and systematic emigration and diaspora engagement policy which emphasises cultural, political and socio-economic ties' (Baser 2017). Before the JDP rule, 'diaspora' was never used when speaking of Turks living abroad (Unver, 2013:183), a Kemalist notion of exclusive citizenship was still predominant (Öktem 2014). After 2002,

[53] Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA), History of TIKA http://www.tika.gov.tr/en/page/history_of_tika-8526

[54] TİKA (2018) 'Türkiye Yüzde 25'lik Artışla Resmi Kalkınma Yardımlarını 8,14 Milyar Dolara Çıkardı' http://www.tika.gov.tr/tr/haber/turkiye_yuzde_25%27lik_artisla_resmi_kalkinma_yardimlarini_8_14_milyar_dolara_cikardi-43534

there was an institutionalisation and even a politicisation of the diaspora. The Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities, a department created in 2010 under the prime minister's office, is a case in point. It was entitled to significant responsibilities for cultural diplomacy, providing consular-like services for Turkish people living abroad, funding projects promoting Turkish culture and managing Turkish grants to international students (Fidan 2013), which are another very important soft power instrument of Turkey (Demirtaş 2013: 176-177) According to İçduygu (2014: 6), by glorifying the Ottoman past – its history, people, and geography – the Presidency pursues a neo-Ottoman discourse that challenges the European model. Lately, this increased Turkish activism towards the diaspora has attracted more international attention, especially during the constitutional referendum in 2016. Back then, the very fact that Erdoğan was trying to reach out to Turkish communities and campaign was perceived as a challenge by many European countries, which did not grant the necessary authorisation to the President.

According to Cornell (2017), there is a process of 'weaponization' of the Diaspora that involves, apart from the Presidency, the Turkish State Directorate of Religious Affairs Foundation (Diyanet); this organisation has branches in most European countries with sizable Turkish populations to distribute funds, essentially for the construction and management of mosques. The Diyanet changed dramatically under Erdoğan: 'While it in the past served as a check on Islamic radicalism, it is now used to amplify the Islamist ideology of the AKP' (Cornell 2015). This cannot but have implications for the increasingly conflictual relations between Turkey and some EU member states hosting large Turkish communities, such as Germany and the Netherlands. Therefore, it looks that Turkey is trying, similar to Russia, to use a new form of extended and transnationalised nation-building to increase global power and presence.

Language is also part of Turkey's soft power assets. In 2007, Turkey established the Yunus Emre Foundation, aiming to promote the promote Turkey, Turkish language, its history and culture abroad[55]. It has already opened 45 centres in countries as diverse as Albania, Japan, Qatar and the US. These centres offer Turkish language courses and other cultural activities. In the Balkans – where Turkish and local languages share many similar words in light of the Ottoman domination – the Yunus Emre Centres have also been active in spreading the teaching of Turkish in public schools as well, promoting the emergence of the Turkish as

[55] Yunus Emre Enstitüsü official website, https://www.yee.org.tr/en/corporate/yunus-emre-enstitusu Accessed on 19 September 2018.

lingua franca in the whole area (Demirtaş 2015: 133). For some scholars, the Yunus Emre Centres were used by Turkey as instruments to establish regional hegemony. Kaya and Tecmen argue that through alternative use of a neo-Ottoman discourse spread through the Centres, the Turkish political elites portrayed themselves as 'active political agents imposing their cultural, linguistic, historical and religious tenets on other nations, rather than being imposed upon by the linear form of modernity monopolised by the west' (Kaya and Tecmen 2011: 7). According to this logic, the Yunus Emre Centres seem to display Turkey's effort to mark its own cultural/religious/civilizational identity, emphasising at the same time its peculiarities, the historical linkages with the neighbours and the differences with the EU. But the Centres served another purpose, too. They were created by the JDP structures to counter the influence of another very powerful Turkish cultural, religious and social institution operating abroad: the movement of Fethullah Gülen, a Turkish Islamic preacher and writer, formed at the end of the 1960's in Turkey to provide its followers with cultural and educational 'services' (*hizmet* in Turkish). The Gülen movement is famous all around the world for building and running non-religious schools that host both Turkish migrants and students of the local societies, as well as business associations – such as The Turkish Confederation of Businessmen and Industrialists (TUSKON) – and cultural institutions. Balci (2015: 8) describes the movement's influence in this terms:

> Through a unique, transnational approach, Gülen and his followers have built up a global web of influence that has allowed the Gülen movement to become a global representative of both conservative Islamic values and "Turkishness," spreading the country's language and culture abroad. It has benefitted Turkey by consolidating Turkish soft power and advancing Ankara's interests around the world, all while increasing the Gülen movement's popularity and prestige in both in Turkey and on the international stage.

The JDP was growing dissatisfaction with the Movement's influence led to the foundation of its official network of Turkish cultural centres, that is, the Yunus Emre Centers. According to an influential member interviewed by Balci (2015: 8), the Yunus Emre centres were 'conceived by the AKP government to compete with the movement's activities abroad'. The JDP's decision[56] on November 2013 to close the *dershane*, a network of private tutoring

[56] Hürriyet Daily News. 'Turkish government determined to close private tutoring schools'. November 05 2013 http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkish-government-determined-to-close-private-tutoring-schools-57375

centres, most of which are run by the Gülen movement, was also a sign of the growing power struggle between Erdoğan and Gülen.

Apart from the Gezi protests, 2013 marks another milestone for the evolution of Turkish soft power and Turkish politics at large: the corruption scandal involving several members of the JDP over an illegal oil deal with neighbouring Iran, which at that time, was hit by UN sanctions. The corruption scandal symbolised the worsening of the power struggle between Gülen and Erdoğan since Gülen was accused of having organised the scandal with the goal of toppling the JDP government.[57] The conflict became open with the already mentioned coup attempt, which was allegedly organised by Gülen. The effects of the coup attempt and the JDP reaction to it were deep and are still ongoing. They also impacted Turkish soft power. The government ordered the closing of many Gülen-backed institutions,[58] such as the TUSKON and the Gülen schools. The latter had become very important not only in constructing Turkey's image and influence abroad but also in providing basic services in the host societies, to the extent that some states – such as Kosovo[59] – still refuse to close them down, as requested by the Turkish government. Many states, however, have complied with Turkey's demands. The closing of Gülen's school is likely to undermine Turkey's soft power efforts in the future, given the aforementioned widespread presence of Gülen's school abroad and their prestige.

3.5. Conclusion

[57] DW, 'More arrests amid Turkish power struggle', December 20, 2013 http://www.dw.com/en/more-arrests-amid-turkish-power-struggle/a-17312969

[58] Following the publication of several decrees published in the Official Gazette on 23 July 2016, some 35 health institutions and organizations as well as 1,043 private education institutions, organizations, dormitories, and hostels were closed due to their alleged links to Gülen. 'A total of 1,229 foundations and associations, 19 unions, federations and confederations, and 15 foundation schools were also closed.' Anadolu Agency. 'Turkey to shut down all Gülen-linked companies', 24 July, 2016.
http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-to-shut-down-all-gulen-linked-companies---102009

[59] Reuters. 'Kosovo arrests six Turks over links to Gulen schools' 29 March, 2018 https://www.reuters.com/article/turkey-security-kosovo/kosovo-arrests-six-turks-over-links-to-gulen-schools-police-idUSL8N1RB2PR

In this chapter, I have traced the evolution of Russia's and Turkey's foreign and soft power policies under the governments of the current Russian and Turkish Presidents Vladimir Putin and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. First, I wanted to show the illiberal evolution that happened in both countries domestically and impacted their foreign policy, too; second, I have started the analysis of their soft power understanding and application through a review the academic literature. This analysis further unfolds in the following chapters.

There are several similarities in the evolution of Turkey's and Russia's foreign policies. Both countries were affected by the end of the Cold War. For Russia, the end of the Cold War meant the collapse of the Soviet Union, defined by Putin in 2005 as 'the greatest geopolitical catastrophe' of the 20th century[60]; Turkey also saw its geopolitical role profoundly transformed. Both countries knew a period of political and economic instability in the 1990s; but in both cases, after the major economic crises of the 1990s, there was a remarkable economic boom in the early 2000s: according to OECD data[61], during the past decade, Turkey's per capita incomes doubled. Russia, on his part, also saw its levels of poverty significantly decreasing from almost 30% in 2000 – when Putin took office – to roughly 13% in 2016[62]. During this period, hopes of integration with the West were high, as proven by the EU candidacy status granted to Turkey in the Helsinki Summit and the start of high-level dialogue initiatives between Russia and the EU, chiefly the Strategic Partnership and the Partnership for Modernisation. However, in both cases, there was an illiberal turn, which resulted in a more assertive foreign policy and an increasingly confrontational relation with the EU. In Turkey, this illiberal turn was more recent and its pace much faster, being the harsh government response to the Gezi protests in 2013 the most visible element. In Russia, on the other hand, it was more gradual and started well before, with the landmark speech of Putin at the Munich Security conference in 2007 and, especially, the war against Georgia in 2008 being wake-up calls that exposed Russia's dissatisfaction with the global order. But, despite the different pace of the process, the result seems to be the same.

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[60] BBC, 'Putin deplores collapse of USSR', 25 April, 2005, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/4480745.stm

[61] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Country profile: Turkey. http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/economics/country-statistical-profile-turkey_20752288-table-tur

[62] BBC, Life in Vladimir Putin's Russia explained in 10 charts, 12 March 2018 https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-43210257

Today, both Russia and Turkey maintain their economic interdependence with the EU – according to official EU data[63], the EU is the most important trade partner for both Turkey and Russia. However, hopes of integration are at their lowest point, with the EU membership process almost stalled in Turkey and high level of confrontation between Russia and the EU, which entails the imposition of sanctions over Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the subsequent suspension of almost all official channels of dialogue.

Turkey and Russia's illiberal turn critically affected the evolution of the understanding and the application of their soft power, bearing important consequences at the analytical level for soft power scholars. First, this illiberal turn makes it very difficult to apply Nye's definition of soft power to Russia and Turkey because of Nye's reliance on universal, democratic values. This is why a soft power definition based on Gramsci's concepts of hegemony appears better-equipped for carrying out the analysis of Russia and Turkey's soft power given its focus on the process of consensus-building around some policies or values, regardless of how democratic these may be. Second, as the recent evolution of the soft power narratives analysed in the following chapter proves, today's attractiveness of both countries seem to rely more on their capacity to stand up to and challenge liberal democracy, rather than on their democratic credentials. This illiberal turn, hence, seems to boost Russia and Turkey's attractiveness for like-minded elites in the neighbouring countries as well as groups in the West who are highly critical of the EU and US foreign policies and perceived normative imperialism.

[63] European Commission, Trade Policy: Turkey. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/countries-and-regions/countries/turkey/
European Commission, Trade in goods with Russia. Available at: http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2006/september/tradoc_113440.pdf

CHAPTER 4

RUSSIAN AND TURKISH SOFT POWER NARRATIVES

In the theoretical chapter of my thesis, I conceptualised soft power as the 'ability of a state or a state's ruling elite to influence the international discourse such that certain policies, worldviews, and narratives are framed as "common sense", paving the way to the establishment of power relations'. This chapter now explores the main narratives used by Russia and Turkey to exert soft power. Some of these narratives are used more in Russia's and Turkey's neighbourhoods (as the analysis of my case studies reveals), others target further audiences, such as people in African countries receiving Turkish aid or far-right political groups in the EU receptive to some of Russia's discourses.

I have selected these narratives drawing on Russian and Turkish officials' speeches and policy documents, academic literature on Russian and Turkish foreign policy, as well as insights from my elite interviews. The narratives could be more or different; furthermore, sometimes they overlap to the extent that it becomes difficult to tell one narrative from the other. However, I think these narratives are particularly telling of the evolution of Russia and Turkey's foreign policy and actorness in the neighbourhood and, therefore, they are particularly worthy of attention. Given the centralised and personalistic nature of the foreign policy-making process in both countries, I focus mainly on the speeches of the current Russian and Turkish Presidents, Putin and Erdoğan[64], and Foreign Ministers. When relevant, I also quote some other prominent government members.

In some cases, the narratives currently used by United Russia (UR) and the Justice and Development Party (JDP) are a continuation or evolution of older narratives. Indeed, some authors suggest studying policy narratives identifying their beginning, middle, and end, as well as the arguments 'that underwrite the policy assumptions of policy making'. (Roe 1994: 155) A broader study comparing recent narratives with those adopted in the pre-UR and pre-JDP eras would be useful and revealing, but it falls outside of the timeframe of my thesis. In

[64] Both men have been holding key governmental positions – both acting as presidents or prime ministers for over a decade (since 2000 Putin, since 2003 Erdoğan).

fact, my main interest lies in unpacking how the UR and JDP created and/or used these narratives, as well as how economic and socio-political changes both at the domestic, regional and at the international level affect the use of these narratives. In other words, I want to study the narratives' evolution during the UR and JDP rule, yet acknowledging the fact that sometimes their roots might trace back well before these two parties' rule. Given the fact that some narratives originate in and are a sign of the political culture of a country, my analysis is informed by past studies and, in turn, can be a stepping stone to conduct larger future studies on this topic. Furthermore, analysing the consistency within and among narratives (and between narratives and actual policies) in instrumental to assess the effectiveness of soft power policies that are based on those narratives.

The following six subsections analyse Russia and Turkey's main soft power narratives on their foreign policies, providing direct quotes from the analysed speeches and illustrating with concrete examples how these narratives reverberate throughout Russia and Turkey's domestic and foreign policies. The three selected narratives for Russia are: I) Russia as a champion of multilateralism and multipolarity; II) Russia as a conservative power; III) Russia as a big brother. The three selected narratives for Turkey are: I) Turkey as a powerful and resilient regional power; II) Turkey as a Muslim democracy; III) Turkey as a big brother. In the conclusion of the chapter, I explore some significant parallelisms between the two countries' narratives. The evolution of the narratives, I argue, signals Russia and Turkey's growing discontent with what they perceive as the West-dominated liberal order and their willingness to challenge it. Today, Russia's and Turkey's attractiveness seems to rely more on their capacity to stand up to and challenge liberal democracy, rather than on their democratic credentials. This acknowledgement prompted the academic interest in 'autocracy-promotion'[65] – especially when it comes to Russia's role in its neighbourhood. (Burnell 2010; Babayan 2015; Lewis 2016; Noutcheva 2018) Russia's and Turkey's anti-Western credential, which I detect in the analysis of their soft power narratives, can appeal to like-minded elites in the neighbouring countries as well as Euro-sceptic groups in the EU and critics of US foreign policy.

[65] For a review of the growing literature on autocracy promotion, see Yakouchyk, K. (2018) 'Beyond Autocracy Promotion: A Review', *Political Studies Review*. doi: 10.1177/1478929918774976.

4.1. Russian soft power narratives

In what follows, I analyse three narratives for Russia: I) Russia as a champion of multilateralism and multipolarity; II) Russia as a conservative power; III) Russia as a big brother. The quotes from the selected speeches are put into the context of Russia's relation with its neighbouring countries and with the EU and complemented by examples of concrete policies that can relate to particular narratives.

4.1.1. Russia as a champion of multilateralism and multipolarity

Especially since Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014, many observers view Russia as a unilateralist and power-maximising country at the expense of existing institutions. Nevertheless, one of the main narratives put forward by the Kremlin advocates for multilateralism and multipolarity. 'Multilateralism' can be defined as the 'institutions and issue areas that involve multiple countries (three or more) working in concert in a sustained manner', different from integration, which involves pooling certain aspects of state sovereignty and authority to a supra-national governmental body. (Wilson Rowe and Torjesen 2009: 1) Multipolarity, on the other hand, refers to the distribution of relative power capabilities among the major powers in the global and/or regional international system. Multipolarity exists when there are three or more great powers in the system, such as in the modern European states' system (Hyde-Price 2011).

In the immediate years after the fall of the USSR, Russian policy-makers regarded multilateralism as a key foreign policy tool to avoid some of the 'risks and pain of standing in the shadow of others' (Legvold 2009: 21). During his first years in office, Putin followed Boris Yeltsin in professing a 'deep attachment' to the principles of multilateralism (Wilson Rowe and Torjesen 2009: 1). Russia actively engaged in multilateral organisations, especially the 'exclusive clubs' involving leading states (for example, the UN Security Council, where Russia is a permanent member) and with a low level of institutionalisation that would limit state sovereignty and would interfere in the country's domestic affairs. This attachment to multilateralism goes back in time. It marks a continuation with Russia's historical experience, which includes a series of attempts to combine ideas of good global

governance with a search for strengthening material capabilities: 'From Alexander I's Holy Alliance to Vladimir Putin's pragmatic concentration of power and recent international assertiveness, Russia has strived to bridge principles of multilateral decision making with those of multipolar balance of power' (Tsygankov 2009: 51).

The Kremlin's insistence on a multipolar approach to international affairs has hardened over the last few years, but it is also marked by inconsistencies. In the 2006 Foreign Policy Review (RMFA 2006), the United Nations (UN) is referred to as 'the universal forum that has been given unique legitimacy, […] and the main element of contemporary multilateral diplomacy'. Russia combines a rhetorical adherence to the kind of multilateralism embodied in the UN with a narrative about Russia's new assertiveness and a critique of US unilateralism. Russia acts as an 'instrumental multilateralist' (Zagorski 2009, 46): on the one hand, it uses international institutions to restrain US policy; on the other hand, due to its ambition to cement its role as regional power, it uses regional institutions or *ad hoc* agreements to legitimise its unilateral actions in its neighbourhood. (Zagorski 2009) Putin's speech at the Munich Conference on Security Policy (Putin 2007) is emblematic in this sense. He talks about 'multilateral diplomacy' as an alternative to the unipolar model, which he considers as

> not only unacceptable but also impossible in today's world. And this is not only because if there was individual leadership in today's – and precisely in today's – world, then the military, political and economic resources would not suffice. What is even more important is that the model itself is flawed because at its basis there is and can be no moral foundations for modern civilisation.

This passage underscores Russia's deep dissatisfaction with US unilateralism, a sentiment shared by many other countries that feel underrepresented in US-dominated international organisations. Putin then accuses the US of 'disdain for the basic principles of international law' and having 'overstepped its national borders in (...) the economic, political, cultural and educational policies it imposes on other nations'. (Putin 2007) Moscow's threat[66] to withdraw from the Intermediate Nuclear Missile Treaty if NATO kept deploying its military infrastructure close to the Russian border followed suit. Since that landmark discourse,

[66] Demetri Sevastopoulo, Neil Buckley, and Daniel Dombey: 'Russia Threatens to Quit Arms Treaty', Financial Times, 15 February 2007 https://www.ft.com/content/289ed728-bd26-11db-b5bd-0000779e2340

Russia has stepped up its assertiveness and cooperation with China and Iran (Tsygankov 2009: 58).

Putin's speech to the UN General Assembly (UNGA) in September 2015 – the first time he has personally appeared there in a decade – is very important as it showcases the Kremlin's attempt to influence the international debate along the lines of anti-unilateralism. Putin (2015a) paints a picture of a world in chaos, under attack by Islamic terrorists; while a multilateral coalition composed by legitimate governments (including Assad's) is the only way to re-establish harmony, Russia should also play a key role as a constructive world power and a champion of global cooperation. (Putin 2015a) Putin criticises the US throughout this speech without explicitly calling it by its name. He blames it for destabilising the world and proposes that US hegemony give way to a world policed by the UN – in which Russia, as a member of the Security Council, would also play a leading role. While Putin describes the threat of further destabilisation in Syria and more gains on the part of the Islamic State (IS), he also suggests that this gloomy scenario could be avoided with coordinated international action, conducted under the aegis of the UN with the political mediation of Russia.

This portrait of Russia as guarantor of international law and multipolarity is present in many of Putin's public declarations. In his 2013 state-of-the-nation speech, for instance, Putin (2013) says that Russia does not aspire to have a superpower status, but rather, to become a leader by protecting international law and insisting on respect for national sovereignty:

> We do not claim to be any sort of superpower with a claim to global or regional hegemony; we do not encroach on anyone's interests, impose our patronage onto anyone, or try to teach others how to live their lives. (…) But we will strive to be leaders, defending international law, striving for respect and national sovereignty and peoples' independence and identity.

At a meeting with ambassadors and heads of diplomatic missions, a few months after Russia's annexation of Crimea[67], Putin (2014) even quotes Ukraine in the context of the 'sacredness' of national sovereignty:

[67] In 2014, the Crimean peninsula was annexed by Russia in response to the ousting of Ukraine's president Viktor Yanukovych, following mass protests. The Crimean population, Russian-speaking in majority, voted to join Russia in an *ex-post* referendum that Ukraine, the EU and US consider illegal. For more details, see BBC, Crimea profile (last update January 2018) http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-18287223

> We must persevere to rid Europe of anti-constitutional coups, interventions in the internal affairs of sovereign states, blackmail and threats in international relations, and the inducement of radical and neo-Nazi forces'. All of us in Europe need some kind of safety net to prevent the Iraqi, Libyan, Syrian, and, I am sorry to say in this context, Ukrainian precedents from becoming contagious.

This quote is particularly telling of Russia's fears of possible spillovers of the democratic revolutions happening in Russia's neighbourhood and the Arab world. While in the case of the Arab Springs, Russia was openly concerned about terrorism spillovers to its Caucasian territories and the neighbouring Central Asian Republics (Nikitina 2014), the Euromaidan protests in Ukraine and other 'colour revolutions', are seen as posing a direct threat to Russia's political stability (Finkel and Brudny 2012; Nikitina 2014).

Putin frequently criticises the alleged support of Neo-Nazi and anti-Semitic fascist groups to the Kiev government and utilises it to justify the annexation of Crimea and the backing of separatist groups in eastern Ukraine. In spite of the support given to and received by far-right groups in Europe, Russia boasts a historical anti-fascist identity, which originates from the USSR's role during World War II, called the 'Great Patriotic War' in Russia, and used to support the Kremlin's multipolar and anti-imperialist rhetoric. Many events are organised to keep the historical memory alive both within the Russian world and in Europe. Celebrations of the 'Victory Day' (9 May 1945) peaked in 2015, which marked the 70th anniversary of the Red Army's triumph over Nazi Germany. But the government organises rallies, fanfare and massive military parades every year since the mid-2000 to celebrate a victory that Putin and other officials describe in several speeches as 'sacred' (*svyashchennyy*), blurring the line among history, religion and ethics. Over the last decade, Russia has been promoting the role of the USSR in the fight against Nazism and countering the distortion of the 'historical truth'. In 2009, the then-President Medvedev set up a Commission to Counter Attempts to Falsify History to the Detriment of Russia's Interests[68]. The Commission aimed to 'defend Russia against falsifiers of history and those who would deny Soviet contribution to the victory in World War II'. The Commission eventually ceased its activity in 2012 without any significant actions. Despite its former member historian Alexander Chubarian said that the

[68] President of Russia, 'Dmitry Medvedev signed an Executive Order On the Presidential Commission of the Russian Federation to Counter Attempts to Falsify History to the Detriment of Russia's Interests', News, 19 May 2009, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/4121

commission 'had fulfilled its task leaving a certain legacy behind'[69], many experts in the post-Soviet space perceived the Commission as an attempt by the Kremlin to impose an official truth, hide or fine-tune crimes such as the Soviet participation in the division of neighbouring states, while using history as 'part of self-assertion strategy' (Prus 2015: 1) Several among my interviewees from the CIS countries also expressed the view that, through these commemoration and controversial policies, Russia is depicting itself as the true 'WWII hero', monopolising the victory at the expenses of the other Soviet peoples who fought alongside the Russians. Again, this role of 'anti-fascist hero' is presented in stark contrast to the neo-Nazi forces that Russia is allegedly combating in Ukraine[70] and, to a lesser extent, in the Baltics; therefore, it serves as a moral justification of the annexation of Crimea. Hence, the increasing emphasis on the principle of sovereignty seems to go hand in hand with Russia's need to retain a free hand in connection with world politics, and especially in its neighbourhood – as the 2008 war with Georgia, resulting in Moscow taking control of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and the annexation of Crimea demonstrate. This difference between the rhetoric and the actual practice suggests that, while rhetorically emphasising the principle of multilateralism, Moscow's foreign and security policy remains oriented mainly towards unilateral action and ad hoc coalitions. (Zagorski 2009: 48) The gap between foreign policy goals and rhetoric, on the one hand, and actual practice, on the other, is not uncommon; but through these assertive actions in the neighbourhood, Russia is applying the double standards of which often it accuses the West.[71]

Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov reiterated Putin's concern about the dangers of instability within states. In a September 2014 speech at the UNGA, he called on the United Nations to agree upon a declaration 'on the inadmissibility of the interference into domestic

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[69] Julia Kantor. 'Without falsification'. Moscow News, 19 March 2012. Original in Russian: Юлия Кантор. Без фальсификаций. Московские новости, http://www.mn.ru//society_history/20120319/313741427.html

[70] See, for instance, Damien Sharkov, 'Putin Warns Of Neo-Nazism In Ukraine And Europe Ahead Of WW2 Memorial', *Newsweek,* 10 May 2014. http://www.newsweek.com/putin-warns-neo-nazi-rise-ukraine-and-baltics-latvia-responds-look-mirror-277710

[71] See, for instance, Emma Anderson, 'Putin accuses EU of double standards on Catalonia and Kosovo', *Politico,* 19 October 2017 https://www.politico.eu/article/vladimir-putin-catalonia-accuses-eu-of-double-standards-on-catalonia-and-kosovo/

affairs of sovereign states and non-recognition of coup d'état as a method of the change of power' (Lavrov 2014). Here, there is a clear reference to the regime change policies pursued by the US: indeed, key Russian officers and officials often accuse the Western powers to be behind the so-called colour revolutions in the post-Soviet space and elsewhere for their own ends.[72]

Putin also supports his claim for multipolarity with arguments about the need for economic balancing of the US. During the Q&A session following the BRICS and SCO summits the BRICS and SCO summits in July 2015, he spells out his willingness to launch new BRICS financial instruments, including new plastic cards for financial transactions:

> Visa and MasterCard are used by 97 percent of the people in Russia. Is this normal? Not at all, but we allowed our partners to do this proceeding from the premise that the economy is outside politics. But it happened that this is not the case. (…) The economy is immersed in politics and, moreover, being used as an instrument of political struggle. So we'll have to draw conclusions from this (Putin 2015b).

In this speech, Putin contests the global imposition of the US' currency and economic tools. The US Dollar is indeed held as the main currency for international reserves and trading commodities like oil and gold and acting as a stability peg for other currencies as a reflection of its 'superpower' status. (Pruit and Spruill 2007: 3) Putin also mentions the political use of the economy to criticise the Western sanctions punishing Russia for the annexation of Crimea. The context of what he perceives as the creation of a broad international anti-Russian front, which includes a number of European countries, Putin is keen to stress the difference between the 'good' Europe (European countries that protested the sanctions against Russia) from the 'bad' Europe (EU members that staunchly support sanctions, such as the Baltic Republics). For instance, Putin expressed particular outrage at US sanctions against French banks, playing on France's renowned anti-Americanism, saying that these cause nothing but indignation in Europe in general and here as well'. (Putin 2014) Putin, at the same time, omits the fact that the Kremlin often resorts to sanctions and trade bans against countries that do not comply with Russia's interests, such as the sanctions it had

[72] See, for instance, Cordesman, A. H. (2014). Russia and the "Color Revolution" A Russian Military View of a World Destabilized by the US. *Center for Strategic and International Studies Report*, 52. Retrieved from https://csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/legacy_files/files/publication/140529_Russia_Color_Revolution_Summary.pdf

imposed on Ankara after the Turkish military shot down a Russian fighter in 2015. In this episode, it is clear that Russia does not refrain from using its hard power through economic sanctions. As Newnham (2015: 161) claims, in recent years Russia has launched a 'concerted effort to undermine pro-Western regimes in the former Soviet area by using economic sanctions'.

Despite its disconnect with actual policies, this narrative is understandably popular in the Global South and among the rising powers (notably the BRICS), which have often protested US unilateralism. The narrative can explain Russia's leading role in the BRICS, seen as a platform to enhance Russia's role as a global power. Russia hosted the first BRICS summit in 2009 in Yekaterinburg, while Russia was one of the most vocal supporters of the creation of the BRICS New Development Bank (NDB), as an answer to the West-dominated international financial system. This narrative also helps explain the alignment between Russia and China in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). A study commissioned by the European Parliament analysing the voting patterns of the UNSC (especially before the Syria crisis) shows a general convergence of interests between Russia and China, and a common vision of their foreign policy priorities and objectives, compared to the other three UNSC states. (Ferdinand 2013) Both countries insist on the sacredness of national sovereignty, multilateralism and the primary role of the UN. Ensuring that UN peacekeeping operations are only imposed with the consent of the host government is crucial for Russia and China (Ferdinand 2013: 4).

Meanwhile, the 'anti-imperialist' Moscow also politically backs left-wing and at times anti-American movements in Europe, such as the SYRIZA government in Greece, the Scottish National Party, and the Stop the War Campaign – the umbrella group of left-wing and anti-American pacifists, strongly supported by the UK Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn, who is also a regular contributor of the Kremlin-funded Russia Today (today, renamed simply as RT), a Russian network that EU lawmakers often label as a tool of Russian propaganda[73]. The case of Greece is particularly relevant, in light of the financial crisis and discrepancies with the other EU members over the bailout conditions. In May 2015, Russia invited Greece to join

[73] RFE/RL, 'EU Issues Call To Action To Combat Russian 'Propaganda', January 17, 2018. https://www.rferl.org/a/european-commission-russia-disinformation-propaganda-call-to-action/28981394.html

the BRICS Development Bank (now known as the New Development Bank)[74], in a move to exploit divisions in the EU and challenge the dominance of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF). It is unlikely that Greece could ever manage to join the Bank due to its obligations within the EU economic institutions. This display of solidarity on the part of Russia, coupled with a general rise of anti-EU sentiments, explains the high level of confidence in Putin among the Greek population: 53 percent trust him on his international role (the highest support for Putin in the EU). At the same time, Greece showed the highest level of negative opinion about the EU in the same poll, with 71 percent of Greeks disapproving of Brussels. (Pew 2016) However, support for left-wing movements does not prevent Russia from entering into controversial alliances with far-right ones in Europe, signalling – as the next sections argue – the ambivalence of some of Russia's narratives. Despite the ambivalence, this narrative is crucial to understand Russia's call for a more multilateral and less Western-centric international system, especially regarding the exercise of global governance.

4.1.2. 'Russia as a conservative power'

Russia's power of international attraction is based on political values, to the extent that the Kremlin tries to offer an alternative narrative to the West's. (Tafuro 2014) This vision is not only based on multipolarity, but also on the defence of conservative (sometimes plainly anti-liberal) values – a worldview that appeals to many in the neighbourhood and beyond. Putin outlines his conservative vision in his presidential address to the Russian Federal Assembly in December 2013, when he presents the EU and the West more generally as decadent places where traditions and values are 'eroding', accepting 'without question the equality of good and evil'.

Despite the divorce from his wife[75], Putin (2013) is ready to depict himself as a keen supporter of the traditional family:

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[74] RT, 'Russia invites Greece to join BRICS bank'. 12 May, 2015. https://www.rt.com/business/257701-greece-russia-brics-invitation/

[75] See Masha Lipman, 'The Putin Divorce: What Russia's Rulers Hide' The New Yorker. 8 June 2013 https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/the-putin-divorce-what-russias-rulers-hide

> This destruction of traditional values from above not only leads to negative consequences for society but is also essentially anti-democratic, since it is carried out on the basis of abstract, speculative ideas, contrary to the will of the majority, which does not accept the changes occurring or the proposed revision of values. We know that there are more and more people in the world who support our position in defending traditional values that have made up the spiritual and moral foundation of civilisation in every nation for thousands of years: the values of traditional families, real human life, including religious life, not just material existence but also spirituality, the values of humanism and global diversity.

Quoting the Russian philosopher Nikolai Berdyaev, he suggests that the point of conservatism is that 'it prevents movement backwards and downward, into chaotic darkness and a return to a primitive state.' (Putin 2013) At the same time, Putin attacks the US' and EU's democracy promotion activities as attempts to destabilise order and change the culture of other states. Putin declares that 'Peoples and countries are raising their voices in favour of self-determination and civilizational and cultural identity, which conflicts with the attempts by certain countries to maintain their domination in the military sphere, in politics, finance, economy and in ideology.' (Putin 2013) In the concluding part of his speech, Putin appeals to 'truth, justice, and the power of moral superiority', describing them as the real basis of Russian foreign policy, alluding to the alleged lack of selfish interests in Russia's foreign policy.

Just days before Putin's address, the Centre for Strategic Communications, an influential Kremlin-connected think tank, held a press conference in Moscow to announce its latest report titled 'Putin: World Conservatism's New Leader'[76]. Indeed, the Kremlin is using as a foreign policy tool a conservative ideology that can replace the powerful communist one: 'Just as the Communist International (…), or Comintern, and what Soviet ideologists called the "correlation of forces" sought to unite progressive elements around the globe behind Moscow, the world's traditionalists will now line up behind Putin.' (Whitmore 2013) Almost three decades after the end of the Cold War, it seems like Russia is using this conservative ideology as a way to contrapose itself ideologically to the 'liberal West'.

[76] The report is only available in Russian: Эксперт: Владимир Путин стал лидером мирового консерватизма. РБК: https://www.rbc.ru/politics/10/12/2013/5704145f9a794761c0ce4b19

In the neighbourhood, this socially conservative narrative resonates greatly. Like-minded illiberal governments in the post-Soviet space copy-paste illiberal Russian laws such as the one 'banning propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations to minors (known simply as 'anti-gay propaganda' bill). Kyrgyzstan and Belarus are discussing or have passed similar or nearly identical versions of the law in their legislative bodies, but many other former Soviet countries (including the EU members Latvia and Lithuania) have enacted laws restricting 'homosexual propaganda'. (Masci 2014) Dilrabo Samadova, a Dushanbe-based human rights lawyer, cites Russia's anti-gay propaganda law as an element affecting the state of LGBT rights in Tajikistan, prompting the state to portray the LGBT community as a threat to national security (Djalilov and Grigoryeva 2018).

In Ukraine, both the Russian Orthodox Church and the Russian Embassy have played a role in pushing the 'civilisation' argument against integration with the EU (Tafuro 2014), contrasting the EU's liberal values with the widespread conservative sentiments of the Ukranian population.[77] The group Ukrainian Choice, funded by Viktor Medvedchuk, a businessman close to Putin, and Russian diplomats have distributed pamphlets warning that 'association with the EU means same-sex marriage', fuelling fears among the conservative strata of the society that an AA with the EU would entail legalising same-sex marriage. In 2014, as the conflict in Ukraine was getting worse, Alexei Pushkov, Chairman the Foreign Affairs Committee in Russia's lower House of Parliament, tweeted: 'In place of Victory Parades in Kiev there will be gay parades'. (Birnbaum 2015) According to Higgins (2016), the Russian Orthodox Church helps project the image of Russia as the 'natural ally of all those who pine for a more secure, illiberal world free'. Thanks to a close alliance with the Kremlin, the Church has actively campaigned in countries like Moldova and Montenegro to hinder their integration with the West (Higgins 2016).

Also due to its conservative narrative, Moscow seems to have become an ideological mecca (and material supporter, according to several allegations) for many far-right and socially conservative movements, such as the UKIP in the UK, the Front National in France, Jobbik in Hungary and Ataka in Bulgaria (Orenstein 2014; Klapsis 2015; Laruelle 2015b) The

[77] For an empirical assessment of conservatism in Ukraine, see Matthes Buhbe (2017) 'How Ukrainians Perceive European Values', Friedrich Ebert Stiftung http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/id-moe/13731.pdf and Denys Gorbach, 'The struggle for progressive politics in Ukraine', Open Democracy, 11 June 2015 https://www.opendemocracy.net/denis-gorbach/struggle-for-progressive-politics-in-ukraine

conservative narrative plays an important role in this relation. Marine Le Pen, for instance, called Putin a 'true patriot', defender of European values and the 'Christian heritage of European civilisation' (Polyakova 2015), while praising Russia's actions in Ukraine.

However, principles usually matched financial support from the Kremlin. In February 2016, the National Front asked Russia for a €27 million loan to finance its electoral campaign in 2017, while in 2014, the party secured a €11 million loan from the Moscow-based First Czech Russian Bank. (Oliveira 2016) Therefore, it is not always clear to determine whether these alliances reflect a genuine Russian soft power or rather a mere marriage of convenience. This ambivalence speaks to the intrinsic and intricate relation between hard (economic and military) and soft power: it is indeed impossible to separate the analysis of Russia's narrative on conservative values from Moscow's active political and financial support for like-minded groups. The upcoming analysis of the 'big brother' narrative further investigates the close link between hard and soft power.

4.1.3. The Starshiy Brat narrative: Russia as a 'big brother'

The narrative that speaks more to Russia's position and role in its immediate neighbourhood is the one that portraits Russia as a 'big brother' (*starshiy brat*). This type of narrative is not new. During Soviet times, the process of 'Russification' – as opposed to the *Korenizatsiya*, namely the promotion of the national identities of the non-Russian Soviet people – based itself on the idea of Russians playing the elder brothers' role in the 'Socialist family of nations' – in a nutshell, 'civilisers of backward peoples'. (Prina 2016) This narrative evolved over the decades, losing strength with the demise of the Soviet Union and the profound economic and political crisis that characterised Russia in the 1990s.

Under Putin's rule, the world witnessed the resurgence of Russia as a powerful regional, even global, player. The 'big brother' narrative was back in the political discourse and especially in practice. This time, more than a 'Kiplingian burden'[78] – that is, a civilising

[78] The reference is to Rudyard Kipling's 'The White Man's Burden: The United States and the Philippine Islands', an 1899 poem about the Philippine–American War, in which the author invites the US to take up the 'burden' to rule over the 'new-caught, sullen peoples, half devil and half child'. It is therefore seen as a hymn to US imperialism. See Rudyard Kipling, "The White Man's Burden: The

mission towards cultures deemed inferior – Russia bears the responsibility to defend the interests of its 'younger brothers' even by force. The 'big brother' approach applies especially to ethnic Russians and Russian-speaking people living outside of Russia. (Zevelev 2014) In fact, the so-called 'Russian world' (*Russkiy Mir*) outside Russia and 'compatriots' are central concepts to understand this narrative and Russia's foreign policy in its Near Abroad. They cast light on Russia's role and motivations as a regional player, as they contribute to explaining controversial foreign policy decisions, such as the annexation of Crimea in March 2014. (Zevelev 2014, Laruelle 2015a).

'Russian world' and 'Compatriots' are highly related, to the extent that the line distinguishing one from the other is often blurry, and they are sometimes used as synonyms. Laruelle (2015a) traces the origins of the term 'Russian World' back into the Middle Age when it was employed to define ancient Rus, a loose federation of East Slavic tribes. The current, post-Soviet use of the term originates from the work of some intellectuals, who tried to revive a philosophical approach to Russia's identity through several articles and publications. In a 1997 text, Petr Shchedrovitsky and his colleague Efim Ostrovsky described the concept of 'Russia's World' as a peaceful reestablishment of Russia's identity and its reconnection with its past and its diasporas. Such a definition was 'moulded by the notion of destiny: "We, Russians, are a multinational people. Being Russian is not about blood, being Russian is about a shared destiny."' (in Laruelle 2015a: 4) According to this view, a shared history seems to lead to a common fate.

If the 'Russian World' can be seen as an idea, an identity approach, 'compatriots' are the key legal element substantiating it. They sometimes act as subjects, but more often as objects of Moscow's policies. In 1992, Boris Yeltsin and Andrei Kozyrev introduced the term 'compatriots abroad' into the political discourse. (Zevelev 2014) The term refers to individuals who live outside Russia's borders, but feel that they have historical, cultural, and language links with Russia, and want to nurture this relation regardless of their actual citizenship. Mostly, it is ethnic Russians for whom organisations such as Rossotrudnichestvo aim at strengthening links with the historical 'Motherland'.[79] They can be non-ethnic Russians, too: recent and highly mediatised examples of these individuals include French

United States & The Philippine Islands, 1899." Rudyard Kipling's Verse: Definitive Edition (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1929).

[79] Rossotrudnichestvo. 'Support for Compatriots Abroad': http://rs.gov.ru/en/activities/5

and US actors Gerard Depardieu and Steven Seagal, who received a Russian passport in 2013 and 2016, respectively.[80] When he handed the Russian passport to Seagal, Putin declared that this gestures aimed to show a 'normalisation' of strained relations with Washington.[81]

While it is not easy to find an official definition of the 'Russian world', 'compatriots' are defined in the point 3, article 3, of the 1999 Russian Federation's State Policy toward 'compatriots' Living Abroad as:

> the persons and their descendants living outside the territory of the Russian Federation […] and also […] the persons whose relatives in direct parentage earlier lived in the territory of the Russian Federation, including persons who had citizenship of the USSR, live in the states formerly part of the USSR, and have acquired citizenship of these states, or become stateless persons.

Therefore, in Russia's case, a compatriot is any citizen of the former Soviet Union, even if he or she, or their forebears never lived in the Russian Federation. The amended version of the State Policy toward 'compatriots' Living Abroad in 2010 ultimately maintained this broad definition and even establishes 'self-identification' as the guiding principle of the procedure for being recognised as a compatriot. (Putin 2010) Hence, ultimately both 'Russian world' and 'compatriots' seem to include Russians living abroad, former citizens of the Soviet Union, Russian immigrants, descendants of 'compatriots', and even 'foreign citizens who admire Russian culture and language' (Kiilo and Vladimirova 2011: 181). Putin (2014) further stressed the importance of self-perception when defining 'compatriots', whom he describes as 'those people who consider themselves part of the broad Russian community, they may not necessarily be ethnic Russians, but they consider themselves Russian people.' (Putin 2014). For example, he declares:

[80] See: BBC, Gerard Depardieu meets Putin, receives Russian passport. 6 January 2013. http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-20921208 and The Guardian, Vladimir Putin presents Steven Seagal with Russian passport, 25 November 2016 https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/nov/25/vladimir-putin-presents-steven-seagal-with-russian-passport

[81] The Guardian, Vladimir Putin presents Steven Seagal with Russian passport, 25 November 2016 https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/nov/25/vladimir-putin-presents-steven-seagal-with-russian-passport

> In Ukraine, as you may have seen, at threat were our 'compatriots', Russian people and people of other nationalities, their language, history, culture and legal rights, guaranteed, by the way, by European conventions. When I speak of Russians and Russian-speaking citizens I am referring to 'those people who consider themselves part of the broad Russian community, they may not necessarily be ethnic Russians, but they consider themselves Russian people (Putin 2014).

The feeling of belonging to a community, even if defined in cultural rather than political terms, is likely to lead to sympathetic politic views. This assumption is commonly heard in Russia and is based on the theory by the Russian educationalist Georgy Schedrovitsky, who stated that 'those who speak Russian in their everyday life—also think Russian, and as a result—act Russian' (Schedrovitsky in Kudors 2010: 2).

Given this loose definition of the Russian World, estimating its size is a difficult task. According to the webpage of the *Russkiy Mir* Foundation, the 'millions of ethnic Russians, native Russian speakers, their families and descendants scattered across the globe make up the largest diaspora population the world has ever known'. In the case of Russian 'compatriots', the numbers vary considerably depending on the source, ranging between twenty and thirty-five million people, mainly concentrated in the post-Soviet space. Under Putin's rule, the compatriot issue was increasingly politicised. (Suslov 2017) As Nozhenko (2006) highlights, from 2002 onwards there was a remarkable change in Moscow's official approach towards Russian 'compatriots': the Kremlin started to see them as a resource that could use to achieve some foreign policy goals. For example, the 2013 Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation considers 'Compatriots' as partners in the pursuit of several objectives, including in 'expanding and strengthening the space of the Russian language and culture.' (RMFA 2013) In some cases, the defence of their interests and rights has served as a justification for the Kremlin to interfere with internal affairs of – or even to intervene militarily in – some post-Soviet countries. Therefore, the image of Russia as a big brother, able and willing to defend Compatriots (an element of soft power) comes to justify the use of hard power (in the form of threats or military interventions) often concealing other, political interests.

According to Zevelev (2014), the 2008 war with Georgia was Russia's first usage of compatriots as a justification for military action. In fact, while Russia did not support irredentist attitudes in Crimea, Northern Kazakhstan, and in other areas with compact

Russian communities in the 1990s, in 2008 it took up arms against Georgia to attempt to protect its citizens and compatriots in South Ossetia and Abkhazia. While South Ossetia has a sizeable Georgian minority but is otherwise relatively mono-ethnic, Abkhazia has consistent minorities of Armenians, Georgians and Russians. (Gerrits and Bader 2016: 305) The Russian President at that time, Dmitry Medvedev, addressed an emergency session of the Russian Security Council on 8 August 2008. In his address, he denounces Georgia's incursion into South Ossetia, asserting that:

> Russia has historically been a guarantor for the security of the peoples of the Caucasus, and this remains true today. (...) Civilians, women, children and old people, are dying today in South Ossetia, and the majority of them are citizens of the Russian Federation. In accordance with the Constitution and the federal laws, as President of the Russian Federation it is my duty to protect the lives and dignity of Russian citizens wherever they may be. It is these circumstances that dictate the steps we will take now. We will not allow the deaths of our fellow citizens to go unpunished. The perpetrators will receive the punishment they deserve (Medvevev 2008).

It was with the conflict in Ukraine that global media attention focused on the concepts of Russian World and compatriots. Putin (2014) states that Russian compatriots in Ukraine were 'at risk', and directly mentions the Russian World in a speech on March 18, 2014, while justifying Russia's annexation of Crimea. In the same speech, he discloses his hopes that Germany, as a country formerly divided, would understand and support the aspiration of the Russian World to re-establish unity. In the words of Dmitry Peskov, the Kremlin Press Secretary, 'Russia is the country that underlies the Russian World, and the president of that country is Putin; Putin precisely is the main guarantor of the security of the Russian world'. (quoted in Laruelle 2015a, 14) This image of 'security guarantor' is at odds with the multilateral narrative and its defence of national sovereignty and exacerbates the claims that Russia does not consider many post-Soviet states as sovereign entities, but just as 'smaller brothers'. This role does not need to be necessarily perceived by local populations and elites under a negative light. In specific cases such as Ukraine, the choice is between being 'the smaller brother of Eurasia' and 'the rejected son of Europe', making the former more attractive to many Ukrainians (Kuzio 2002: 150).

As it might be easily inferred, the relation between Russia and its compatriots is not a one-way relation only. In exchange for the Kremlin's 'protection', the Russian world is expected

to support Russia's actions in its Near Abroad. Putin (2015c) shows his gratitude for compatriots' solidarity during the reunification of the Crimea and Sevastopol with Russia:

> The decisive support of our compatriots, who expressed their firm desire to be with Russia, to support Russia definitely helped unify Russian society and became an important factor in the consolidation of Russians abroad and the entire Russian community. (...) [Compatriots] were forced to leave Russia for a number of reasons, but they continued serving their Motherland, many of them see it as their mission. We value this *[service]* very highly.

Compatriots are also a key element in the Russian 'passportisation' strategy, that is, the distribution of Russian passports among citizens in neighbouring states. 'Passportisation' represents an easy way to create or strengthen pro-Russian sectors of the population and influence local politics, despite the resolute opposition of many neighbouring governments to this practice; it also provides legal ground for military intervention – as it has happened in Georgia and Crimea. (Artman 2014; Green 2014) It is not 'merely a neutral response to the patriotic demands of the pro-Russian element in Crimea. Accepting a Russian passport signifies legal inclusion in the Russian body politic, with everything that that connotes.' (Artman 2014) The case of Crimea is particularly relevant, due to the conflict that it has triggered in Ukraine. Some estimates suggested that the number of Crimeans with Russian citizenship was sixty thousand (Grigas 2016) or even more than 140 thousand (Green 2014: 8), though Russian officials continued to deny the distribution of passports there. Again, it seems difficult to affirm whether compatriots' active support for Russian policies, including passportisation, stems from genuine support and admiration, or is rather the result of incentives, such as economic ones. According to Grigas (2016), 'the passportisation of Crimeans was a reflection of the success of Russia's soft power and compatriot policies on the peninsula and in other parts of Ukraine'.

The 'big brother' narrative, although contested in many post-Soviet states, is partially successful in countries like Armenia, where Russia is historically seen not only as a vital economic partner but also as the guarantor of the sovereignty – and ultimately the very existence – of the country vis-à-vis Azerbaijan and Turkey. When it comes to enclaves largely inhabited by ethnic Russians, then, the success is even greater, as the Crimean case demonstrates. Despite the Ukrainian and international claims over the illegitimacy of the annexation of the peninsula, Crimeans seem to approve of Russia's conduct overwhelmingly.

In June 2014, a Gallup poll revealed that of 82.8% of Crimeans viewed the results in the 2014 referendum to secede as legitimate. (Rapoza 2015) One year later, a poll by German polling firm GfK confirmed that attitudes have not changed, with a total of 82% of the respondents endorsing Russia's actions (Rapoza 2015).

Hence, both the concepts of 'Russian world' and 'compatriots' provide Russia with ideational and the legal strength when depicting itself as a powerful civilisational pole and 'elder brother' in its Near Abroad, to the extent that it can even intervene military in defence of the compatriots. This narrative is therefore particularly telling of how hard and soft power are intertwined, and of how difficult it is, at times, to tell one from the other. The next sections elaborate on Turkey's soft power narratives, which present some commonalities with Russia's, as highlighted by the conclusion of this chapter.

4.2. Turkey's soft power narratives

This section identifies and briefly discusses three narratives for Turkey: Turkey as I) a powerful and resilient regional power; II) as a Muslim democracy; III) and as a big brother. Similar to Russia's narratives, the evolution of these three narratives points to increasing friction between Turkey and the EU - that is, all narratives have come to emphasise the EU's 'otherness'.

4.2.1. Turkey as a powerful and resilient regional power

When analysing Turkey's renewed confidence and willingness to act as a powerful regional power, the speeches, and publications of the IR academic and practitioner Ahmet Davutoğlu[82] acquire particular importance. In 2001 – eight years before being appointed as a Foreign Minister, even before the JDP government came to power – Davutoğlu published a book, *Strategic Depth*, setting out a new foreign policy of engagement for Turkey with the

[82] Ahmet Davutoğlu occupied different governmental positions. Following the November 2002 elections, he was appointed as Chief Adviser to the Prime Minister; in 2009, he was appointed as the Minister of Foreign Affairs until 2014; finally, from August 2014 to May 2016, he has served as the Prime Minister of Turkey.

region. In this widely cited work, he claims that Turkey possesses 'strategic depth' due to its history and geographic position, which determine Turkey's actions in its neighbourhood. He envisages a powerful Turkey rebuilding/strengthening the economic and political ties with all its neighbours through regional cooperation, gaining at the same time global recognition. In fact, in the book, he argues that not only should Turkey play a regional role in the Balkans or the Middle East, but it should also to be a central power. (Davutoğlu 2001) In the words of Özkan (2014: 119), Davutoğlu saw the end of the Cold War as a historic opportunity for Turkey to become a global power, based on an expansionist foreign policy informed by Islamist ideology.

The importance of history and geography in determining Turkey's role as a *responsible* power kept being a *leitmotiv* in Davutoğlu's speeches throughout his political career. In 2014, Davutoğlu (2014b) claimed that:

> Turkey takes both the advantage of its geographic disposition and close historical and cultural ties across a vast landscape promoting dialogue and interaction between civilisations at the heart of Eurasia and Africa. All this above have levied on Turkey a special responsibility to actively contribute to the preservation of regional and global peace and stability.

In a 'rapidly changing global landscape' characterised by the 'diffusion of power, the continuing fragile world economic situation and the rise of the emerging economies', regional cooperation is mentioned as a 'key factor in driving forward the necessary solutions to economic issues of our time'. (Davutoğlu 2013b) From these assumptions, Davutoğlu derives the doctrine of 'zero problems with neighbours', already described in the previous chapter of 'Turkish and Russian foreign policy'. According to this doctrine, 'Ankara's primary aim was to sustain the goal of applying active efforts to solve the deep-rooted regional problems in line with a win-win approach through peaceful means' (Askerov 2017, 150). A transformative and win-win approach, as opposed to interest-driven foreign policy, is consistently described by Nye as a cornerstone of soft power.

As discussed in the previous chapter, Turkey has experienced an economic boom since the last financial crisis in 2001[83] (Kalemli-Ozcan 2014). According to OECD data, during the

[83] For a detailed account of Turkey's economic boom, see Sebnem Kalemli-Ozcan (2014), Turkey's Economic Transformation in the 2000s and Going Forward'. Rethink Institute April 2014.

first decade of the 2000s, Turkey's economy grew by $383 billion, exports increased from $63 billion to $135 billion and per capita incomes doubled[84]. This boom largely overlapped with the JDP's rule and seemed to provide the country with the means to achieve its ambitions to become a powerful regional actor. The idea of Turkey as a 'trading state' (Kirişci 2009), boosting regional wealth and trade diplomacy, permeated the academic and political discourse and partially explains Turkey's transformation in the 2000's from regional *coercive* power to a '*benign'* (Öniş 2013) one. But this 'New Turkey' can also capitalise on its historic and cultural links with all the regions to which it belongs, accumulating a considerable soft power potential. Davutoğlu is commonly seen as the most prominent actor of Turkey's soft power', while Erdoğan seems to prefer an 'openly nationalist, imperialist, and pan-Islamist discourse' (Benhaïm and Öktem 2015: 13). Yet, at times, Erdoğan also referred to the concept: 'Turkey has used its soft power and its economic force to become an international actor'. (Erdoğan 2011 in Insel 2013) However, he never elaborated further on the concept nor does he mention it in his speeches.

Many JDP members have already been stressing the idea that the JDP rule brought about a 'New Turkey', made more democratic by the inclusion of religious masses into the domestic governance schemes. The failed coup attempt on 15 July 2016, analysed in the previous chapter, brought about even more radical changes in Turkey's domestic and foreign policy and left some important marks on the JDP's discourse, too. A new narrative depicting Turkey as a 'resilient' regional power seems to be emerging, having the public's resistance to the coup attempt as a 'founding myth of the "New Turkey" they are attempting to build'. (Hoffman, Werz and Halpin 2018: 20) This remark by a high-level official prompted me to examine this narrative:

> We can also define Turkey as a resilient, anti-fragile power. It has a strong state tradition, and it has proven capable of governing itself despite the challenges. I think that, given the tremendous challenges facing several states today, think of Syria and Libya, Turkey's resilience makes it very attractive. States are faltering and vulnerable. People are calling for strong leaders.[85]

Available at: http://www.rethinkinstitute.org/turkeys-economic-transformation-in-the-2000s-and-going-forward/

[84] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Country profile: Turkey. http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/economics/country-statistical-profile-turkey_20752288-table-tur
World Bank, http://data.worldbank.org/country/turkey.

'Resilience' has become increasingly popular in the political discourse, especially since it appeared prominently in the 2016 EU Global Strategy.[86] The term has also been used in relation to Turkey after the coup attempt by some IR scholars and practitioners. İbrahim Kalin, a former academic and now Erdoğan's special adviser and spokeperson, referred to resilience when talking about post-Coup Turkey, stating that the coup attempt put the Turkish economy's strength and resilience to the test – and it passed with flying colours' (Kalin 2016: 16); he also believes that the resilience of Turkish democracy had major implications for national and regional security'. (Kalin 2016: 16) Esen and Gumuscu (2017: 63) refer to the resilience of the JDP in light of its capacity to mobilise public support against the coup plotters. Bilgiç (2018) analyses the JDP's resilience after the Gezi Protests in 2013, which – as mentioned in the previous chapter – represent a turning point for Turkish domestic politics, with important consequences on foreign policy. Using Gransci's hegemony, the scholar argues that the concept of 'national will' (*milli irade)* is at the core of JDP's discourse and 'produces its ideological hegemony by rendering authoritarian neoliberalism resilient'. (Bilgiç 2018: 260) Bilgiç's study, although it does not focus on soft power, contribute to show the intrinsic link between discoursive tools (including narratives) and power, using a Gramscian framework to assess the extent to which an actor is able to cement its power through consensus-building.

The perceived lack of international solidarity after the attempted coup became a source of resentment in the already difficult relations between Turkey and the EU. Many in Turkey resented both the absence of any high-level political visits to Turkey by its Western allies in the aftermath of the coup attempt and the perceived mediatic focus on the purge rather than the failed coup itself. (İçener 2016). According to Hoffman et al. (2018: 5), 15 July is a 'versatile founding myth for Erdoğan and the AKP because it provides a flexible tool for targeting external and internal enemies and defining the national in-group as well as the so-called other.' Therefore, the coup attempt became instrumental in furthering the 'othering' of the West. Despite the challenges facing Turkey after the coup attempt, Erdoğan (2016a) depicts Turkey as:

[85] High-level official at Turkish MFA Policy planning, face-to-face interview with the author, Ankara, March 2017

[86] European External Action Service (2016), 'Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign And Security Policy'. Available at: http://www.eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/top_stories/pdf/eugs_review_web.pdf

> a stronger, more astute and more resolute country today than the morning of 15 July. No attack against our unity, solidarity, brotherhood, homeland, liberation and future will ever be successful. Neither terrorist organisations nor the ones exploiting them will be able to prevent us from achieving our goals.

Again, Turkey's historical legacy and societal resilience play a crucial role in shaping the country's resoluteness in fighting the forces that potentially threaten its survival. Erdoğan makes several references in his speeches to Ottoman poets and writers, such as Mehmet Akif Ersoy, author of the Turkish National Anthem, apparently linking the founding fathers of the Turkish Republic and the martyrs (*şehitler*) of the 'New Turkey', that is, the 249 people who died resisting the coup plotters.

The style of many of Erdoğan's speeches on this topic become strong, informal and allegorical. Some of them adopt a revenge-seeking and tip-for-tap tone that seems to complement well the JDP's proposals to reinstate the death penalty after the coup attempt.[87] For instance, in a New Year Message, Erdoğan (2017) said: 'Thanks be to Allah, our nation discharges from its system whoever tries to create any division as soon as noticing them'. Here, the metaphor depicting Turkey as a human body discharging alien elements from its system, almost as a virus attacked it, is strongly suggestive. The speeches often celebrate the heroic behaviour of the people on the coup night and its aftermath:

> With the noble resistance it put up against the 15 July treason, our nation showed to the whole world that it would protect the achievements of our country at the cost of its life. Our recent history has shown that scenarios such as separation, polarisation or internal conflict are groundless and meaningless. (...) Turkey has not been divided but has become stronger (Erdoğan 2016b).

The heroic sacrifice of the 'martyrs of democracy' and the 'steel will' of the country are mythicized in the discourse and embodied in new monuments built all over Turkey. Streets

[87] Turkey abolished death penalty in 2004 to comply with EU norms in light of its accession process. Before that, no one had been executed in the country since 1984 under a de facto moratorium on the execution of death sentences. See Amnesty International, 'Turkey: All Death Sentences Commuted', June 1991. Available at:
https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/200000/act530031991en.pdf
Talks of reinstating the death penaly abounded in media and among some political groups. Erdoğan openly backed it on the first anniversary of the failed coup attempt. See Euronews, 'Turkey: Erdoğan backs death penalty for coup supporters', 16 July 2017. http://www.euronews.com/2017/07/16/turkey-erdogan-backs-death-penalty-for-coup-supporters

and square are being renamed to celebrate the recurrence of the 15th of July; for instance, the new name of Kızılay Square, one of the most important centres and junction points in Ankara, is 15 July Kızılay National Will Square (*15 Temmuz Kızılay Milli İrade Meydanı*). The coup's anniversary is now marked as 'Martyrs and Democracy Day', a national holiday, and taught in primary school curricula, becoming as 'the defining political moment for a generation of Turks'. (Hoffman et al. 2018: 5) In Istanbul, the Bosphorus Bridge (*Boğaziçi Köprüsü*), one of the three bridges on the Bosphorus Strait connecting Europe and Asia, is now officially known as the 15 July Martyrs Bridge (*15 Temmuz Şehitler Köprüsü*).[88]

The many calls for unity and constructed image of the JDP as an inclusive party, which wants to 'build the new Turkey hand in hand and make it stronger together' as a 'whole nation' (Erdoğan 2014), is at odds with the actual post-coup policies. Such policies clamp down on legitimate political opposition parties, academics, journalists and resulted in a purge that furthers existing and new cleavages within the Turkish society.[89] These measures received a wide international condemn. A huge number of Western politicians and EU officials deemed the post-coup measures enacted by the JDP 'anti-democratic' and prompted the EU Parliament's call in 2017 for suspending the membership process. It is true that this sub-narrative is very recent, and any conclusions on its effects seem premature; yet, thus far, it seems that the way the JDP frames its post-coup response is likely to push Turkey further away from Europe. Over the last years (especially with the outbreak of the Syrian war), Turkey is increasingly building its image as a regional power different from and, sometimes, at odds with the EU, a trend on which the '*ağabey* narrative', analysed in the upcoming section, further elaborates.

[88] See Alexandra Locke, 'Turkey keeps renaming places after its July 15 failed coup', PRI's The World. 14 July 2017. https://www.pri.org/stories/2017-07-14/turkey-keeps-renaming-places-after-its-july-15-failed-coup

[89] According to the website Turkey Purge, as of May 26, 2018, 151,967 state officials, teachers, bureaucrats, and academics were dismissed by government decrees, 138,579 people were detained and 78,687 arrested, 3,003 schools, dormitories and universities were shut down, 5,822 academics lost their jobs, 4,463 judges, prosecutors were dismissed, 189 media outlets shut down and 319 journalists were arrested since 15 July, 2016. https://turkeypurge.com/

4.2.2. The Ağabey narrative: Turkey as a big brother

The second narrative, closely related to the first one, portraits Turkey as a 'big brother'. Similar to Russia, also in Turkey the big brother label includes two main aspects: morality and hierarchy. Firstly, the use of the emotional image of brotherhood, going far beyond the scope of 'partnership' or 'alliance', speaks to ties based on morality and responsibility and resembles family ties, which are extremely important in the Turkish society. Secondly, the adjective 'big' exposes a relation of hierarchy whereas the big brother is also more powerful and authoritative – a synthesis that the Turkish word *ağabey* (elder brother) seems to capture adequately. Translated into political terms, the big brother image may be useful to describe a regional hegemon, a benign power who enjoys, nonetheless, its sphere of influence.

As for the first aspect, morality, Turkey's 'moral foreign policy' might well be, at least theoretically, a great soft power asset. As a matter of fact, according to Nye's definition of soft power (Nye 2004; 2011), history and culture should be coupled with attractive political values and legitimacy of a state's foreign policy. Concepts like 'responsibility' and 'holistic approach' - namely, an approach based on 'security development and cultural and religious cross-understanding' (Davutoğlu 2014b) – have been often mentioned in the past, and Turkey's 1974 military operation and current tutelage in Cyprus is usually defined as 'humanitarian'. Yet, it is since the start of the Syrian War that the Turkish government started to describe its foreign policy more and more as *moral*. On several occasions, Davutoğlu and Erdoğan gave very emotionally-charged speeches on the topic, emphasizing Turkey's sheltering of millions of Syrian refugees. For instance, Davutoğlu (2014) said:

> In Turkey, we regard extending a helping hand to those who endure horrible experiences and took refuge in our countries to save their lives as our obligation as well as humanitarian duty. (...) We will never forget Syrian brothers and sisters. As Turkey, we will continue our open door policy, and keep our homes open, but more importantly, our hearts will continue to be open to them forever. We share a common destiny. We will never forget them.

References to humanitarian foreign policy are still at the core of Turkey's foreign policy strategy under the guidance of Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs since 24 November 2015. 'We live in an age of rapid changes and uncertainties. Thus our policies

need to be able to adopt to constant change and help shape the dynamics around us in the direction of peace, prosperity and stability. Humans are at the core of our activities. And, foreign policy needs foresight and action. It needs initiative. That is why Turkey takes initiatives with an "enterprising and humanitarian foreign policy" approach, in the words of Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu'[90]. At times the importance of 'Islamic solidarity' is underlined (Davutoğlu 2013a), as well as the religious legacy permeating Turkey's current foreign policy: 'With the inspiration received from Gazi Osman Paşa, this nation does not turn its back to the wretched ones in Syria, Iraq, Egypt, Palestine, or to the people of Gaza, who are being bombarded and martyred every day'. (Erdoğan 2014 in Alaranta 2015, 97). Recently, notes Korkut (2016), politicians and various public actors have been describing the role that Turks should play for Syrians in Turkey through the metaphor of *ensar,* which refers to the people of al-Madinah, who supported other Muslims that migrated there from Makkah. This religious reference allows Turkish politicians to influence the public sphere discursively 'rather than initiating a rights-based relief and integration programme for all refugees' (Korkut 2016:13). This strategy does not seem particularly effective among the Turkish population: Erdoğan and Semerci (2018) showed that Turks across the board holds mostly negative attitudes towards Syrians. The religious bond does not refrain Erdoğan from using the Syrian refugees as a political lever vis-a-vis the EU, either. In November 2016, for example, Erdoğan threatened to 'flood Europe with migrants' if the EU did not offer him a better migration deal.[91]

Hence, this image of brotherhood draws inspiration from a common Muslim faith and heritage and it is widely used by the JDP also at the domestic level, especially in the framework of the peace process with the Kurds. However, the common idea expressed by the Turkish government is that Turkey stands up for 'all oppressed people and victims without paying attention to their roots, sects, or beliefs'. (Erdoğan 2015) Some of my interviewees confirmed this aspiration: 'Religious affinities count, but Turkish foreign policy's scope is larger than that. Assistance is spread globally. Turkey aims at becoming the

[90] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, 'Synopsis of the Turkish Foreign Policy' http://www.mfa.gov.tr/synopsis-of-the-turkish-foreign-policy.en.mfa

[91] Reuters, 'Turkey's Erdogan threatened to flood Europe with migrants'. 8 February 2016 https://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-eu-turkey/turkeys-erdogan-threatened-to-flood-europe-with-migrants-greek-website-idUSKCN0VH1R0

voice of the least developed countries.'[92] Internationally, therefore, what may induce other countries to consider Turkey as a 'brother' is not the common Muslim faith, but the common disadvantaged background.[93]

The fact that Turkey experienced such an impressive economic boom over the last decade would then turn it into a *primus inter pares* among the least developed countries, or even as a model. Academic references to the 'Turkish model' are numerous (among many, Altunisik 2005; Dal & Erşen 2014); yet, several academics (for instance Alaranta 2015; Park 2012) reported how the Turkish government prefers avoiding the term model, using 'source of inspiration' instead. I could also notice how some of my interviewers contrasted this 'inspiring' attitude and the EU's patronising policies. In fact, it seems that – although Turkey is happy to inspire and assist neighbouring countries – it does not want to be perceived as 'pushy'. Turkey's approach aims to mark a difference with what is sometimes perceived as the EU's normative imperialism, or in the words of a Turkish official[94], the EU's image as an 'imperialist Christian power with bad intentions', referring to the EU's perceived attempt to use democratic values as a means to consolidate its political and economic power.

The second aspect, hierarchy, is subtler and difficult to ascertain in the political discourse. As in the case of Russia, Turkish officials refrain from explicitly describing Turkey as a *big* brother – benevolent and akin, yet more powerful and often patronising. They do so for obvious reasons, as labelling their country as a big brother might be seen as an attempt to undermine other countries' sovereignty and it could, therefore, be received very unfavourably by those societies and elites that Turkey aims to endear. The literature, however, classifies Turkey's actions towards specific states/regions in its neighbourhood as 'big brother foreign policy' on several occasions. For example: Turkey's attempt to include

[92] High-level official at Turkish MFA Policy planning, face-to-face interview with the author, Ankara, March 2017

[93] A parallel could be drawn with the life of President Erdoğan, which - despite his modest origins (he was born in 1954 to a poor family in Kasimpasa, a rough neighborhood in Istanbul) - managed to become the most influential person in Turkey and 'one of the world's most charismatic leaders' according to a 2015 editorial appeared in *The Telegraph.*
http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/turkey/11548369/Turkeys-most-powerful-president-since-Ataturk-A-profile-of-Recep-Tayyip-Erdogan.html

[94] High-level official at Turkish MFA, face-to-face interview with the author, Ankara, March 2017

Central Asian countries in its sphere of influence after the fall of the USSR (Larrabee 2011; Tüfekçi 2017); Turkey's approach towards the Islamic nations in the Balkans (Nas and Özer 2012; Petrović and Reljić 2011); and, more recently, Turkey's actions in Syria, where - had the Muslim Brothers managed to come to power in Damascus - the JDP would have enjoyed the position of 'big brother of the fledgling Arab democracies'. (Hinnebusch 2015: 287) In most cases, this approach was arguably unsuccessful, especially in Central Asia, where Russia and China largely overshadowed Turkey regarding political and economic influence, and Syria, where Ankara did not manage to oust Bashar al-Assad as initially hoped[95].

However, subtle references to this narrative are visible if one reads between the lines of speeches delivered by government members on several occasions. Perhaps, the best example of this narrative is Turkey's tone toward the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). Here, Ankara's 'patriarchal and dominating political jargon' (Kanlı 2015) denotes an even stronger hierarchy that the one existing between big and small brothers, and takes the form of 'motherland-babyland' relation. In a famous 2011 episode, Erdoğan, irritated by an anti-Turkey banner at a demonstration in the TRNC, accused Turkish Cypriots of ingratitude and said: 'It's thought-provoking that those who are being fed by us should be doing this' said, using a derogatory Turkish word for 'foster child'.[96] In 2015, reacting to the neo-elected TRNC leader Mustafa Akıncı's call to have an equal relationship 'like brothers' with Turkey, Erdoğan said that:

> Mr. President's ears should hear what comes out of his mouth. Working together even as brothers has its prerequisites. This country has paid a price for Northern Cyprus. We've sacrificed martyrs, and we are continuing to pay a price. We spend about $1 billion for them annually. (...) Who is waging the battle for Northern Cyprus in the international arena? Can Mr Akıncı wage this battle on his own? [Turkey] will continue to see [the TRNC] just like a mother sees her baby.[97]

[95] See, for instance: Reuters 'Turkey tells Syria's Assad: Step down!' 22 November 2011 https://www.reuters.com/article/us-syria/turkey-tells-syrias-assad-step-down-idUSL5E7MD0GZ20111122

[96] Al Monitor. 'Northern Cyprus demands respect from Turkey'. April 20, 2015. http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/04/turkey-greece-cypriot-baby-grow-up.html#ixzz4xZSfdz1S

[97] Al Monitor. 'Northern Cyprus demands respect from Turkey'. April 20, 2015. http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/04/turkey-greece-cypriot-baby-grow-up.html#ixzz4xZSfdz1S

Nowhere as in this quote does Erdoğan expose the power hierarchy and Turkey's paternalistic attitude that characterise the relation between Ankara and Lefkoşa.

Therefore, the big brother narrative can take different shapes depending on the time and context. The adjective 'big' is not often spelt out in the political discourse, but it is intrinsic in the asymmetric power relations existing in most cases where this narrative is used - from African countries where Turkey deploys its international aid to TRNC. The reference to brotherhood, on the other hand, pervades many speeches and official documents. Parallel to Turkey's image-construction as a brother, a growing 'othering' of the EU and other Western powers as alien and insensitive actors is visible in the Turkish discourse. As an interviewee told me, 'Turkey doesn't want to be in the OECD because it doesn't want to be identified as a rich and white donor country. We want to speak the language of the global South. We want to be perceived as Brothers, rather than outsiders.'[98] Indeed, Europe is often condemned – not without reason – for remaining inactive or closing its borders to Syrians fleeing war. Erdoğan accused the EU of 'cruelty', saying European nations had 'no mercy and no justice'.[99] Turkey, on the other hand, is not 'introvert' and does not 'remain silent if it sees oppression and injustice taking place in its neighbourhood'. (Erdoğan 2014 in Alaranta 2015: 97). In Erdoğan's words, with Syria Turkey gave a 'humanitarian lesson to the international community', while Europe has ignored the issue for years and 'laid as a burden on a few countries'. (Erdoğan 2016c). When Erdoğan claims that: 'We may have limited possibilities but we have rich hearts' (Erdoğan 2015), the reference to the rich but selfish Europe seems clear. This narrative, thus, well illustrates how Turkey – once a common example of Europeanisation[100] – has been distancing itself from the EU value- and foreign policy-wise.

[98] High-level official at Turkish MFA, face-to-face interview with the author, Ankara, March 2017

[99]Louisa Loveluck 'EU-Turkey deal: It is 'cruel' of Europe to close its borders to Syrian refugees, Erdogan says' *The Telegraph*, 9 May 2016 http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/05/09/eu-turkey-deal-it-is-cruel-of-europe-to-close-its-borders-to-syr/

[100] For a more elaborate discussion on this, see chapter on Turkey's and Russia's foreign policies.

4.2.3. Turkey as a Muslim democracy

In an interview with the Italian newspaper *Corriere della Sera*, the former US President Barack Obama referred to Turkey as a 'great Muslim democracy', representing a type of Islam endorsing *universal* values and secularity, and therefore a potentially good example for other Muslim countries.[101] In the same interview, Obama claimed that accepting Turkey into the European Union would be 'wise'. Turkey has often been depicted in the political as well as in the academic discourse (see, for instance, Yanik 2011) as a 'bridge' between the West – its values and institutions in which the country participates – and the broader Muslim world. The hope and necessity to mediate between these two worlds were high, so were expectations of the role that Turkey could fulfil. As a matter of fact, at the beginning of its rule, the JDP did show the capacities and willingness to meet these expectations, also because it portrayed its very existence as a sign of Turkey's democratisation. In the words of Erdoğan's (2015):

> It is an undeniable truth that pressure was put on some different ethnic backgrounds, beliefs and sects in certain periods during this 95- year-long period. In this sense, injustice was done to believers, those who had different opinions, Kurds and other segments and this injustice even turned to oppression from time to time. We are people who have personally experienced this injustice since our youth and personally witnessed it. The fact that instead of ignoring this injustice we have stated it loudly is mentioned in historical records.

Thus, the JDP claims to represent those who have been 'marginalised and regarded as the "other" in society for years', but who are now taking part in democratic political processes and 'deliver their demands to political parties'. (Erdoğan 2016b) Erdoğan (Prime Ministry of Turkey 2013: 10-11) also describes this process as a 'silent revolution' toward democratisation, inclusiveness and a 'new security paradigm', which contemplates the end of tutelage and of the 'practice of maintaining the state of emergency' *(sic!)*, depenalisation of the use of other languages and dialects, and the beginning of a peace process with the Kurds. 'Advanced democracy' was one of the key ingredients that would make Turkey, together with a strong economy and active foreign policy, a 'more significant actor in its region'.

[101] Obama, Barack (2010). Obama: Turchia a pieno titolo in Europa (Interview by Paolo Valentino). Corriere della Sera. 8 July 2010. http://www.corriere.it/esteri/10_luglio_08/obama-intervista-corriere-edicola_71c9bf26-8a50-11df-966e-00144f02aabe.shtml

(Prime Ministry of Turkey 2013:12) Turkish Islam, on the other hand, was seen as compatible with (liberal) democracy because it was 'essentially a ritualised Islam that has a very limited impact on one's moral conduct' (Yavuz 2004), therefore respecting the diversity in beliefs and lifestyles. In the first years in charge, indeed, Erdoğan presented himself as a Prime Minister for everyone, including for the LGBT people. For instance, in a 2002 TV show called *Genç Bakış* (young look), Erdoğan declares: 'It is necessary that LGBTs are recognised before the law in the light of their rights and freedoms. We do not find it humane that they go through certain treatments from time to time on TV'.[102] One year later, the first authorised gay pride took place in Istanbul, and it was organised yearly until it was banned again in 2015.[103]

However, over the last few years, the JDP leadership grew increasingly dissatisfied with the mediator or bridge role and started to depict Turkey as a centre of a civilizational project (Alaranta 2015:51). This foreign policy aspiration, spelt out in the previous narrative, coupled with domestic concerns[104], determined a change in discourse and policies that stress Turkey's Muslim identity in a way that becomes more and more incompatible with liberal democracy. Such evolution is especially evident in some field, such as women's rights, education, and alcohol consumption regulations. Restrictions on the sale of alcohol and a ban on alcohol advertising, for instance, were enacted in 2013, amid the protests of seculars.

[102] Erdoğan'ın Eşcinsel Hakları Sözü, 2002. Video recording, YouTube, viewed 17 May 2018 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-bp6grWsIJA&feature=player_embedded

[103] See Kyle Knight, 'Dispatches: Violent Crackdown at Istanbul's Pride Parade', Human Right Watch, 30 June 2015. https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/06/30/dispatches-violent-crackdown-istanbuls-pride-parade

[104] This is probably the narrative on which the domestic context has the greatest impact. Alaranta (2015:98) stresses how Erdoğan makes use of emotionally charged words such as *dava* (cause) in order to describe the role of the JDP in the 'New Turkey' as a political movement representing political Islam. For instance, he quotes Erdoğan saying: "Even though the JDP was formed no longer than 13 years ago, we are the expression of a holy march, a holy cause (*kutlu bir dava*) originally inaugurated centuries before" (see "Erdoğan'ın AK Parti'ye Veda Konuşması," Star, 27 August 2014). These words should be read in the context of the JDP's democratisation discourse, which is based on the idea that the Kemalist state required a homogenous secular Turkish nation, and excluded all those who were unwilling to identify with it, especially pious Muslims. Erdoğan himself often claims to have been a victim of secular repression in the past, most notably when he was jailed in 1997 on the charge of inciting religious hatred for reading a poem by the Turkish nationalist Ziya Gökalp.

While Erdoğan said that the measures were not 'an intervention into anybody's identity, ideology and lifestyle', he also added: 'If you are going to drink [alcohol], then drink your alcohol in your house. (...) But we are not allowing this in certain places and at certain hours – and within 100 meters of mosques and schools'.[105] These remarks seem to express a normative judgement of alcohol consumption: by restricting consumption and prohibiting it near places attended by children and religious people, usually considered innocent and moral people, the President presents alcohol in stark contrast, almost as something immoral.

The promotion of a patriarchal understanding of the role of women is another case in point. Erdoğan said in 2014: 'Our religion has defined a position for women: motherhood. (...) Some people can understand this, while others can't. You cannot explain this to feminists because they don't accept the concept of motherhood'. He added that women and men could not be treated equally 'because it goes against the laws of nature' and 'their delicate nature'.[106] The domestic and international outcry following this declaration did not prevent him from making another controversial statement in 2016: 'A woman who rejects motherhood, who refrains from being around the house, however successful her working life is, is deficient, is incomplete'.[107] This identification of womanhood with motherhood can easily explain some recent JDP measures. For instance, the JDP has started to provide financial stipends to young couples that married early and had more than three children. In 2012, Erdoğan unsuccessfully proposed outlawing all abortions that are not medically necessary, and limiting medically necessary abortions to the first eight weeks after conception, because 'there is no difference in killing the foetus in a mother's womb or killing a person after birth' and abortion 'has no place in our values'[108]. At the same time,

[105] Hürriyet Daily News. 'Drink at home, Turkish PM tells booze regulation critics'. 28 May 2013 http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/drink-at-home-pm-tells-booze-regulation-critics.aspx?pageID=238&nID=47764&NewsCatID=338

[106] The Guardian. 'Recep Tayyip Erdoğan: 'women not equal to men'. 24 November 2014 https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/nov/24/turkeys-president-recep-tayyip-Erdoğan-women-not-equal-men

[107] Al Jazeera. 'Turkey's Erdogan says childless women are incomplete'. 6 June 2016 http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/06/turkey-Erdoğan-childless-women-incomplete-160606042442710.html

[108] Sebnem Arsumay, 'Premier of Turkey Seeks Limits on Abortions', *The New York Times.* 29 May 2012.

tolerance for different sexual orientations also seems to have decreased, as the outlawing of Gay Prides proves.[109]

Thus, the Turkish government's support for liberal values is decreasing, probably also due to the deterioration of the EU membership process, which decreases the effectiveness of the EU conditionality. The fading influence of the EU impacts Turkish foreign policy heavily, as remarked in Chapter Three. Nowhere is this phenomenon more visible than in this narrative: if in the early years of the JDP rule Turkey was still portrayed as a democracy with Muslim characteristics, now it seems that Turkish officials rather describe their country as Muslim with democratic features. In 1996, when he was still Mayor of Istanbul, Erdoğan famously said: 'Democracy is like a train: you get off once you have reached your destination'[110]. Whether he believes that Turkey has reached its envisaged destination or not, it does seem that the country is jumping off the 'liberal democracy train': the country is becoming more and more Muslim, and less of liberal democracy. In this sense, Turkey can still be a model for its Muslim neighbours, but not the one the EU would have hoped for. Hence, similar to the previous narrative, this narrative also signals the increasing value rift between Turkey and the EU.

4.3. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have presented six narratives through which Russia and Turkey define their image and worldviews in the international arena and possibly exert soft power: Russia as a champion of multilateralism and multipolarity; Russia as a conservative power; Russia as a big brother; Turkey as a powerful and resilient regional power; Turkey as a Muslim

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http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/30/world/europe/turkish-premier-calls-for-more-abortion-restrictions.html

[109] See the 2018 Istanbul LGBTI + Pride Parade Press Release (*2018 İstanbul LGBTİ+ Onur Yürüyüşü Basın Açıklaması*), available at: http://prideistanbul.org/blog/ Accessed on 19 September 2018.

[110] Hürriyet Daily News. 'Destination "great Muslim democracy": Time to get off the train'. 6 May 2016 http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/destination-great-muslim-democracy-time-to-get-off-the-train.aspx?PageID=238&NID=105635&NewsCatID=398

democracy; Turkey as a big brother. As I have stated in the introduction, I have selected these narratives because in their evolution I detect the most strident points of friction between Russia and Turkey, on the one hand, and the 'West' – in particular, the EU – on the other hand. In fact, through the narratives' evolution, we can see how Russia and Turkey's relation with the EU, as well as their response to important changes at the domestic, regional and international level, provoked an increasing and substantial disconnect with the EU's narratives. Even narratives that were previously not at odds with the EU's discourse in the neighbourhood, such as Turkey as a Muslim democracy, now seem to be underscoring elements of differentiation rather than compatibility.

Despite obvious differences, there are several motives shared by both Turkey and Russia when deploying their narratives. An example is the call for a more inclusive and less Western-centric international system, both value-wise and regarding the exercise of global governance. This call reverberates through the narratives 'Russia as a champion of multipolarism' and 'Turkey as a Muslim democracy'. Another prominent motive behind the spread of strategic narratives is the willingness to consolidate political influence in their neighbourhood. This is particularly evident when analysing a common narrative depicting Turkey and Russia as 'big brothers'; as my fieldwork research strongly suggests, through this narrative Russia and Turkey aim at preserving their dominant role in Armenia and Northern Cyprus respectively, by presenting themselves as mighty yet benevolent 'brother nations' to the societies and political elites of the targeted countries. But probably the most concerning trend is the increasing desire for Turkey and Russia to construct their international image in opposition to the EU. This trend is visible for instance in Russia's use of conservative values in opposition to moral decadence of the West or Turkey's stress on its Muslim identity to the detriment of its democracy credential. In other words, we can notice how these narratives further the EU's 'otherness' and showcase an increasing divergence from the EU path that Russia and Turkey were previously on.

This bears important implications for the EU. There might be a large gap between identity, envisaged strategies and actual (and effective) policies, but the narratives impact directly or indirectly Russia and Turkey's domestic and foreign policies, as the examples throughout the chapter show. Hence, the study of these narratives should inform the EU's policies both vis-a-vis Turkey and Russia, as well as the EU neighbourhood policy in general, given the crucial role that Turkey and Russia play in the shared neighbourhood. The EU has been

relying so heavily upon its narratives (just to name one, the EU as a Normative Power) in the neighbourhood that potential or overt challenges to its own stories are all the worthier of attention.

The effectiveness of soft power is based on the consistency within and among narratives, and between narratives and actual policies – plus, of course, the success of those specific policies. This rule of thumb is valid for Russia and Turkey as well. In this chapter, I have focused on the process of narrative creation and evolution, on the actors involved and their motives. Nevertheless, to assess whether these narratives constitute an *effective* soft power tool, the focus should now switch to the targets of those narratives. The following two chapters provide an empirical analysis of how soft power played out in two specific political instances, one for Russia and one for Turkey. According to the definition of soft power adopted in this thesis, these narratives are effective if their recipients perceive them as common sense, as a 'natural' state of things that they cannot or do not want to put into question, because they work in their favour. The very fact that human-made – hence, modifiable – things are perceived as natural can be regarded as a positive effect of the soft power strategy of the power-projecting country. For instance, the main narrative used by Russia and Turkey in my case studies is the 'big brother' narrative. To what extent is this narrative accepted by Armenians and Turkish Cypriots? And what was the role of this and other soft power narratives in helping Russia and Turkey maintain their influence in the analysed countries? The analysis unfolded in the next two chapter aims to shed light on the mechanisms through which soft power facilitates the achievement of determined foreign policy outcomes. At the same time, it shows how soft power can be generated even from typical elements of hard power, such as the military of economic might.

CHAPTER 5

ARMENIA IN THE EURASIAN ECONOMIC UNION: WHAT ROLE FOR RUSSIA'S SOFT POWER?

In September 2013, Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan declared that his country would join the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), Russia-led regional economic integration scheme, instead of furthering its cooperation with the EU by signing the Association Agreement (AA), as initially planned[111]. This announcement caught Brussels by surprise; in recent years, the country had quite consistently advocated integration in the framework of the EU Eastern Partnership (EaP) Programme[112], to the extent that Delcour and Wolczuk (2015) referred to Armenia as the 'EU's Unexpected "Ideal Neighbour"'. Brussels' reactions to this u-turn ranged from questioning the effectiveness of EU policies towards Armenia to indirectly or directly accusing Moscow of sabotaging the EaP. (Youngs and Pishchikova 2013: 17) The implications of Armenia's choice are extremely relevant for the EU's foreign policy, especially for its EaP. It is, therefore, crucial to fully understand the reasons behind this puzzling outcome. How do we account for it? Did Moscow influence Yerevan's behaviour? If so, in what ways? Was Russia's soft power part of the equation? Unpacking Russia's role in this outcome has deep implications for both Russian-Armenian and EU-Russia relations because the EU and Russia have overlapping – sometimes competing - regional integration projects in the post-Soviet area.

[111] Association Agreements create a legal framework for bilateral cooperation between the EU and a third country. In the framework of the EU enlargement and Neighbourhood policies, the AA typically entails that a non-EU country commits to reform in the political, economic, and human rights fields, in exchange for access to some or all EU markets, and financial or technical assistance. For more details, see European Commission, "Enlargement - Association agreement", online: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/policy/glossary/terms/association-agreement_en

[112] After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Armenia has been trying to adopting 'complementarism' in its foreign policy - that is, the idea according to which 'various foreign policy dimensions can and should complement each other and need not be perceived as mutually exclusive' (Iskandaryan 2013: 6). At first, its participation in the Eastern Partnership did not seem to threaten this posture. Hence, 2013 was a watershed year, because Armenia was forced to make a sharp decision between the EU and Russia's competing integration projects.

In this chapter, I aim at building an explanation for the outcome that is inclusive and takes into account both material and immaterial factors, which can explain Russia's role in this outcome. If it is true that Armenia depends on Russia economically and security-wise, the existence of deep historical and cultural ties with Russia and a relatively strong public support for the EEU are also conditions that might enable Russia's soft power. I especially trace the resonance of Russia's soft power narratives- analysed in the previous chapter – which is how I operationalise soft power. I focus on the 'big brother narrative', the narrative mostly used in Russia's neighbourhood. However, due to the variety and complexity of reasons that led Armenia to join the EUU, looking only for one mechanism would be reductive. Focusing uniquely on either material factors (for instance, security) or immaterial ones (such as cultural ties) would not allow me to provide a comprehensive and solid explanation. Therefore, the analysis opens up to the presence of other possible mechanisms, building an explanation that is eclectic and includes conglomerates of different mechanisms to account for the outcome.

I use the 'explaining-outcome process-tracing' methodology, as outlined by Beach and Pedersen (2013) and follow an inductive path. Here, the analyst starts from the empirical level, working backwards from the outcome in a manner more analogous to historical methodology or classic detective work (Roberts 1996 in Beach and Pedersen 2013). It is a 'bottom-up type of analysis, using empirical material as the basis for building a plausible explanation of causal mechanisms whereby X (or multiple Xs) produced the outcome'. (Beach and Pedersen 2013: 20). The inductive path is suitable when examining a little-studied outcome. The chapter starts indeed with the acknowledgement that the outcome is not sufficiently studied, also due to its political sensitivity. In fact, explications currently available for it are either biased – offering a partial view that blames either Russia or the EU – or they fail to account for the whole picture, as the literature review in the following section highlights. My chapter aims to produce an original contribution to the debate on this topic, mainly thanks to my use of primary sources (elite interviews).

In the second section of the chapter, I construct a timeline starting from the outcome and proceeding backwards to analyse the 'landmark moments' that impacted the outcome directly or indirectly. The thesis' timeframe for the analysis of Russia's soft power is Putin's Presidency (2000 to date of writing, 2018). However, to fully understand and explain this particular instance and the peculiar relationship between Russia and Armenia, it is necessary

to go further back in time, touching upon some events happened during the times of the Soviet Union and Russian Empire. Drawing from my interviews[113] conducted in St Petersburg and Moscow between April and June 2016 and in Yerevan in February 2017, as well as from references in the Armenian official speeches and English-speaking press, I build two interrelated chains of events. The first one deals with events happened under the Putin's government, and that might have impacted the outcome more directly; the other analyses earlier events shaping the Russian-Armenian relations, and hence having a more indirect – but important – effect on the outcome.

The third section draws on the temporal chains of events to explain the outcome through a three-fold causal mechanism, comprising a structural, institutional and ideational part. The chains of event and the causal mechanism show that Russia managed to its 'natural' role as a big brother – a security provider and a powerful ally sharing similar values based on Christianity and conservatism as common sense in Armenia. In Gramsci's hegemony, influencing what is considered to be 'common sense' is part of the process of consensus-building, which is – together with coercion – fundamental for a dominant actor to maintain its hierarchical advantage. Finally, the conclusion sums up my arguments and points at more recent events (from Armenia's accession to the EEU in 2013 to present days) that can impact relations among Armenia, Russia and the EU in the short/medium-run.

5.1. Armenia's choice to join the EEU: a matter of hard power, soft power or a combination of both?

According to Beach and Pedersen (2013: 63), the first stage of conceptualisation in explaining-outcome process tracing is the review of existing scholarship in search of potential mechanisms that explain the outcome. In most explaining-outcome studies, they argue, 'existing theorisation cannot provide a sufficient explanation, resulting in a second stage in which existing theories are reconceptualised in light of the evidence gathered in the preceding empirical analysis'. (Beach and Pedersen 2013: 63) Hence, the chapter starts with a concise yet wide-ranging literature review; its chief objective is to help disclose potential mechanisms that explain the outcome while spurring the search and analysis of new

[113] For the complete list of interviews, please see List A in Annex I.

mechanisms. This literature review has also helped to formulate the most appropriate questions for my interviews, acting as a starting point or as a spark for the debate with the interviewees. It is important to note that this review does not include only academic works, but it strives to offer a broader picture of how policy-makers and think-tankers, as well as academics, perceived the issue. Therefore, it also refers to public declarations, policy papers and my interviews. The literature review points to different sets of reasons explaining Armenia's decision, ranging from security to economic and political ones.

Geographical location seems to influence how Armenia's decision to join the EEU is perceived and explained. In other words, there seems to be an east/west divide when trying to explain Armenia's choice. Views differ especially at the policy-makers level: EU officials, on one side, and Russian and Armenian, on the other, expressed very different views. For instance, Elmar Brok, the German Chairman of the European Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee, blamed Russia for Yerevan's U-turn; he declared in an interview: 'A small country like Armenia was blackmailed to make such a decision'.[114] (RFE/RL 2013) Former Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt, whose country has been a key backer of AAs with ex-Soviet states, commented on Twitter: 'Armenia negotiated 4 years to get Association Agreement with EU. Now President [Serzh Sargsyan] prefers Kremlin to Brussels'.[115] These opinions mirror the mainstream interpretation of the events that was widespread in Brussels at that time. According to my experience living in Brussels in 2013 and talking to several EU officials and European think-tankers on this topic, there was a wide consensus on the fact that Moscow almost 'compelled' Yerevan to drop its European aspirations due to Russia's economic and security blackmails, such as Moscow's threat to increase gas price by 60 percent. (Blank 2013; Füle 2013) On the other hand, the Armenian President publicly explained this step in light of the country's security interests, mixed with perspectives to improve economic indicators. President Sargsyan claimed that the decision was only rational because, since Armenia is already a member of the Russia-led military alliance Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), 'participating in one military security structure makes it infeasible and inefficient to stay away from the relevant geo-economic area'. (President of

[114] Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) (2013). 'German MEP Regrets Armenia's Customs Union Move'. 3 September 2013. Available at: http://www.rferl.org/a/armenia-customs-union-elmar-brok-russia/25094796.html

[115] Eurasianet 'Yerevan Says Association Agreement with EU Still Possible'. 4 September 2013. Available at: https://eurasianet.org/s/yerevan-says-association-agreement-with-eu-still-possible

the Republic of Armenia 2013) Russian authorities backed these views[116], particularly highlighting the economic benefits that the EEU membership entails for Armenia. They usually emphasise the strong trade links and extreme relevance of remittances from Russia for Armenian GDP: according to the Central Bank of Armenia, the number of private remittances sent from Russia to Armenia in January-May 2013 increased by 112 percent, making up for nearly 84.5 percent of the total.[117] According to this logic, the EEU and its freedoms of goods, capital, services and people would benefit Armenia greatly, although, in reality, academic literature has pointed to the discrepancy between the EEU's 'publicly stated economic objectives versus its unstated power-driven objectives' (Sergi 2018: 53).

Even if more nuanced, the divide is present in the academia, too. Academic accounts tend to take into consideration a wider variety of factors, therefore presenting a less black/white version compared to policymakers. According to my analysis, scholars based in Europe or the US tend to emphasise security or structural factors (i.e., economic dependency on Russia) - at times supporting the view that Russia blackmailed Armenia into joining the EEU. On the other hand, scholars based in Russia tend to underscore the economic benefits that the EEU entails, even if acknowledging the crucial impact of security factors; they also tend to minimise the impact of Russia's pressures and mention the cultural, historical and religious affinity between Armenia and Russia. Examples from the first group of scholars include Delcour, who describes Armenia's support for Russia's regional integration policies in the Post-Soviet Space as 'half-hearted' (Delcour 2014): despite growing interrogations in Armenian society, President Sargsyan had to give up to Russian pressures due to the country's de facto security trap. In turn, the 'quest for protection at all costs has led Armenia to become increasingly, if not entirely, dependent on Russia'. (Delcour 2014: 38) Delcour sees the long-term economic benefits of a more balanced foreign policy (and integration with the EU) but claims that those are clearly 'outweighed by the country's urgent and vital need for a security umbrella, which explains its engagement (even if hesitant) in the Eurasian project'. (Delcour 2015: 323) Popescu (2014: 22) believes that Armenia was more 'resigned

[116] Eurasian Economic Commission. 'Armenia has benefits from participation in the Eurasian Economic Union', 23 November http://www.eurasiancommission.org/en/nae/news/Pages/23-11-2016-5.aspx

[117] Armenia Now. 'Central Bank: Private remittances from Russia to Armenia up in January-May'. 15 July, 2013. Available at: https://www.armenianow.com/economy/47644/armenia_central_bank_private_remittances_russia

to joining the EEU than motivated by any genuine enthusiasm for the prospect'. According to him, not only did Russia pressure Armenia with security motivation, but it also subsidised it, offering cheap energy and considerably limiting Yerevan's alternatives. Grigoryan, an Armenian political scientist affiliated with the Jamestown Foundation in Washington, also cites Russian pressure on Armenia, including threats to cancel security guarantees by Russia and a rise in gas prices, as the most plausible explanation for Yerevan's EEU membership.[118]

The other group of scholars tends to belittle the importance of Russia's pressure and geopolitical competition when explaining Armenia's decision. Many Russian scholars lament the fact that the West perceives the EEU in confrontational terms or even as Russia's attempt to restore the Soviet Union. For instance, Lukin (2014) claims that 'Western leaders are woefully misinformed about the idea of Eurasian integration'; to him, neither Russia nor any of the states in the EEU aim to restore the USSR or confront the West. Tangible economic benefits alongside security cooperation are the real drivers of integration. (Lukin 2014) Some point to the huge compromises and concessions from Russia, which made the EEU attractive for Armenia. One of my interviewees, Evgeny Vinokurov – a Russian academic, who is now the Director of the Centre for Integration Studies at the Eurasian Development Bank – points at the fact that Russia provided Armenia with concessions on the exports of gas and raw diamonds, a fact confirmed by Giucci and Mdinaradze (2017); these concessions 'meant the survival of the Yerevan-based industry of diamond cutters'.[119] Post-Soviet scholars also suggest the unattractiveness of the EU's integration scheme. Markedonov mentions the fact that the EU lacks the willingness and capabilities to offer a more security-oriented integration: 'the EU, while appealing to European democratic values, was unable to offer Armenia security guarantees and mechanisms that Russia has given it, together with economic advantages of cooperation within the Customs Union'.[120] Finally, Minasyan (2014) offers a controversial, yet interesting view. According to him, by opting for

[118] Grigoryan, Armen. Visiting scholar at Central European University, Department of Political Science. Email interview, December 2016

[119] Vinokurov, Evgeny. Economist, Director of the Centre for Integration Studies at the Eurasian Development Bank. Face-to- face interview with the author. St Petersburg, Russia. April 2016.

[120] Markedonov, Sergey. Director of the Department for Problems of Ethnic Relations at the Institute for Political and Military Analysis in Moscow, Associate professor of Russian State University for the Humanities, expert of Russian International Affairs Council. Face-to-face interview with the author. Moscow, Russia. June 2016.

self-restraint of its own accord and 'pleasing Russia' – i.e., by choosing the EEU or supporting the referendum in Crimea – Armenia minimised its risks and losses. He believes that Armenian foreign policy is going through a Finlandisation process: 'As Finland refused to participate in the Marshall Plan under pressure from Moscow during the Cold War, so will Armenia have to give more regard to Russia's opinion now and then, facing a sharper reaction from the United States and the European Union'. (Minasyan 2014) In this regard, Armenia's decision was smart because, although Finlandisation is not the ideal foreign policy approach, yet it is the safest to maintain territorial integrity and statehood against the threats coming from Azerbaijan.

Security considerations rank very high on the list of possible reasons for Armenia's decision, followed by economic gains. Likewise, the role of Russia tends to be explained through the lenses of its hard power, especially its military might, energy blackmails and economic incentives.[121] The EU's harmonisation efforts and economic incentives, on the other hand, were attractive but not paired with security guarantees, and were overshadowed by security concerns. While policymakers' views understandably mirror a high political polarisation, academic studies have not yet managed to grasp a deep understanding of the decision and its broad context. The analysis of some scholars (see Delcour 2014, Vasilyan 2016) do take into account a wider variety of factors, yet they do not thoroughly elaborate on them - which is also due to the recent nature of the event. In the following section, I dig deeper into Armenia's reasons and Russia's impact on it, through a historical analysis that: a) builds two temporal chains of events that help to explain the outcome and the Russian-Armenian relation more broadly; b) traces especially, but not exclusively, the resonance of Russia's soft power narratives, in particular the 'big brother narrative', to assess whether these narratives were perceived as common sense, enhancing Russia's soft power.

5.2. A timeline unpacking Russian-Armenian relations

This section, divided into two parts, looks at 'landmark moments' that impacted directly or indirectly Armenia's decision. The first part delves into Putin's rule period to trace the more

[121] These aspects of Russia's hard power will be explained in the Section 5.3 'Constructing the causal mechanism', especially in the analysis of the structural part of the causal mechanism.

direct ways in which Russia influenced Armenia's decision. Nevertheless, after my fieldwork, I concluded that limiting the research to such a short framework would constrain my ability to provide a wide-ranging explanation for the outcome. That is why the second part of the section takes into account landmark moments occurred before Putin's rule and defined Armenia's identity and its relation with Russia. The analysis starts from the outcome (President Serzh Sargsyan's announcement in September 2013 that Armenia would join the EEU) and proceeds backwards, particularly focusing on three spheres: security; economy; and cultural/ideational sphere. Sargsyan signed the EEU Treaty in October 2014, and Armenia officially joined the organisation in January 2015. The signature came only one year after Sargsyan announced his intention to join the organisation, in September 2013, making the speed and the quality of the negotiations 'exemplary', 'one of the fastest negotiations ever'. (Vinokurov 2016) If no major incidents hampered the negotiations, it was because the real turning point was the moment when Sargsyan announced, just before the EU's EaP summit in Vilnius, the decision to join the EEU. The announcement put an abrupt end to the process of concluding a DCFTA with the EU, because through its membership of the EEU, Armenia lost its competence of individually signing free trade agreements with other (groups of) countries. Hence, this decision in September 2013 is the starting point for this timeline.

5.2.1. Landmark moments under Putin's government

As the previous section has shown, security concerns top the list of possible motives behind Armenia's decision to join the EEU. When speaking of security, the first thing coming to mind is the (not-so)frozen conflict[122] involving Armenia and Azerbaijan over the Nagorno-Karabakh, an ethnically Armenian enclave within Azerbaijan. The quasi-totality of my interviewees indeed mention the fact that Russia is Armenia's main security provider vis-à-vis Azerbaijan as a crucial factor influencing Armenia's decision to join the EEU. This acknowledgement is so widespread and accepted that it can be categorised as common sense in Gramscian terms.

[122] The next section will provide more historical details about the conflict.

Russia does seem to play the role of a 'benevolent protector', that is, a big brother. Russia's defence obligations currently relate only to Armenia's territorial integrity, and therefore formally exclude Nagorno-Karabakh. However, in 2013 Andrey Ruzinsky, the chief commander of the 102nd military base, the biggest Russian military base in Armenia (and the only military base in the region), declared that 'If Azerbaijan decides to restore jurisdiction over Nagorno-Karabakh by force the [Russian] military base may join in the armed conflict in accordance with the Russian Federation's obligations within the framework of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO)'[123]. It is important to place this statement in context: a few years earlier, in 2010, Russia and Armenia agreed to extend the mandate for the Gyumri base until 2044, and the agreement did not formally modify Russia's obligations regarding direct involvement in the conflict. However, statements such as Ruzinsky's make Russia's posture ambiguous and resonate greatly with the Armenian public, reinforcing the common sense that Russia is a big brother and this works in favour of Armenia's interests. For instance, a 2010 poll appeared in Krasnaya Zvezda reveals that over 70 per cent of Armenians believe that the existence of the Russian military base in Gyumri preserves their security. (German 2012: 227) A 2011 Gallup opinion poll showed that three in four people in Armenia approved of Russia's leadership, making it the fifth-most pro-Russian country in the world.[124]

It is also true that Russia did not halt relationship with Azerbaijan and sometimes uses it as a powerful lever vis-à-vis Armenia, intensifying its arms trade with Baku. (Markedonov 2014) In this regard, Putin's visit to Baku in August 2013, shortly before Sargsyan announced his intention to join the EEU, is key. During the visit, Putin characterised Azerbaijan as a 'strategic partner'[125] and advocated for stronger relations, also based on Russia's sophisticated arms delivery to Azerbaijan, including tanks, artillery cannons, and rocket launchers. (Grove 2013 in Vasilyan 2017: 34). Russian authorities tried to downplay the importance of the visit. According to Markedonov, Russia treats Armenia as 'strategic ally',

[123] Joshua Kucera 'Russian Officer: We Would Intervene in Karabakh Against Azerbaijan'. Eurasianet Nov 1, 2013 https://eurasianet.org/s/russian-officer-we-would-intervene-in-karabakh-against-azerbaijan

[124] RFE/RL, 'Global Poll Finds Strong Pro-Russian Sentiment In Armenia' August 09, 2011 https://www.rferl.org/a/pro_russia_sentiment_in_armenia/24291052.html

[125] Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst. 'Vladimir Putin Visits Baku' 4 September 2013 https://www.cacianalyst.org/publications/field-reports/item/12804-vladimir-putin-visits-baku.html

which is substantially different from ‘partner’; while ‘partner' speaks to an impersonal business-like relation, ‘ally' goes beyond business: ‘Yes, we make deals with Azerbaijan even in military-technical sphere, but in accordance to market prices. Also, Azerbaijan is not a member of integration projects under Russian auspices. But we supply weapons to Armenia with huge discounts, not according to market prices.’[126] The visit, coupled with the arms deal, was widely criticised in the Armenian press and further heightened Armenia's perception of imminent threat (Vasilyan 2016: 3).

The Syrian civil war might also have played a role in Armenia’s decision of 2013 marked the second anniversary of the uprisings in Syria; back then, the possible future developments of the conflict – especially the involvement of Turkey – worried Yerevan very much because of the Armenian diaspora in Syria. According to the Armenian government, at least 20,000 Syrian Armenian refugees moved to Armenia[127], whose population is only 2.9 million – that makes up six refugees to 1,000 locals. As Markedonov puts it, the ‘active role of Ankara’ in Syria was perceived as a ‘real danger’, and this factor – largely disregarded by Western analysts – pushed Armenia into deepening Eurasian integration’.[128] Later, Armenian media frequently labelled Turkey’s military operations[129] as an ‘invasion’ of Syria and harshly criticised the establishment of Ankara’s bases there, specifically in Idlib province, near the Armenian community in Haleb/Aleppo. (Yegparian 2018) The fact that the aforementioned

[126] Markedonov, Sergey. Director of the Department for Problems of Ethnic Relations at the Institute for Political and Military Analysis in Moscow, Associate professor of Russian State University for the Humanities, expert of Russian International Affairs Council. Face-to-face interview with the author. Moscow, Russia. June 2016

[127] Tamila Varshalomidze 'Syrian refugees improve Armenia's social fabric'. Al Jazeera. 17 December 2017 https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/12/refugees-improve-armenia-social-fabric-171214061224398.html

[128] Markedonov, Sergey. Director of the Department for Problems of Ethnic Relations at the Institute for Political and Military Analysis in Moscow, Associate professor of Russian State University for the Humanities, expert of Russian International Affairs Council. Face-to-face interview with the author. Moscow, Russia. June 2016

[129] Since the 2015 Operation Shah Euphrates, Turkey has been increasing its military involvement in in the Syrian war. For a timeline of Turkish involvement, see The Associated Press ‘A Timeline of the Syrian Conflict as It Enters Its Eighth Year’, 15 March 2018, Bloomberg https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-03-15/timeline-of-the-syrian-conflict-as-it-enters-8th-year

Gyumri Russian military base is very close to the Turkish border speaks to the historical importance of the 'Turkish factor' and Russia's protection against it.

Economic factors are also widely mentioned by my interviewees. Under Putin, the world witnessed the resurgence of Russia as a powerful regional actor aiming to bolster Eurasian integration – and that bore important consequences for Armenia. (Kanet 2015) Already in 2011, Putin wrote an article in *Izvestia* in which he signalled that the EEU would be a priority of his third mandate as a President[130]. Before the economic crisis in Russia caused by decreasing global oil prices and, after, the Western sanctions, Eurasian integration did proceed at a fast pace. In January 2012 a Common Economic Space (CES) between Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia started functioning, together with a Eurasian Economic Commission (the executive body of the EEU, which became operational in January 2015), and a Eurasian Economic Court. This attempt of economic integration in the region is much more solid than previous attempts (Delcour et al.: 9). Even if the EEU comprises of other states (in 2013, those were Belarus and Kazakhstan), Armenia's main economic interests in the organisation lie with Russia. During the years of Putin's Presidency, Russia has established and maintained its dominant position as Armenia's main trade partner and foreign investor. According to the National Statistical Service of Armenia, in 2013 (year of the outcome) Russia took 22.6 per cent of total exports and 23.4 per cent of total imports. (Vasilyan 2016) Starting in the early 2000s, Russia also began taking over the Armenian energy sector, 80% of which is currently under Moscow's control. (Vasilyan 2016) After the debt-for-equity deal signed between Russia and Armenia in 2002, Russian Gazprom started taking over ArmRosGazprom; eventually, in early 2014, the company's CEO and Armen Movsisyan, Armenia's Minister of Energy and Natural Resources signed an agreement granting Gazprom 100 per cent of ArmRosgazprom's shares. (Gazprom 2013) Gazprom promptly monopolised Armenia's attempt to diversify its energy sources through cooperation with Iran. In 2007, a new Iran-Armenia Natural Gas Pipeline, with the potential to provide energy security for Armenia as an alternative to the Russian-dominated imports flowing through Georgia, raised many hopes. (Socor 2007) However, according to Gevorg Avetikyan, an Armenian

[130] Vladimir Putin, 'A new integration project for Eurasia: The future in the making' (Original in Russian: 'Новый интеграционный проект для Евразии — будущее, которое рождается сегодня'), https://iz.ru/news/502761 Available in English at: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009_2014/documents/d-ru/dv/dru_2013_0320_06_/dru_2013_0320_06_en.pdf

academician affiliated with the European University in St Petersburg, Russia intervened to make sure that Armenia would keep relying on Russia:

> At some point, Gazprom appeared in the negotiations. Russia was kind of treating Armenia as a traitor, given that [Russia] sells its gas at a much-discounted price. Armenia justified it with its need to diversify its energy supply sources, in light of the instability deriving from the South Ossetia crisis. Eventually, the pipeline was built, but with few restrictions. One of them is that the pipeline had to end in Armenia, it couldn't be used a transit line, so Armenia and Iran cannot do business out of this agreement. Another was that the pipeline had to be two times smaller [*volume-wise*] than it was initially planned. Eventually, it essentially became a project controlled by Armprom, read Gazprom. [131]

Furthermore, Russia controls the Metsamor nuclear plant, which produces more than one-third of the country's electricity.[132] Russian state-controlled companies also own huge shares or the totality of the Armenian airline Armavia, the national railway network, and the Armenian Savings Bank. (Vasilyan 2016) Russia's quasi-total control of Armenia's energy infrastructures reinforces the idea that the future of the country is irremediably linked to Russia; this act as a double-edged sword for Russia's image among the Armenian public. On the one hand, Armenia has no gas reserves. Still, it can buy gas at a heavily discounted price it is thanks to its relation with Russia. For instance, it pays less than its neighbour Georgia, although the gas must navigate through Georgia to Armenia via the North-South pipeline. (Valeriano and Maness, 2015) On the other hand, if energy commodities' prices rise, the Russian government, alongside the Armenian one, is blamed as responsible. For instance, when protests against peaks in energy prices were organised in June 2013, Armenian news outlets reported of small protests outside of the Russian Embassy in Yerevan. (Grigoyan 2013) Given that the Armenian energy sector depends almost quasi-entirely on Russia, increases in energy prices can hinder Russia's image in the country.

Armenian migrants in Russia also constitute a crucial factor. Russia's economic boom of the first decade of the 2000s, mainly driven by the oil and gas revenues, reestablished the image of Russia as the strongest and richest country in the region, an image already widespread

[131] Avetikyan, Gevorg. IMARES Program Associate Director, Professor, European University at St. Petersburg. Face-to- face interview with the author. St Petersburg, Russia. April 2016

[132] Emil Danielyan. 'Russian State Presence in Armenian Energy Sector Declining'. Eurasianet. May 5, 2016 https://eurasianet.org/s/russian-state-presence-in-armenian-energy-sector-declining

during Soviet times. The Armenian diaspora in Russia, already very large, grew even more in the first decade of the 2000s. The 2010 Russian census recorded 1,182,388 Armenians in the country, mainly concentrated in Moscow, Saint Petersburg, Krasnodar Krai in the North Caucasus.[133] However, some estimates point at an actual figure of more than 2 million. (Dyatlov 2016) The pull factors include better economic opportunities, more jobs, affordability of travel, relative geographical, language and cultural proximity, but also some policies either directly implemented or strongly backed by Russia designed to attract the workforce from the post-Soviet region. One prominent example is the launch of the Russian Compatriots Programme in 2006, which assisted compatriots through coverage of relocation expenses, job placement, and the possibility of acquiring Russian citizenship. The programme was initially expected to end in 2012, but a decree made it permanent and extended eligibility to the grandparents and adult brothers and sisters of migrants. (Grigoryan 2012) As the previous chapter highlights, compatriots are a crucial element of Russia's soft power, acting as one of its main sources and recipients at the same time. Similar policies designed to attract compatriots started to be implemented under Putin and led to an increase in the number of labour migrants. The 2007 law permitting Armenians to hold dual citizenship also drove to an increase in the applications to Russian passports. In 2012, the politicisation of migration and dangers of brain drain led the Armenian government to object to the Russian Compatriots programme; however, this has not prevented hundreds of Armenians from seeking opportunities in Russia. According to many of my interviewees, many of those migrants, upon their return to Armenia, tend to have sympathetic views toward Russia. Richard Giragosian, Director of the Yerevan-based Regional Studies Center (RSC), claims that this phenomenon concerns especially the upper middle class, which in Russia can find the good job opportunities that are lacking in Armenia.[134] Russia's ability to overcome the financial crisis and maintain its economic attractiveness will certainly affect the future of the relation with Armenia.

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[133] World Heritage Encyclopaedia. 'Armenians in Russia'. Available at: http://self.gutenberg.org/articles/Armenians_in_Russia

[134] However, he also warns that, in recent times, the lower economic classes who come back to Armenia do not see Russia as 'hospitable, inviting or much as an economic opportunity as it once was, due to the downturn in the Russian economy and the crackdown in terms of Migrant labor'. Giragosian, Richard. Director, Regional Studies Center (RSC). Face-to-face interview with the author. Yerevan, Armenia. February 2017

The use of the Russian language is a powerful element in Russia's capacity to exert attraction. According to an Azerbaijani academic, returned Armenian migrants tend to use Russian in their everyday life because this

> gives them [Russian Armenians] the opportunity to feel, in their minds, as first-class people, because in Russia the language is spoken by those "privileged" and "superior" over these very Armenians. (...) The Russian language is used to establish authority over newcomers, especially immigrants from former colonies. Armenians feel it distinctly. So, Armenians from Russia speak Russian in Armenia, because it makes them believe they are "first-class" (Badalov 2013).

This perception exists in other post-Soviet states, where local populations commonly regard Russian as the language spoken by the elites. Over the last years, Russia has launched initiatives to promote the use of Russian in the post-Soviet region. In Armenia, the Russian centre, established at Yerevan State University by the *Russkii Mir* Foundation, and the Russian Centre for Science and Culture in Yerevan are the main centres. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov during a meeting with the faculty of Yerevan State University expressed his support for policies supporting the use of Russian and declared:

> We appreciate the craving of the Armenian society for Russian culture and Russian language. (...) Incidentally, in his speech, Dean of the Faculty of Russian Philology of Yerevan State University made a slip of tongue (as in Freud), saying that in the secondary schools the Russian language is studied along with foreign ones. This slip of the tongue shows that the Russian language is completely not a foreign language, but the language of communication and our friendship (Lavrov 2012).

Economic opportunities in Russia, together with the cultural attractiveness of Russian film and music industry[135] or the prestige of Russian universities, where high-level members of the Armenian government studied[136], incentivise the study of Russian language in the country.

[135] Geghamyan, Varuzhan. President of Armenian National Cultural Autonomy of St Petersburg. Face-to-face interview with the author. St Petersburg, May 2016. Follow up: Yerevan, Armenia. February 2017

Finally, public support for the EEU has consistently been high. Polls from both the Eurasian Development Bank and the American polling company Gallup found support for the EEU among 64 per cent of Armenia's population in 2013.[137] On the other hand, the number of Armenians trusting the EU has been dropping over the last few years, according to the Caucasus Barometer[138]. If almost half of the interviewed in 2008 declared to 'fully trust' the EU (45 per cent), in 2013 this percentage had decreased to 27 per cent. The distrust remained constantly high, marking 28 per cent in 2013, and feelings of indifference toward the EU grew from 0 in 2008 to 13 per cent in 2013, reaching a peak of 20 in 2011.

Two main factors might explain this lack of trust in the EU and the high support for the EEU. Firstly, there is Armenia's extremely high dependence on Russia, both economically and security-wise, which makes it difficult for Armenians to imagine the future of their country without Russia's support and help explain the Armenians' compliant reactions[139] to the announcement that the country would join the EEU. The image of Russia as a security guarantor is deeply enrooted in Armenian society (Hovhannisyan 2013) and bolsters both Russia's soft and hard power. Secondly, reasons are deriving from the poor performance of the EU in the country. There were popular expectations that closer cooperation with the EU would help Armenia to ease the burden of relative economic isolation (due to the closed borders with Turkey and Azerbaijan) and bring about democratisation. These expectations were largely left unfulfilled. (Simão 2012) In my opinion, this was also due to the lack of incentives for the Armenian political elites. The EU indeed offered appealing economic development mechanisms under the Eastern Partnership (EaP), such as access to the EU

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[136] Isachenko, Tatiana, Prof. of International Economic Relations and Foreign Economic Relations, MGIMO University. Expert, RIAC. Face-to-face interview with the author. Moscow, Russia. May 2016

[137] Arka News Agency, Armenia's accession to Eurasian economic union backed by 64 percent of population- survey'. 2 March 2015 http://arka.am/en/news/politics/armenia_s_accession_to_eurasian_economic_union_backed_by_64_percent_of_population_survey/

[138] Caucasus Barometer 2013 regional dataset. http://caucasusbarometer.org/en/cb2013/TRUSTEU/

[139] Although some protests were organised, only a small group of civil society activists took part in them. This speaks, according to Zolyan (2015), to the fact that 'the EU has been unwilling or unable to match Moscow's immense soft power in the post-Soviet space with an adequate effort of its own'.

market and technical assistance to Armenians producers. However, these economic incentives come with strings attached: democratic conditionality (democratisation, human rights, anti-corruption measures and reinforcing the rule of law) in the long-run would entail high costs for the Armenian elites, even threatening their political survival. According to my view, these polity-related changes might have been appealing to some segments of the Armenian society but scared those in power. In the end, furthering integration with Russia through the EEU represented a safer bet for Armenian elites, even if it does perpetuate the status of dependency - even vassalage, as a member of the Armenian National Movement Party puts it[140] - on Russia.

5.2.2. Digging deeper: Landmark moments before Putin

A broader review of the events that impacted Armenia's decision before Putin and its relation with Russia, even if sketched, allows for a deeper understanding of the context in which the decision was taken. Such review cannot but start with the Nagorno-Karabakh War, an event that greatly marked Armenia's identity and foreign policy in the 20th century to the point that 'to be without Nagorny Karabakh is to have an incomplete national identity'. (De Waal 2005: 13) The conflict as such was fought in 1991–1994, but Armenia and Azerbaijan have a long history of tension. During the Soviet rule, the Nagorno-Karabakh was declared as a part of Azerbaijan, although the majority of the population was Armenian. In 1988, Nagorno-Karabakh voted to secede from then-Soviet Azerbaijan and join Armenia. When the USSR dissolved, a violent war started, resulting in Armenian forces taking control of Nagorno-Karabakh and several surrounding regions – a situation that persists today. Azerbaijan and Armenia reached a ceasefire in 1994, with the crucial mediation of Russia. Since then, the OSCE Minsk Group has been mediating between the two countries; Russia has been playing a dominant role compared to its co-chairs (US and France), a role justified by its position in the region, but also 'facilitated by the fact that Nagorno-Karabakh itself remained outside of direct Russian military involvement (...) and that Russian diplomacy brokered the ceasefire. (Romashov & Rytövuori-Apunen 2016: 5) However, many, including

[140] 'Armenia Is The Vassal Of Russia: Armenian Politicians'. ArmInfo News Agency, Armenia. Nov 7 2006 http://www.armeniandiaspora.com/showthread.php?69142-Armenia-Is-The-Vassal-Of-Russia-Armenian-Politicians

Turkish President Erdoğan[141], see Russia as a partial player backing Armenia. With the establishment of the Gyumri base and the signing of the 1997 friendship treaty, which calls for mutual assistance in the event of a military threat to either party and allows Russian border guards to patrol Armenia's frontiers with Turkey and Iran, Russia confirmed its image as protector of Armenia's security. The roots of this image date back to the USSR and the Russian Empire, as the following section shows.

Alongside the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the event that had the most dramatic impact on the Armenian identity is the disputed so-called 'Armenian genocide', the extermination of hundreds of thousands (1.5 million, according to Armenian figures) of Armenians, mostly through the policies of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), popularly known as the Young Turks, during the last years of the Ottoman Empire. A detailed account of these historical events and the related controversy falls beyond the scope of the chapter; a brief mention is, nevertheless, necessary due to the centrality of the international recognition of the 'genocide' claim for Armenia's foreign policy and Russia's role in it. The Russian Empire first, and the Soviet Union then, acted as a saviour twice in this context. First, it was home to many Armenians fleeing the Ottoman Empire and seeking refuge in the Russian Empire. (Panossian 2006) Second, it allowed the first official commemoration of the so-called 'genocide' that took place in Soviet Yerevan in 1965. Since then, the event started to permeate eastern Armenian identity, becoming a real 'national' issue: 'The Genocide entered Soviet Armenian consciousness as a learnt injustice rather than as an experienced reality. The idea of being victims of the Turks did exist and was 'further nurtured by Soviet-inspired historiography'. (Panossian 2006: 192) It is true that this commemoration happened only fifty years after the events unfolded; however, the recognition had a highly symbolic significance, given the importance of the 'genocide' as a building block of Armenian identity – transversally uniting the Armenian diaspora.

The role of Russia as a saviour and harsh accuser of the so-called 'genocide' is crucially important and mentioned in many of my interviews. It almost seems that the image of Russia as a big brother defending Armenians vis-à-vis Azerbaijan is a continuation of the role that

[141] 'Erdogan: Russia Backing Armenia in Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict'. The Moscow Times. 7 April 2016 https://themoscowtimes.com/news/erdogan-russia-backing-armenia-in-nagorno-karabakh-conflict-52444

Imperial and Soviet Russia[142] played during and after the 'genocide'. Today, there is a wide perception among Armenians – in Gramscian terms, it is accepted as 'common sense' – that Russia continues to play this role. Russia officially recognised the 'genocide'[143] in 1995, 2005, and 2015, and Putin frequently takes part in the commemorations and makes declarations that tend to upset the Turkish authorities. For instance, in the commemoration marking the centenary of the 'genocide' in 2015, he declared: 'Russia felt these events as its own grief. Hundreds of thousands, even millions, of defenceless and homeless Armenians found shelter in the Russian Empire and were saved'[144]. He also recalled that it was Moscow that at the time had initiated a joint statement by Russia, France and Britain referring to the events as 'a crime against humanity and civilisation'. (Idiz 2015) Russia uses the genocide issue as a political asset in its relation with Turkey. Giragosian, for instance, sustains that the recent attempts by the Russian Duma to criminalise the genocide denial again should be seen in the context of the crisis generated by Turkey's downing of Russian warplane in 2015.[145] In other words, Russia used the issue as a political weapon against Turkey at a time when relations with Ankara were strained.

The origins of the 'Russia as a saviour' image spring from the Russian Empire era. For centuries, Armenians sought protection and independence through external powers (Panossian 2006). In the Ottoman Empire, some elite Armenian families obtained the trust of the Sultans and managed to achieve important positions in the Ottoman government and economy. However, it was the consolidation of Russian rule over Eastern Armenians which had a 'revolutionary impact' on Armenian society: 'From isolated, discrete communities

[142] Although Russia's image as a saviour received a blow in Soviet times due to the signing of the Kars Treaty with Turkey in 1921, in which the latter obtained most of the former Kars Oblast of the Russian Empire, including the highly symbolic Ararat (Ağrı) mountain. The Treaty was important to the Soviets for it restored a 'stable border between Kemalist Turkey and Bolshevik Russia'. (Vagnini 2012: 93)

[143] Alex Christoforou 'The list of 28 countries that have officially recognized the Armenian Genocide' The Duran, 24 April 2017 http://theduran.com/the-list-of-28-countries-that-have-officially-recognized-the-armenian-genocide/

[144] President of Russia, 'Vladimir Putin took part in memorial events commemorating 100 years since the Armenian genocide'. 24 April 2015, http://en.special.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/49332

[145] Giragosian, Richard. Director, Regional Studies Center (RSC). Face-to-face interview with the author. Yerevan, Armenia. February 2017

with loose allegiance to the national church as their spiritual authority, the Armenians of the Russian Empire had now a single state authority over them and a closer association with the head of the national church, now living within the empire'. (Suny 1997: 115) Peter the Great started granting economic privileges and military exemption to Armenians in an attempt to attract them to Russia. At home, Armenians were given a degree of autonomy in cultural and religious matters and therefore could easily maintain their distinct communal identity, despite the Russian state administrative centralisation and integration efforts. (Panossian 2006) The degree of autonomy varied depending on which Russian Tzar was ruling, but starting from 1836 relations between the Empire's institutions and Armenian territories were formalised in the *Polozhenie* decree, which granted the Church a 'nominal degree of self-government', recognised the specificity of Armenian Christianity and gave Armenians freedom of worship. The church was also given rights regarding education and land ownership, and was exempted from taxation, and allowed ownership of land for income. (Panossian 2006, Suny 1997) Hence, the *Polozhenie* provided the basis for a friendly and cooperative relationship[146] between the Armenian Apostolic church and the Russian state until the end of the Russian Empire.

It is important to stress the significance of the religious factor, due to the role of the Armenian Church both as a shaper and 'glue' for the Armenian identity. 'Religious solidarity' drove Russo-Armenian relations in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and 'from the early adoption of Christianity by the two nations, in 301 by Armenians and 988 by Russians, the links between the Armenian Apostolic and the Russian Orthodox churches remained strong'. (Riegg 2015: 5) Armenian nationalists built their Russophile discourse by the old Christian view that the Orthodox Russians were the 'natural allies and defenders of the Armenians'. (Panossian 2006: 192) The majority of my interviewees indeed mentioned 'religious affinity' as a historically powerful driver of Armenian-Russian relations. Not only were Christian Russians seen as the lesser evil, but they were potential 'liberators' from the 'Muslim yoke'. Religious solidarity and political loyalty, due to expectations of high future returns, led Armenians forces to take part in Russian military operations on various occasions eagerly. For instance, in a 1917 article, the Armenian intellectual Chopanian (quoted in Panossian 2006: 192) argued that Russia was Armenians' 'primary protector'. If victorious in the WWI it would, along with the allies, reward Armenia with self-rule. Four

[146] With the notable exception of the period 1903-1905, which saw the suspension of the Polozhenie and the intensification of Russification efforts by the Tzar Nicholas II.

years later, after the Sovietization of Armenia, independent Armenia's ambassador to the United States, Armen Garo (quoted in Mirzoyan 2010: 24), still maintained:

> Without Russia's active assistance, we will not have the opportunity to even half-way realize our national ideal: to have our own homeland, independent or even semi-independent, where our people will have the chance to live and work, away from the Turkish sword. From this perspective, our 'red brothers' in Yerevan are standing on a more realistic ground.

These hopes were often frustrated, but Russophilia persisted among many Armenian nationalists, during both imperial and Soviet times.

Economy-wise, with the relative security and stability provided by the Russian Empire first, then by the USSR, the Armenians knew moderate prosperity. For instance, Soviet Armenia went through a process of economic and social modernisation like the rest of the Soviet Union, growing at a 'respectable rate of industrial and agricultural development', sometimes even at a 'faster rate after 1950 that the USSR as a whole'. (Suny 1993: 183) However, Armenians were usually migrating to Russia to fulfil their economic aspirations. The urbanisation and modernisation process started during the Russian Empire, but outside Armenia proper: 'the modernisation experience was once again diaspora-based, albeit relatively close to the homeland'. (Panossian 2006: 124) Over the centuries, Russia confirmed its image as a powerful and relatively rich neighbour, where Armenians could seek refuge in dangerous times, but also migrate to in the search for better economic possibilities. Indeed, they gained a reputation for 'skilled merchants', which is how Russians stereotypically see Armenians, according to my interviewees.

The prospects of economic gains and career advancement have incentivised the study of Russian among Armenians for centuries. Since the middle of the nineteenth century, the prospering Armenian bourgeoisie had become loyal supporters of Russian rule; as a result, 'many Russified their names, sent their children to Russian schools, and tried to adopt the cultural patterns of the master nationality'. (Suny 1997: 114) This Russophilia derived by the firm belief that Armenian aspirations and Russian state interests coincide and seemed to be the perfect complement to Armenia's European aspirations, too. As Richard Suny (1997: 126) puts it, 'The Armenian middle class and many intellectuals believed that their welfare was best served by working within the tsarist system. (…) Russian education and access to

Europe seemed to promise a future of great enlightenment and culture'. During the Soviet years, Russian was not as widely spoken as Armenian in quantitative terms, but it was the regional *lingua franca*: the academic and artistic world, alongside the Armenian Soviet *intelligentsia* and the bureaucracy, spoke it fluently. It was a matter of social status: 'Knowing Russian in those days meant excellence, and somehow made it possible to exercise power over those who either did not know or had poor proficiency of the Russian language'. (Badalov 2013) Hence, also in the USSR it was common sense that knowing the Russian language was beneficial, enhancing a person's social prestige. This common sense persists today, as highlighted in the previous section.

After the fall of the USSR, many post-Soviet countries reacted harshly toward the former colonisers, by closing Russian schools or converting them to national schools, and promoting the local language and culture. Armenia was no exception. The decline in the study of Russian indeed started in 1993, due to a law on language, which called for the exclusive use of Armenian for instruction at educational institutions in the country. However, in the late 1990s, the Armenian government adopted the concept 'The Russian Language in the Educational System and Socio-cultural Life of the Republic of Armenia', followed by other statements and bilateral initiatives to promote the teaching of Russian in schools, in recognition of the status of Russian as a language of interethnic communication. (Berezovskaya 2009) The main driver for the study of Russian in Armenia was – and still is – the attractiveness of Russia as a potential destination for Armenia labour migrants. Some of my interviewees also highlight the cultural attractiveness of Russian film and music industry[147] or the prestige of Russian universities, where high-level Armenian state officials studied.[148]

This timeline of events shows that the roots of this image of Russia as a powerful and benevolent state – acting as a saviour first, a 'big brother' then – date back to the USSR and the Russian Empire. This image, in turn, builds on Russia's image as a conservative power,

[147] Geghamyan, Varuzhan. President of Armenian National Cultural Autonomy of St Petersburg. Face-to-face interview with the author. St Petersburg, May 2016. Follow up: Yerevan, Armenia. February 2017

[148] Isachenko, Tatiana, Prof. of International Economic Relations and Foreign Economic Relations, MGIMO University. Expert, RIAC. Face-to-face interview with the author. Moscow, Russia. May 2016

given the relevance of the religious factor (a common Christian identity against the Muslim 'other') in Russia-Armenia relations. Russia's role is now widely accepted as common sense among Armenia's elites, as my interviews suggest, and society alike. It is a keystone of the causal mechanism explaining why Armenia joined the EEU, outlined in the following section.

5.3. Constructing the causal mechanism

This section builds on the two chains of events outlined in the previous sections to present the causal mechanism explaining the selected outcome (Armenian government's decision of joining the Russia-led EEU). It is possible to imagine the causal mechanism as a machine. (Beach and Pedersen: 30) Its different parts are insufficient but necessary parts of an overall mechanism, that is, none of the parts can produce the outcome by itself, but only when it functions together with other parts of the machine. A mechanism constructs reasons for people to behave in a certain way. Written texts (official translations of speeches of Armenian politicians, plus press articles in English) and face-to-face interviews check and support my arguments.

The content of the causal mechanism varies depending on the type of theoretical explanation. The section draws upon Parsons' logics of explanation. Parsons (2007: 5) distinguishes between 'general' and 'particular' logics of explanation. While the former can be formulated in law-like regularities, the latter – adopted in this thesis – explains certain actions as the result of earlier contingent developments. Parsons also lists (2007: 14) four types of explanation within the social sciences: structural, institutional, ideational, and psychological. Structural claims explain what people do as a function of their position vis-à-vis exogenously given 'material' structures like geography, wealth or physical power distribution. Institutional claims explain what people do as a function of their position within human-made organisations and rules (implying 'path-dependent' processes). Ideational claims explain what people do as a function of the cognitive and/or affective elements that organise their thinking, and see these elements as created by certain historical groups of people.

Psychological claims also explain what people do as a function of the cognitive, affective, or instinctual elements that organise their thinking, but see these elements as generally applicable across humankind. While drawing on Parsons' work, I also argue that to achieve a comprehensive and wide-ranging explanation, applying a single logic is not enough: in fact, an eclectic approach is needed to fully grasp the reasons behind Armenia's choice to join the EEU over the AA with the EU. An eclectic approach responds to the need of holding a holistic view on soft power, which does not separate it strictly from its hard power components. Building on the temporal chains of events outlined in the previous section and on the results of my fieldwork in Russia and Armenia, I propose a threefold causal mechanism, whose parts respond to structural, institutional and ideational logics.

The first part of the causal mechanism is structural: it relates to the material constraints Armenia faces: it shows how exogenous constraints dictated by a given material structure determined the Armenian government's preferences. Starting with the very geographical position of Armenia is necessary. With no access to the sea and surrounded by its most bitter enemies (Turkey and Azerbaijan), Armenia finds itself in a geographic landlock. The previous section gave a historical overview of how this affected Armenia's identity and preferences: Turkey and Azerbaijan constituted the 'enemy other', against which Armenian local and diasporic communities, leaders and politicians, cemented their sense of group identity. Even today, enmity with Turkey contributed to nurturing the feeling that Armenia is geographically landlocked. For instance, after the outbreak of hostilities in Nagorno-Karabakh in April 2016, Turkish President Erdoğan released provocative statements such as the prediction that the breakaway region would one day 'return' to its owner. (Cole 2016) At the same time, their presence justified Russia's image as 'big brother' and 'saviour', ultimately enabling the ideational part of the causal mechanism, which is detailed below in this section. Relations with Tbilisi are relatively stable, and crucial since the land connection with Europe and access to Black Sea ports is only possible through Georgia. However, Georgia is politically closer to Azerbaijan and its key ally, Turkey. The three support each other diplomatically and enjoy close economic ties. (Cecire 2017) Turkey has been Georgia's largest trade partner by volume for years; Azerbaijan supplies most of the country's gas; the three operate gas and oil pipelines together. Recently, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Turkey have launched a railway connecting the three countries, establishing a link between Europe and China that bypasses Russia and Armenia. Furthermore, Georgia is a member of Organization for Democracy and Economic Development (GUAM) - a regional organisation involving

Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, and Moldova that excluded Armenia. Georgia supports resolution of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict within Azerbaijan's territorial integrity, although Armenia avoided taking a strong stance in Georgia's frozen conflict and has not formally recognised the Russian-backed breakaway republics of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Former Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili even stated that 'whoever opposes Azerbaijan' is Georgia's 'enemy'[149]. Finally, it is also worth noting that during the 2008 war between Russia and Georgia, Armenia critically experienced the 'landlock feeling', since its main trade route, Georgia, was cut off. As for Iran, relations have been relatively good for decades. Both countries have a solid trade, energy and tourism ties. Energy relations are of particular importance to Armenia; the country currently imports nearly all of its energy from Russia, which aborted Armenia's attempt to reduce energy dependence on Moscow through the Iran-Armenia Gas Pipeline, as mentioned in the previous section. Furthermore, the economic sanctions that the international community imposed against the Islamic Republic until January 2016 badly affected its economic capacity, reducing Iran's attractiveness and importance as a trade partner for Armenia. The positive effects of the Nuclear Deal with Iran included the end of the political and economic isolation of Iran, but while many smaller trade restrictions are still in place, the lifting of the sanctions could also push Iran to look at other economic partners, which are more attractive than Yerevan.

Hence, confronted with the need to choose sides between Russia and the EU, Armenia aligned with the former, due to the economic and energy dependence from Russia; in turn, this dependence is dictated by Armenia's structural characteristics, including the geographic landlock and by the lack of energy resources. Structural factors constitute the first and prominent part of the causal mechanism explaining why the South Caucasian country chose the EEU.

The second part of the causal mechanism responds to Parsons' institutional logic. Unlike structural factors, institutional ones depend on human-made, hence modifiable, institutions. The Armenian President explicitly declared that the EEU membership was a natural consequence of Armenia's membership in the CIS and CSTO. (President of the Republic of Armenia 2013) Many of my interviews highlight that the decision was perceived as 'natural' – 'common sense – also by the majority of the Armenian population, in light of both

[149] Trend News Agency, 'Georgia supports resolution of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict within Azerbaijan's territorial integrity', 28 August 2011 http://en.trend.az/azerbaijan/karabakh/1924105.html

economic and security factors. The economic dimension is very strong, because Russia has a prominent role in the EEU and, in turn, Yerevan has very strong trade and energy links with Moscow. Russia's role is the main incentive (or disincentive, due to the ongoing financial crisis) for other countries to join the EEU. The organisation started to function is 2015, but the first idea was proposed back in 1994 by the President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev during a speech at Moscow State University. (Libman and Vinokurov, 2012: 220) That proposal was not fully developed further. Yet, it is remarkable that that desire to pursue integration was expressed so early by a non-Russian leader. In the words of Andrei Vaganov, Secretary of the Economic and Finance Commission of the CIS Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, 'within the first three years after the collapse of the USSR, everybody understood that our economies were so interrelated to the extent that people were not afraid of the word "union" again'.[150] For the Armenian economy, the links with Russia has historically been - and still are today - essential.

However, due to the crucial importance that security has for Armenia's politics, it is the security dimension that made a difference. Especially in light of the formal mutual defence obligations that Russia has in the framework of the CSTO, Armenia's CSTO membership was perceived as factor dramatically limiting the set of choices having Armenia. In other words, there was consensus over the fact that membership in the CSTO would 'naturally' lead to membership in the EEU. Despite some past and very recent setbacks, many Armenians still see Russia as the only foreign power able and willing defending them vis-à-vis Azerbaijan and Turkey, also thanks to the Russian military base in Gyumri. Russian politicians keep perpetuating the idea that the current situation is the only viable option. In the words of Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev:

> Russia is ready to continue to play a mediating role in the OSCE Minsk Group and to use our powers under the prescribed procedures. There is no alternative to the mechanism that exists; its powers are enshrined decisions of the United Nations Security Council and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.[151]

[150] Vaganov, Andrei Aleksandrovich, representative from the Interparlamentary Assembly of CIS. Face-to- face interview with the author. St Petersburg, Russia. June 2016

[151] The Government of the Republic of Armenia (2016). 'Armenian, Russian Prime Ministers Make Concluding Statements on Talks Outcome, http://www.gov.am/en/news/item/8370/

Although there is no legal link between them, the EEU is indeed perceived by many as a continuation of the CSTO, a 'natural' choice: as one of my interviewees said, 'Although the military is not directly related with the EEU, we perceive it as the sister organisation of CSTO'.[152] In this part of the mechanism, it is possible to see path-dependence processes at work, since 'unintended consequences of man-made organisations and rules altered the shape of the obstacle course, and with it, people's later choices'. (Parsons 2007: 18) Therefore, past institutional patterns restricted successive ones by presenting the EEU as a 'natural' choice, that is Gramscian 'common sense'. This perception speaks to the definition of soft power adopted in this thesis, according to soft power is at play when target audiences perceive some policies or worldviews spread by the power-projecting country as 'natural'.

The third and last part of the mechanism is the ideational one, which concerns how the adoption of certain ideational elements—culture, norms, ideas, practices—later led people to interpret their environment and 'interests' in certain ways. (Parsons 2007: 19) This part is the one that speaks most to Russia's soft power, which I operationalise through soft power narratives. In this case-study the 'big brother' narrative is, by far, the most prominent one, followed by 'Russia as a conservative power'. Emulated practices of institutionalised corruption form also part of the ideational part of the mechanism.

The previous section's historical analysis already described how Russia has been performing the role of Armenia's 'big brother' and even 'saviour' throughout the last two centuries. Even if today's Armenia is an independent state, this narrative has still great relevance, and it is possible to trace it among the elites and in some segments of Armenian society. Nowadays, Armenia has still an 'emotional approach towards Russia due to its history of ethnic cleansing'. [153] Russia is seen as a 'homeland, after centuries of settlement process'.[154] In light of this, Russia can either be seen as a big brother, saviour or as the 'lesser evil', but it

[152] Avetikyan, Gevorg. IMARES Program Associate Director, Professor, European University at St. Petersburg. Face-to- face interview with the author. St Petersburg, Russia. April 2016

[153] Shakhnazaryan, Nona. Research Fellow, Centre for Independent Social Research (CISR), StP. Skype interview, July 2016.

[154] Sherov-Ignatiev, Vladimir G., Associate Professor, SPbSU, Face-to- face interview with the author. St Petersburg, Russia. April 2016

is always seen positively compared it to Azerbaijan and Turkey. Avetikyan explains this perception in a very clear manner:

> In the 19th Century, it was the Russian Empire that saved us from the Muslims; now they keep protecting us. We understand that Russia is not an ideal friend, but it *is* better and doesn't slaughter Armenians! So there is a historical reason why we needed Russia for our own security and existence. Culturally, I don't think Armenians perceive Russians as closer to them than many Europeans, for example, the Greeks. However, given that Greece is part of the EU, there would be no historical ground for the 'salvation' narrative. (...) In this narrative, if there is a major saviour for the Armenians, that is Russia.[155]

The religious link historically informing the Russian-Armenian relations is still vivid today. Ruben Shugarian, former Deputy Foreign Minister and now Armenian Ambassador to the US, describes his country's ties with Russia as 'something innate and natural for all Armenians, particularly those residing on the territory of the Republic and the CIS. Its components are common cultural-spiritual values and traditional perception of Russia as the most significant regional ally and protector of Armenia's security'. (Shugarian in Mirzoyan 2010: 21) This traditional cultural-spiritual link puts Russians in the position of being a 'natural' ally of Armenians.

The Russian culture, and especially language is another powerful vector of Russian influence, amplifying the sense of closeness between Russia and Armenia also at an individual level. Varuzhan Geghamyan, an Armenian academic and prominent member of the Armenian National-Cultural Autonomy of Saint Petersburg, the biggest diasporic organisation in the area, puts it in these terms:

> when you share the language, even you don't want it, you still have this connection. And that brings you much closer to the people. (...) We read philosophy and literature - not the whole but at least 50% - in Russian because we haven't enough resources to translate everything in Armenian. (...) And of course, we have a very strong diaspora here in Russia, which is a very important thing. We feel a very close connection. My generation for example - the 90s - was more familiar with inner Russia's socio-cultural dynamics than [it was with] Georgia and Iran, which are our neighbours. But we

[155] Avetikyan, Gevorg. IMARES Program Associate Director, Professor, European University at St. Petersburg. Face-to- face interview with the author. St Petersburg, Russia. April 2016

> know the songs the people sing here [in Russia], we know the jokes the people do here. Because of the television, we have this strong connection. Now the situation is much different, but my generation, which is now responsible for the decision making, and the older generation still have that.[156]

Aghasi Yenokyan, editor-in-chief of *1in.am*, one of Armenia's leading news agencies, underscores the key role of Russian media, especially television: 'Russia has really strong media. There are at least four TV channels on air, lots of news programmes. Besides, the Armenian media is very apolitical, so if a person wants to know about politics and news, they have to go to Russian media'.[157] The elderly and the rural population especially watch Russian TV programmes, in part due to the lack of alternatives, and this is likely to filter their opinions on many topics. Giragosian partly confirms this but also warns that Russian TV is likely to limit to influencing Armenians' opinions only about Ukraine and Crimea and the world perspective in general, but much less about anything that affects them directly.[158] Furthermore, the younger urban generations rely more and more on the internet, which remains relatively free in the country.

In a country where security concerns top the agenda, Russia's role as a security provider is an important source of both soft and hard power. In the past, Russian rule had a contradictory effect on Armenians: on the one hand, it represented for many a gateway to the west; on the other hand, the full power of the Russian state was directed to 'creating a conservative mentality, support for the status quo, and acceptance of Armenian subordination to Russian authority'. (Suny 1997: 116) During the Soviet Union, national specificity and symbolic celebrations, such as the commemoration of the so-called 'genocide', were moderately supported, but in the framework of a political and administrative structure that gave Russia a prominent role. In today's sovereign Armenia, Russia's narrative and image of a big brother might be weaker, but several opinion polls

[156] Geghamyan, Varuzhan. President of Armenian National Cultural Autonomy of St Petersburg. Face-to-face interview with the author. St Petersburg, May 2016. Follow up: Yerevan, Armenia. February 2017

[157] Yenokyan, Aghasi, founder of the Armenian Centre for Political and International Studies, editor-in-chief of the news agency 1in.am. Face-to-face interview with the author. Yerevan, Armenia. February 2017

[158] Giragosian, Richard. Director, Regional Studies Center (RSC). Face-to-face interview with the author. Yerevan, Armenia. February 2017

confirm it was still very strong around the time of the outcome.[159] This image appeals to three group in particular: Armenian ruling elites, who also use this connection with Russia to uphold their power; people in Armenia who are nostalgic of the Soviet Union; Armenians who migrated or plan to migrate to Russia, fleeing persecutions (in the past) or seeking better economic opportunities. According to Avetikyan,

> Armenian communities in Russia are playing this outdated big brother thing. A clear example is the march on 9 May [in St Petersburg]. I was looking at the poster of the Armenian regiment today, and it said: "We were and we will always be together with the Russians" [*вместе с русскими мы были и будем*]. You wouldn't see such thing in Armenia.[160]

This attitude suggests that for some Armenians, close links – or even dependence on – Russia is ineluctable. The majority of my interviewees highlight the importance of the Armenian diaspora in Russia, not only in financial terms, but also in political ones, both in Moscow and Yerevan. For instance, the director of the prestigious Hermitage Museum in St Petersburg is Armenian. The father of Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov was an ethnic Armenian living in Tbilisi, something that Lavrov has stressed on some occasions to highlight his personal links to Armenia. (Petróvskaya 2013) Therefore, not only do the Armenian diaspora have political power in their home country due to their economic power, but they have an impact on their host country, too.

Another element of the ideational part of the causal mechanism relates to shared practices. Even corruption, although condemned rhetorically, can convert itself in an actual asset of Russia's soft power. Both high- and low-level corruption is widespread in Armenia: in Transparency International's 2017 Corruption Perception Index, Armenia ranks 107th among 180 countries.[161] For Yenokyan, maintaining a corrupt system in place 'is a survival matter. (...) For political elites, it is easier to work with corrupt politicians (...) to maintain the

[159] For a comprehensive public opinion review, see RFE/RL, 'Global Poll Finds Strong Pro-Russian Sentiment In Armenia', 9 August 2011, https://www.rferl.org/a/pro_russia_sentiment_in_armenia/24291052.html

[160] Avetikyan, Gevorg. IMARES Program Associate Director, Professor, European University at St. Petersburg. Face-to- face interview with the author. St Petersburg, Russia. April 2016

[161] Transparency International, Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2017. https://transparency.am/en/cpi

kompromat [compromising material, in Russian компромат], while of course it is difficult to work under EU pressure, which is against corruption and pro-democracy.'[162] Many of my interviewees agree. Gegam Bagdasaryan, President of Stepanakert Press Club and Editor-in-chief of analytical monthly 'Analyticon', states: 'The Russian model is based on corruption, and it is the best for the existing elites in Armenia. The ways of doing business they are used to are pretty much impossible in Europe, whereas in Russia and Armenia corruption is the base of the economy.'[163] Perhaps surprisingly, corruption does not only allure political elites, but also small and medium enterprises owners, who are not oligarchs and would, therefore, benefit from an open and transparent system.[164] For many citizens, access to public resources such as healthcare, employment is scarce and depends on the closeness to certain elites:

> Entrenched corruption, strong patronage networks, a lack of clear separation between private enterprise and public office, as well as the overlap between political and business are (…) made worse by and, at the same time, feed a pervasive political apathy and cynicism on the part of citizens, who do not see an impactful role for themselves in the fight against corruption (Wickberg 2015).

In this context, many citizens may start regarding low-level corruption as part of 'the rules of the game' in the society to 'get things done'. (Popovikj 2018) According to Giragosian's experience:

> After 2013, we had a number of focus groups exploring the reaction [to Armenia joining the EEU]. One of the key cohorts of the focus groups was small and medium enterprises. (...) The reaction surprised us: over 90% expressed a very positive opinion on the decision to move away from the AA. The majority of these business owners said: "we never understood what it takes to penetrate the European market, no one has ever explained the practical benefits of the DCFTA, but this [the EEU] is going

[162] Yenokyan, Aghasi, founder of the Armenian Centre for Political and International Studies, editor-in-chief of the news agency 1in.am. Face-to-face interview with the author. Yerevan, Armenia. February 2017

[163] Bagdasaryan, Gegam. President of Stepanakert Press Club and Editor-in-chief of analytical monthly 'Analyticon', Face-to-face interview with the author. Yerevan, Armenia. February 2017

[164] Giragosian, Richard. Director, Regional Studies Center (RSC). Face-to-face interview with the author. Yerevan, Armenia. February 2017

> towards what we are used to, namely the Russian rule set that we are comfortable with". It's the fear of the unknown in terms of dealing with Brussels. (...) In dealing with Russia, we know to whom we should pay the bribes.[165]

This quote seems to confirm the view of Becker et al. (2009), who claim that increased economic integration among countries makes it easier for corrupt behaviours to spread out due to learning and peer-group behaviour. Armen Poghosyan, Deputy Director of the Representative Office of the Eurasian Development Bank in Yerevan, shares this view. He contraposes 'simple' and 'complex' ways of navigating the system: the former is pursuing a personal relation with the like-minded EEU inspectors, who can be bribed; the latter is 'dealing with papers' and 'wasting money on lawyers' to survive in the EU market.[166] Even though this mentality is widespread in the Post-Soviet space, Mariam Matevosyan, Program Coordinator at Open Society Foundations Armenia, claims that the current corrupt system in Armenia 'has been imported from Russia' starting from the early 2000s.[167] The majority of my interviewees share the idea that Russia supports and foments corruption at all levels of society; my analysis suggests that sometimes this phenomenon is not perceived negatively by the elites and the population, but only as the ordinary state of things – i.e., common sense.

The last element of the ideational part of the mechanism has to do with the 'Russia as a conservative power' narrative. Socially conservative values are very widespread within the Armenian society. Many opinion polls on social issues such as gender equality and LGBT rights make the Armenian conservativism patent. Armen Poghosyan, for instance, expresses highly patriarchal views in my interview: 'Armenian men are more conservative even than their Georgian neighbours. The Armenian family is an institution, with established roles. Europeans are too liberal, and they are trying to subvert these roles by changing the position of Armenian women in the family and society'.[168] These conservative values are certainly a

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[165] Giragosian, Richard. Director, Regional Studies Center (RSC). Face-to-face interview with the author. Yerevan, Armenia. February 2017

[166] Poghosyan, Armen. Deputy Director of the Representative Office of the Eurasian Development Bank in Yerevan. Face-to-face interview with the author. Yerevan, Armenia. February 2017

[167] Mariam Matevosyan, Policy Fellowship and Program Coordinator at Open Society Foundations, Armenia. Face-to-face interview with the author. Yerevan, Armenia. February 2017

grassroots phenomenon, but it is equally true that the Armenian and the Russian governments try to foster and exploit them politically.

Alen Shadunts, a Programme Coordinator at Open Society Foundations Armenia, says that government-organized non-governmental organizations (GONGOs) have been created to protect the Armenian society from 'European rotten values' and disrupt the work of liberal local and international NGOs; he also maintains that Russia contributes directly to the clampdown on liberal groups and initiatives.[169] For instance, he recalls how, at the end of 2016, the Armenian government froze a bill proposal against domestic violence after a Russian-sponsored organisation called a press conference and denounced the bill to be sabotaging Armenia's national heritage and values, which revolve around the idea of traditional family.[170] In her latest publication, one of my interviewees directly connects the current wave of Anti-genderism in Armenia with Russian soft power influences: after 2013, 'conservative elements in Armenia, which already had leanings toward traditional gender roles and identities, began to strongly claim that gender discussions are the product of the Western values agenda and therefore correlate with moral and demographic decline'. (Shahnazarian 2017:1) This quote reflects the widespread idea that Western influences are detrimental to Armenia and play into the hands of its enemies, making the country weaker and more vulnerable by furthering societal cleavages.

The ideational part of the mechanism, hence, consists mainly of the idea that Russia is the 'saviour' of Armenians, due to a strong historical, religious (Christian) and cultural affinity, including shared conservatism. Shared practices of corruption also contribute to explain why the elites and public supported the idea of doing business with the like-minded Russians within the Eurasian Economic Union to the detriment of the EU's Association Agreement. The ideational part is a necessary, yet insufficient condition: it explains Armenia's decision to join the EEU only together with the structural and institutional parts. However, it is the part that sheds light the most on Russian soft power's role in influencing the outcome, given the large use of two of Russia's soft power narratives – Russia as a big brother and as a

[168] Poghosyan, Armen. Deputy Director of the Representative Office of the Eurasian Development Bank in Yerevan. Face-to-face interview with the author. Yerevan, Armenia. February 2017

[169] Shadunts, Alen. Program Coordinator; at Open Society Foundations, Armenia. Face-to-face interview with the author. Yerevan, Armenia. February 2017

[170] Ibid.

conservative power – which, according to my analysis, are widely accepted and endorsed by Armenian elites.

5.4. Conclusion

This chapter has constructed a comprehensive and eclectic causal mechanism that explains the Armenian government's choice to join the EEU instead of signing the AA with the EU, tracing in particular how Russia's soft power influenced the outcome. The mechanism is comprehensive because it traces the role and image of Russia back to the Imperial times to formulate a concise yet wide-ranging account of its relation with Armenia. The mechanism is also eclectic, for it draws upon three different logics of explanation, to which the three different parts of the mechanism refer: structural, institutional and ideational.

The analysis of this case study confirms the close link between hard and soft power highlighted in the previous chapters of the thesis: at times, hard and soft power are intertwined, to the extent that it is difficult to tell one from the other. The Armenian case demonstrates it clearly: the attractiveness of Russia depends on its economic and, to a greater extent, military might, both classical elements of hard power. In the case of Armenia, the 'big brother' narrative outlined in the previous chapter, takes the contours of a 'saviour' narrative. Its origin lies in the Russian Empire's protection of Christian Armenia vis-à-vis the 'other', that is, the Muslim Ottoman Empire. Likewise, it was within the Soviet Union that Armenians experienced their first viable national experiment, while today Russia is still Armenia's main protector vis-à-vis Azerbaijan.

The second important point is that the role of Turkey still impacts Armenia's foreign policy decisions greatly. The majority of my interviewees touched upon different aspects of the enmity between Turkey and Armenia, from the litigation on the so-called 'genocide' to Turkey's support to Azerbaijan in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the trade disruptions caused by the closure of the border. Some gestures on the part of the JDP – including attempts of opening up the border, repair of the Armenian churches in Turkey – did not achieve the formal normalisation of relations, which remain strained (Hill, Kirişci, and

Moffatt 2015). The AA with the EU lacked any security provisions that could give Armenia any short-term leverage vis-à-vis Turkey and Azerbaijan. The EEU membership, on the other hand, was perceived as a 'natural' consequence of Armenia's CSTO membership. Moscow is aware that the bad relations between Yerevan and Ankara are critical in helping maintain Russia's influence. An open and clear process of normalisation of Turkish-Armenian relations would reduce Russia's leverage, and Putin is unlikely to support it.

The third point is Russia's soft power – a combination of the 'big brother'/'saviour' narrative, defence of conservatism and perpetuation of corruption practices – appeals to Armenian political elites and segments of society refractory to change and, in this sense, it aims at freezing the status quo. While the thesis focuses on the elites, it is interesting to note some changes at the society level. Pro-Russian attitudes, so rooted in Armenian nationalism throughout the history, has become less prominent lately, and are contested by a relatively small, but increasing part of the society. If nostalgics of the Soviet Union and the Armenian communities in Russia ('the eastern diaspora') especially hold on to the 'big brother' narrative, in today's Armenia, 'there's a kind of proto-civil society, which is definitely against the idea of having a big brother, regardless of who it might be'. (Avetikyan 2016) This phenomenon depends on several factors: on the one hand, the attractiveness of competing for development and governmental models, such as the EU's, based on democracy, the rule of law and fight against corruption.

On the other hand, and to a greater extent, the financial crisis facing Russia and its less pro-active (i.e., less pro-Armenia) role during the 2016 recrudescence of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict cause decreasing pro-Russian attitudes. Decreasing support for Russia might not be immediately evident at the level of ruling elites. However, it can be noticed at the societal level. For example, the EDB Barometer 2016 marked the greater decrease in public support in the post-Soviet area for Eurasian integration precisely in Armenia, where support fell by 10 per cent points compared to 2015 (from 56% to 46%).[171]

Hence, recent developments point to a decreasing influence of Russia's soft power and its image of a powerful 'big brother' in Armenia. Still, Russia still largely maintains its power to the extent that political elites still prefer the Russian model and no international actor is

[171] Eurasian Development Bank, 'EDB Integration Barometer – 2016'. 26 October 2016 https://eabr.org/en/analytics/integration-research/cii-reports/integratsionnyy-barometr-eabr-2016/

willing and able to ‘protect’ Armenia vis-à-vis Azerbaijan and Turkey. Things thus standing, no actor today could fill a potential vacuum which can be left by Moscow, both regarding hard and soft power.

CHAPTER 6

THE SUSPENSION OF THE 2014 PEACE TALKS IN CYPRUS: EXPLAINING TURKEY'S ROLE VIS-À-VIS TRNC

This chapter explains why the 2014 round of reunification negotiations in Cyprus stalled, to empirically assess how and in what ways Turkey's soft power impacted the policy choices of TRNC. On 11 February 2014, Nicos Anastasiades, President of the Republic of Cyprus and Derviş Eroğlu, President of TRNC, issued a Joint Declaration[172], starting a new round of negotiations to settle the Cyprus dispute – that is, the partition of the island after the 1974 Turkish military operation. The Joint Declaration launched the talks between Anastasiades and Eroğlu, but these negotiations stalled again in October 2014. Specifically, my research questions are: why did that round of negotiations fail? How did Turkey influence that outcome, especially in terms of shaping TRNC's interests and negotiating position on that specific occasion? Answers to these questions are valuable in themselves, as they explain a key outcome in a decades-long reunification process. They also help improve the scholarly understanding of Turkish soft power and relations with TRNC at large. Indeed, while claims for the generalisability of the results of the study are limited, historically-informed and wide-ranging explanations, even if context-specific, can help enhance theory (George and Bennett 2005: 148).

This chapter shares many similar features with the chapter analysing Russia's soft power Armenia. First, both Armenia and TRNC represent relevant case studies bearing important policy implications for Turkey, Russia and the EU alike. For Turkey, TRNC is a domestically relevant issue because TRNC is inhabited mostly by ethnic Turks originating from Cyprus and Turkish nationals who now hold dual citizenship with the TRNC (Hatay 2017: 18) – contrary to Armenia, in which Russians minorities are not numerically relevant. It also has significant consequences for Turkish foreign policy, particularly in light of

[172] Joint Declaration by the Greek Cypriot leader, Mr Nicos Anastasiades, and the Turkish Cypriot leader, Mr Dervis Eroglu, on the re-launching of talks on the Cyprus problem (11 February 2014), available at the website of the Press and Information Office, Ministry of Interior, Republic of Cyprus https://www.pio.gov.cy/en/joint-declaration-by-the-g/c-leader,-mr-nicos-anastasiades,-and-the-t/c-leader,-mr-dervis-eroglu,-on-the-re-launching-of-talks-on-the-cyprus-problem-(11-february-2014).html

Ankara's material interests and status in the region. A crucial question is: how do changing political and economic domestic conditions in Turkey impact its relations with TRNC? Russia, on the other hand, has historically been active in Cyprus (Melakopides 2017) and has developed economic, trade, religious and cultural links with Greek Cypriots. What role does this relation play, directly or indirectly, on the reunification process between the Republic of Cyprus and the TRNC? Finally, the case study holds relevance to the EU, because TRNC is *de jure* part of the EU by being part of the Republic of Cyprus. What role does the EU play in the reunification efforts?

Methodologically, I follow the explaining-outcome process-tracing methodology outlined by Beach and Pedersen (2013). Similar to the previous case study, I also start from a specific political outcome and proceed backwards to trace the impact of Turkish soft power. I follow an inductive path, that is, I start from the outcome and proceed backwards examining events that may explain it, starting from more recent ones, which had a more direct impact, and continuing with events further in time that had a more indirect influence. The thesis' timeframe to study Turkish soft power is the government of the current President Erdoğan (2002 to date). However, to unpack the causal mechanism explaining this specific political outcome, I need to go further back in time to understand the deep implication of the relation between Turkey and TRNC. That is why I refer to historical events that may precede Erdoğan's government, to form a timeline connecting the outcome with other the 'landmark moments' that impacted the outcome directly or indirectly. In order to understand the evolution and impact of Turkey's soft power narrative and instruments in the TRNC, and how they overlap or collide with the ones spread by other relevant actors in the region – primarily the EU and Russia – I have conducted elite interviews with policy-makers, businesspeople, academics and prominent civil society actors in Ankara and Lefkoşa between March and November 2017.[173]

Similar to Russia in Armenia, Turkey has been acting as the primary security and economic provider for the TRNC, especially after the 1974 military operation. However, there is a substantial difference: Armenia is very much dependent on Russia economy and security-wise, but it is still a formally sovereign and internationally recognised state. The TRNC is not. Not only does Turkey contribute substantially to TRNC's economy and security, but it is the only country that diplomatically recognises it to date.

[173] For the complete list of interviews, please see List B in the Annex II.

Another difference from the previous case study is the type of outcome. In the previous case study, the issue analysed was one time-outcome, that is, the Armenian government's single, *ad hoc* foreign policy decision to join the Eurasian Economic Union, pondering its interests and constraints, such as other actors' incentives or pressure. In this case, the outcome is part of a larger process that cannot be analysed completely separately. In fact, this is a phase in years-long negotiations involving the Republic of Cyprus, the guarantor states (Turkey, Greece and the UK, as established by the constitution of 1960), as well as the EU and other minor actors acting 'behind the scenes' yet playing a relevant role (Russia). This chapter, while explaining the outcome and taking into account all the main actors involved, specifically focuses on the impact of Turkey's soft and hard power on TRNC policy choices. Similar to Russia in Armenia, Turkey enhances its soft power and influence also through its hard power – military presence, economic support to the TRNC budget and other elements detailed in the structural part of the causal mechanism.

The first section is a literature and interview review singling out the most widely mentioned reasons for the deadlock of the 2014 round of the reunification talks. Following that, I build two interrelated chains of notable events: one deals with recent events that might have impacted the outcome more directly; the other analyses earlier events shaping the Turkey-TRNC relations, and hence having a more indirect - but important - effect on the outcome.[174] Drawing on the temporal chains of events, I then explain the outcome through a three-fold causal mechanism, comprising a structural, institutional and ideational part. Finally, the conclusion sums up the arguments of the chapter and points to more recent developments potentially affecting relations between Turkey and TRNC in the short/medium-run.

6.1. Literature and interview review: why did the 2014 negotiation round fail?

On 11 February 2014, Nicos Anastasiades, President of Cyprus, and Derviş Eroğlu, President of TRNC, met under the auspices of the UN Secretary General's Good Offices mission and

[174] It is important to stress that my aim is not to comprehensively report and thoroughly describe all historic events happening in the considered periods of time. Nor do I want to establish a historical truth about issues that, to date, remain extremely sensitive and polarised. My goal is to see how Turkey reacted to specific events and circumstances and how its behaviour helped 1) impact the outcome, and 2) build or reinforce Ankara's narratives in TRNC.

released a joint statement after that. The statement was leading the way to a fresh round of negotiations between the Republic of Cyprus and TRNC to achieve a reunification settlement based on a bi-communal, bizonal federation with political equality, as set out in the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions and the High-Level Agreements. The statement reads:

> The status quo is unacceptable, and its prolongation will have negative consequences for the Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. The leaders affirmed that a settlement would have a positive impact on the entire region, while first and foremost benefiting Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots, (...) ensuring their common future in a united Cyprus within the European Union. The leaders expressed their determination to resume structured negotiations in a results-oriented manner. All unresolved core issues will be on the table and will be discussed interdependently. The leaders will aim to reach a settlement as soon as possible, and hold separate simultaneous referenda thereafter.[175]

Such a positive and proactive tone sparked the support of many actors having a high stake in the process. Former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon commended the Cypriot leaders for their 'commitment to resuming negotiations and for their hard work in the past months to reach what is an important statement of shared principles and an invaluable basis for renewed talks'[176]. The then UK Foreign Secretary William Hague declared in a statement: 'The Joint Declaration (...) makes clear the two leaders' determination to resume structured negotiations leading to a united Cyprus, and their intention to reach a settlement as soon as possible'.[177] The then President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso, and the then President of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy, issued a joint statement declaring 'its readiness to accommodate the terms of a settlement in line with the principles on which the Union is founded' and to 'step up its efforts to help the Turkish Cypriot Community

[175] UN Cyprus Talks. 11 February 2014 Joint Declaration on Cyprus. 11 February 2014. Available at: http://www.uncyprustalks.org/11-february-2014-joint-declaration-on-cyprus/

[176] United Nations Secretary-General. Statement by the Secretary-General on Cyprus.11 February 2014. Available at: https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2014-02-11/statement-secretary-general-cyprus

[177] UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office. Resumption of settlement talks in Cyprus. Written statement to Parliament by the Foreign Secretary William Hague. 12 February 2014. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/resumption-of-settlement-talks-in-cyprus

prepare for implementation of the *acquis'*.[178] However, despite the optimism caused by Anastasiades and Eroğlu's Joint Declaration, talks ran around again in October 2014. What is the causal mechanism that explains: a) the outcome (the halt of the negotiations); and b) the role of Turkey's soft and hard power in influencing TRNC's position in the negotiations?

Answering the first question requires some more background information on what triggered the 2014 round of negotiations. Formal talks under the auspices of the UN Secretary-General started on 21 March 2008, between the then neo-elected President of the Republic of Cyprus, Demetris Christofias, and Turkish Cypriot leader Mehmet Ali Talat. Since then, the two communities have been committing their efforts in achieving the establishment of a bizonal, bicommunal federation with political equality for both communities. They stopped in 2012 and started again in February 2014 until October 2014.[179] Between 2012 and 2013, some key events affected the preferences of the negotiating parties (especially the Republic of Cyprus). These events led to more favourable conditions to the resuming of reunification negotiations, which were stopped in 2012. Two key events happened in 2013 in the Republic of Cyprus. First, the election of President of the Republic of Cyprus in February 2013, was seen as more a moderate and called the chance of peace a 'win-win situation'[180]. Second, the banking collapse in 2012-2013[181] led to GDP contraction and high unemployment in the Republic of Cyprus, and reunification sparked hopes of economic recovery and growth. A 2014 PRIO study found that the economies in both parts of the island were currently significantly underperforming: in the years 2005-2012, growth in total factor productivity (TFP) – a

[178] European Commission. Statement from the European Union on the agreement reached by the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders on a joint declaration and on the resumption of the negotiations. 11 February 2014. Available at:
http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-14-103_en.htm

[179] The latest round began in May 2015 and stalled in July 2017.

[180] Helen Smith, 'High stakes as Greeks and Turks revive Cyprus peace talks' The Guardian, 10 February 2014
https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/feb/10/greeks-turks-cyprus-peace-talks-negotiation

[181] The 2008 financial crisis badly affected the economy of the Republic of Cyprus, also because of Nicosia's large exposure to Greek debt. In 2012, the GDP contracted by 2.3% and several rating agencies like Fitch downgraded the country. The Greek Cypriot state, unable to provide liquidity for its banks, was forced to apply to the European Support Mechanism and adopt a bailout plan involving severe austerity measures. For an analysis of the crisis, see George Koumoullis, 'Revisiting the 2013 banking crisis', Cyprus Mail, 22 October 2017, https://cyprus-mail.com/2017/10/22/revisiting-2013-banking-crisis/

measure of the long-term prospects for growth – was negative in the north, at -0.742% and barely positive in the south, at 0.008%. (Mullen, Apostolides and Besim 2014: 5) Both sides would economically benefit from the reunification, a 'peace dividend' triggered by what economists call the positive shock that would come from a settlement. Apart from the enhancement of trade – opening up the 74-million-people Turkish market to Greek Cypriots and the EU market of 500 million people to Turkish Cypriots – the authors of the study also mention the possible joint enjoyment of the benefits deriving from energy cooperation with Turkey. (Mullen et al. 2014: 6) The discovery of gas[182] in the eastern Mediterranean (in both Cypriot and Israeli waters) was a remarkable event. It was hailed as a game-changer and a potential catalyst for peace because, according to energy experts, the simplest way of getting that gas to European customers was through a pipeline through Turkey[183] and energy cooperation was the support to boost political one according to the liberal interdependence thinking.

In Turkey, the opening of Chapter 22 on Regional Policy, in 2013 – the first in three years – sparked a renewed interest in its EU accession process. Turkey's euro-enthusiasm (or lack of it) has important repercussions on the resolution of the Cyprus issue and vice versa. (International Crisis Group 2014: 12) Another relevant international factor was that the US under the then president Barack Obama, who publicly endorsed the joint declaration, showed some desire to engage in the talks. Whether Obama's 'sudden interest', as a prominent Turkish journalist defined it, was motivated by the possibility of energy cooperation or 'possibility for a success story' (Yinanç 2014), the prospect of US engagement also gave the talks momentum. Another external factor was the conflict in Ukraine and deterioration of the EU relations with Russia; those sparked hopes that the EU would invest on Eastern Mediterranean gas as a viable alternative to Russian gas, investing in parallel an increased amount of energy in the resolution of the long-standing Cyprus issue. (Stergiou 2016: 1)

[182] A few years back, there were essential discoveries of gas and oil reserves in the common Israeli and Cypriot waters (in Israel, the offshore Tamar field discovered in 2009 and Leviathan in 2010; in Cyprus, the offshore Aphrodite field discovered in 2011). The estimations for the amount of gas at that time in the respective fields gave the two countries the status of a world-class energy hub and led to a steady improvement of their bilateral relations. See Konstantinos Oikonomopoulos and Costis Stambolis, 'Hydrocarbon Exploration and Production in the East Mediterranean and the Adriatic Sea', Background Paper, Institute of Energy for South Eastern Europe, 2012, pp. 16–17.

[183] The Economist, 'A glimmer of hope', 15 February 2014
https://www.economist.com/news/europe/21596573-yet-another-round-talks-reunify-divided-island-begins-glimmer-hope

Some academic essays published after the discovery also point out how the gas reserves were perceived as a potential catalyst for peace. (Faustmann 2014; Gürel and Tzimitras 2014) The gas discovery also aroused popular excitement on both sides of the island. An opinion poll commissioned by Al Jazeera revealed that 59% of Greeks and 50% of Turks considered that the discovery of gas could help solve the Cyprus problem [184]. However, when asked about the 2014 peace talks, both sides were sceptical, with 74% of Greeks and 60% of Turks declaring that negotiations would fail. The popular wisdom proved to be right and, despite all the above-mentioned positive triggers and conditions, negotiations failed in October 2014.

What was supposed to give new impetus to reunification became yet another obstacle on the difficult path to peace: the gas turned into a problem that caused the suspension of the talks. Fearing to give too much leverage to Turkey in enhancing energy cooperation through a Cyprus-Turkey pipeline, the Greek Cypriots sought closer cooperation with Israel in order to balance Turkey planning to build a Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) terminal in Vasilikos in cooperation with Israel. (De Micco 2014) At the same time, they continued to sustain that the exploration and exploitation of natural gas was a sovereign right of the RoC and that cooperation with Turkey would only be possible after a solution to the Cyprus issue. Despite the vocal protests from Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots, the Republic of Cyprus position was that implementing its hydrocarbons development is not a bi-communal issue for the negotiations with the Turkish Cypriots. (Gürel and Tzimitras 2014: 87) In fact, whereas Turkey has many intricate legal claims regarding the status of Cyprus and its Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) and is not a signatory to the 1982 Law of the Sea Convention, most states of the international community regard RoC's rights a part of the customary international law. (Kaymak 2012: 18) Gürel and Tzimitras (2014) sum up the stakes for the Republic of Cyprus, for whom hydrocarbons development became the 'vehicle for the promotion of the national cause against Turkey; the way out of the economic crisis; the reaffirmation of the Republic of Cyprus legitimacy; the means of cementing of bilateral relations with the number of states; and the securing of an economical, political, and strategically viable future'. (Gürel and Tzimitras 2014: 84) Therefore, why offering the prospect of revenue-sharing to TRNC on a population-ratio basis, the RoC essentially considered the gas issue as an independent from the peace process (Gürel 2014: 44).

[184] Greek reporter. 'Al Jazeera Cyprus Poll Shows a Divided Island 40 Years On'. 21 Jul 21, 2014 http://greece.greekreporter.com/2014/07/21/cyprus-poll-shows-a-divided-island-40-years-on/

On its part, TRNC objects to the RoC's rights in the maritime zones, including deals with third countries and international companies for joint development of resources and exploration licences. The logic underpinning the Turkish Cypriot attitude is the claim that 'by virtue of the 1960 Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus two equal constituent communities exist and so any unilateral Greek Cypriot action in this field creates *faits accomplis* and runs counter to the legitimate rights and interests of the Turkish Cypriots'. (Stergiou 2016: 2) According to businessman and Turkish Cypriot negotiator Ergün Olgun[185], the Turkish Cypriots offered three possible solutions to solve this divisive issue. The first involved a halt in all activities related to hydrocarbons until a political settlement to the whole Cyprus problem was found, including joint hydrocarbons explorations and exploitation in the framework of a federal settlement. The second option envisaged the formation of a joint energy task-force with participation from both communities entitled to exploration and exploitation in the North and the South of Cyprus. The third suggested focusing negotiations on an ad hoc political formula for the hydrocarbons issue; this last option was postponing the reaching of a comprehensive settlement, which in theory would have benefitted from the positive spillovers of energy cooperation. After the Greek Cypriots rejected all three options, Olgun tells that the reaction of the Turkish Cypriot negotiating team was to turn to Turkey for support:

> They (the RoC) wanted unilateral exploitation so we said: "If you are going to proceed on your own unilaterally despite our offer, we will do the same." We negotiated with the Turkish Petroleum Company and, in agreement with the Turkish government, we charted Barbaros Hayreddin Paşa to come and start seismic studies in areas that we identified. Immediately, they got alarmed. They were saying that this was the EEZ of the Greek Cypriots and the island of Cyprus was under their sovereignty. We told them: "Sorry, guys! You are not able to exercise your sovereignty in those areas that we control". (...) As a result, the international companies got scared, naturally, because this led to an environment of instability.

Therefore, TRNC felt that a natural, common sense decision was to call for Turkey's help. Turkey decided to act: claiming the need to protect the interests of Turkish-Cypriots, on 20 October 2014, Turkey sent an exploration vessel, Barbaros, into Cypriot waters; in an

[185] Olgun, Ergun. Businessperson and Negotiator at TRNC Presidency. Face-to-face interview with the author. Nicosia, March 2017.

immediate response, President Anastasiades decided to suspend the bilateral talks. Ankara perceived cypriot plans to exploit the gas without a pipeline to Turkey as a provocation[186].

Understandably, Turkey's action sending the Barbaros vessel, further complicated negotiations and, ultimately, caused a deadlock in October 2014. According to one of my interviewees, the negotiation stalled earlier than in October: 'In August, there were already some problems that prompted the Greek Cypriot leader Anastasiades to withdraw from the talks. He said: "Because Turkey is exercising certain actions in the natural gas issue in the region, I will not go back to the negotiation table".[187] From the RoC's viewpoint, Turkey was interfering with the process, causing its end.

Hence, Turkey played a crucial role in this setting. The Turkish government acted vigorously with the claim of defending the rights of Turkish Cypriots to have a symmetrically strong voice in determining the extent of the gas exploitation and share the revenues on equal terms. Turkey has also objected from the very start the legitimacy of the RoC, which Ankara believes is not entitled to represent Turkish and Greek Cypriots jointly. On many occasions, Turkish officials defended this claim – which, I believe, is understandable given the history of the island and the fact that the reunification is far from being completed. For instance, during the 52nd Session of the Turkey-EU Association Council on 23 June 2014, the former Turkish Foreign Affairs Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu and the then Minister for EU Affairs Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu declared: 'A common approach should be adopted with the Turkish Cypriots, the co-owner of the Island and its natural resources. (...) The Greek Cypriot Administration does not represent the whole island. They cannot claim authority, jurisdiction or sovereignty over the Turkish Cypriots, who have equal status'.[188] In another passage of the same document, Davutoğlu and Çavuşoğlu reiterate this claim in even stronger terms: 'Accommodating Greek Cypriot demands to accede to international organisations would

[186] The Economist. The Cyprus problem: Intractable - or insoluble? 27 November 2014. https://www.economist.com/news/europe/21635025-hopes-settling-cyprus-problem-are-starting-look-unrealistic-intractableor-insoluble

[187] High-ranking official, TRNC government, Face-to-face interview with the author. Nicosia, March 2017.

[188] Statements by Ahmet Davutoğlu and Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu during the 52nd Session Of the Turkey-EU Association Council on 23 June 2014, p. 58. Available at: http://www.real.gr/Files/Articles/Document/337516.pdf accessed on (12/07/2014).

only reinforce their false claim to represent the defunct "Republic of Cyprus" and distract them from the settlement aim. Turkey has to act in line with her responsibilities.'[189] Therefore, Turkey's official position was to vocally oppose the right of the RoC to pursue gas development activities. It even threatened international oil companies participating in such activities to take 'all necessary measures to protect Turkish rights and interests in the maritime areas, falling within its continental shelf' and 'not allow any activity over these areas'. (Gürel and Le Cornu 2013: 18) With this vigorous action, Turkey fulfilled its role of historic protector of the rights of TRNC, acting as a big brother.

Ankara's position was officially driven by the need to defend the rights of the Turkish Cypriots, threatened by the unilateral actions of the RoC. Concrete economic interests are likely to have played a part. As explained in Chapter 4, starting from in 2014 Turkey's foreign policy grew increasingly unilateral and interest-driven, due to some domestic and international factors such as increasing authoritarian tendencies of Erdoğan's government and the weakening of the EU's anchor. Some of my interviewees regard Ankara's staunch opposition to the RoC energy explorations activities as a purely materialistic move to defend what Turkey perceived as legitimate economic interests in the area. This trend started with the discovery of the gas reserves. Kaymak (2012: 18) claims that the Turkish elites needed to turn TRNC from 'a financial drain' into a success story from which all Turks could benefit:

> Turkey is apparently determined to reposition the TRNC internationally and to render it economically viable in the process. Hence, whereas the TRNC remains a drain on resources, the emphasis is now on productivity rather than welfare. As a result, Turkish infrastructural investments in the TRNC have increased, paving the way to position the northern part of Cyprus as a hub for trade in fossil fuels.

As a Turkish Cypriot member of the negotiating team explains:

> When the drillings started, Turkey also started defending its strategic interests in the TRNC exclusive economic zone. If the Greek Cypriots side unilaterally takes some steps regarding using the resources in the so-called exclusive economic zone of the island, the Turkish Cypriots reciprocate because the Turkish Cypriots have an equal share in those resources and Turkey also has some sovereign rights in this zone. (...) Turkey's reaction was not a stand-alone thing.

[189] Ibidem, p. 59

> The Turkish Cypriots policy was also in line with the Turkish policy at that time.[190]

Therefore, a convergence of interests between Turkey and TRNC can be observed. The latter felt it had no choice but to turn to Turkey when they perceived that their interests were threatened by the RoC and were willing to go along with Turkey's actions – even if those led to the RoC abandoning the negotiating table.

Although the impact of a wide range of factors can be detected (from political configurations in pre-electoral periods to chronic lack of trust and divergences between Turkish and Greek Cypriots), the bone of contention that brought the 2014 talks to a stop was the issue of energy exploitation in Cyprus' EEZs. The convergence of positions between Turkey and TRNC on this matter could be the result of Turkey's soft power, especially from the idea of Turkey acting in the interests of TRNC, seen as undermined by the RoC. At the societal levels, however, not all Turkish Cypriots wholeheartedly approved of Turkey's action: there are some critical voices, especially among the alternative left, and anti-imperialists, accusing Turkey of pursuing its own interests. [191] However, at the level of political elites, including President Eroğlu, there was full convergence, which resulted in a coordinated negotiating strategy.[192] Both actors saw in the RoC's unilateral exploration activities in collaboration with foreign companies a violation of the sovereign rights of the Turkish Cypriots; at the same time, they acknowledged the need to protect the strategic interests of Turkey. What explains this symbiotic alignment of preferences? The reasons are manifold and speak to the historical alliance between Turkey and TRNC, in which Turkey's soft and hard power play a key role. The following section starts delving into the complex relation between Turkey and TRNC through a historical analysis in which the different parts of the causal mechanism emerge.

[190] TRNC Negotiation Board Member, TRNC Presidency. Face-to-face interview with the author. Nicosia, March 2017.

[191] Eronen, Orhan. Businessperson and political activist (Dayanışma, Nicosia). Face-to-face interview with the author. Ankara, November 2017.

[192] High-ranking official, TRNC government, Face-to-face interview with the author. Nicosia, March 2017. Did you delete the name also in the annex

6.2. A timeline unpacking Turkey-TRNC relations

This section, divided into two parts, looks at 'landmark moments' that impacted directly or indirectly the specific outcome (the deadlock of Cyprus reunification negotiations in October 2014) and TRNC foreign policy choices. The first part delves into the period of Erdoğan's rule (2002 to October 2014, when the negotiations stalled again) to trace the more direct ways in which Turkey influenced Armenia's decisions. Nevertheless, limiting the research to such a short framework would constrain my ability to provide a wide-ranging explanation for the outcome. Therefore, this chapter follows the structure of the previous case study and divides the section into two subsections: ones takes into account landmark moments occurred during Erdoğan's rule, the other tackles events that took place before Erdoğan's rule and defined TRNC identity and its relation with Turkey more in general. The analysis starts with the outcome (the deadlock of negotiations in October 2014) and proceeds backwards, particularly focusing on three spheres: security; economy; and cultural/ideational sphere.

6.2.1. Landmark moments during the JDP period

The previous section has exposed that the main reason for the negotiations stalemate was the conflict over the exploration and exploitation of the gas reserves discovered in what the RoC considers to be its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).[193] Ankara is not a signatory to the United Nations Law of the Sea, which defines the continental shelf of Cyprus[194], and does

[193] The Republic of Cyprus established an exclusive economic zone (EEZ), with the enactment of the Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf Law (Law No. 64(I)/2004), which was submitted to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, as the depository of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. According to the Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf Law (which was amended in 2014 (N.97(I)/2014)), the outer limit of the EEZ of the Republic of Cyprus is defined to a distance of 200 nautical miles from the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial sea is measured. Republic of Cyprus, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf http://www.mfa.gov.cy/mfa/mfa2016.nsf/mfa86_en/mfa86_en?OpenDocument&print

[194] Following the ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) in 1988, in 2004 Cyprus enacted a bill limiting its exclusive economic zone (EEZ) by 12 nautical miles (22 km; 14 mi). Web Portal of the Republic of Cyprus, Law to provide for the Proclamation of the Exclusive Economic Zone by the Republic of Cyprus, 2 April 2004 http://www.cyprus.gov.cy/portal/portal.nsf/gwp.getGroup?OpenForm&access=0&SectionId=government&CategoryId=Legislations&SelectionId=Laws%20regarding%20Fisheries&print=0&lang=en

not recognise Cypriot jurisdiction over the EEZ. Hence, Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots wanted to discuss the energy development issue jointly, but the Greek Cypriots refused. Until that point, the Greek Cypriots had developed their gas resources unilaterally, yet supported by the EU and US, and promised to share future benefits but only after a settlement (International Crisis Group 2014: 10).

Some experts suggested that a pipeline to Turkey was the most lucrative export option: for example, Gürel, Mullen and Tzimitras (2013: VIII) forecasted that such a solution would have generated an additional €15 billion net revenue. However, Greek Cypriots showed some discomfort in working with Turkey, seeking to strengthen their alliance with Israel instead, which, by that time, was still in a diplomatic standoff with Turkey over the 2010 Gaza flotilla raid, namely the Israeli operation that killed nine Turkish activists travelling on an aid flotilla in Gaza. Turkey's aggressive rhetoric helped revived Greek Cypriots' distrust of Turkey.[195] Back in 2011, when the gas field was discovered, Turkey threatened 'physically intimidating measures, including laying claim to areas south of the island and saying it would drill them "on behalf of" the Turkish Cypriots'. (International Crisis Group 2014: 9) Commenting on the RoC's exploratory gas drilling on Turkish media, Turkey's former EU Minister Egemen Bağış went as far as saying: 'It is for this (reason) that countries have warships. It is for this (reason) that we have the equipment and we train our navies.'[196] Such a veiled threat is likely to have fuelled Greek Cypriots' fears of military action and probably furthered the climate of distrust that hindered the negotiations.

The RoC went ahead with the exploration activities through the Eni/Kogas joint venture - an Italian-Korean energy consortium - that started drilling in offshore Cyprus. In response, the TRNC government issued a statement on 3 October 2014, condemning the 'illegal' oil and gas exploration activities of the Greek Cypriots, which are not only a 'disconcerting development but also unacceptable as the area overlaps with the areas which are licensed by

[195] According to a 2012 survey, the Greek Cypriots see Turkey's military presence on the islands as a problem and would like to see Turkey as a more constructive neighbor. Bryant, R. and Yakinthou, C. (2012) 'Cypriot Perceptions of Turkey', Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation. Available at http://tesev.org.tr/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Cypriot_Perceptions_Of_Turkey.pdf

[196] Jonathon Burch. Turkey to freeze EU ties if Cyprus gets EU presidency. Reuters, 18 September, 2011
https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-cyprus/turkey-to-freeze-eu-ties-if-cyprus-gets-eu-presidency-idUSTRE78H20L20110918

our State to the Turkish Petroleum Corporation (TPAO)'.[197] The statement made clear that TRNC would, in agreement with Turkey, send the seismic exploration vessel Barbaros 'to the areas in which TPAO was given exploration licenses by the TRNC to conduct exploration "on behalf of the Turkish Cypriot people, the co-owners of the natural resources of the Island"'.[198] Shortly after that, the RoC called the peace talks off. On his Facebook profile, Anastasiades said that due to the 'I am really sad that (...) I was compelled to decide the suspension of my participation in the procedure of the talks' due to the 'stance by Mr Dervis Eroglu's and the actions by Ankara during the last few days'.[199] On October 20, finally, Cypriot National Defense Minister Christoforos Fokaides said that the Barbaros and two additional vessels entered Cyprus' EEZ[200], triggering the reaction on the part of the Greek Cypriot leader, who interrupted the peace talks.

Turkey's actions can be read in light of pursuing Ankara's economic interests. But its rhetoric and actions also confirmed its willingness to defend the interests of TRNC, acting as a big brother, judging from the Turkish official statements already mentioned earlier in this chapter. In Carmon's (2011) view, 'as the big brother of Turkish Cypriots, Turkey cannot agree that a mostly Greek Republic of Cyprus would be allowed to explore and financially gain from the gas fields, leaving the Turkish Cypriots empty-handed'. An unassertive position on the part of Turkey would have harmed both Turkey's reputation as the protector of TRNC interests and its international image as a powerful regional power.

[197] TRNC Deputy Prime Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Press Statement regarding the illegal hydrocarbon exploration activities of the Greek Cypriot Administration in the Eastern Mediterranean, 3 October 2014
http://mfa.gov.ct.tr/press-statement20141003/

[198] Offshore Energy, Cyprus Halts Pace Talks as Ankara Plans to Deploy Seismic Vessel https://www.offshoreenergytoday.com/cyprus-halts-peace-talks-as-ankara-plans-to-deploy-seismic-vessel/

[199] Nicos Anastasiades, 7 October 2014. Available at:
https://www.facebook.com/NicosAnastasiades/posts/791893520874238

[200] Daphne Tsagari, Turkish 'Barbaros' Vessel Enters Cyprus EEZ Zone Without Permission. 20 October 2014
http://greece.greekreporter.com/2014/10/20/turkish-barbaros-vessel-enters-cyprus-eez-zone-without-permission/

The EU reacted with a strong condemnation of Turkey for the deployment of the Barbaros vessel, issuing a joint motion for a resolution by the European Parliament on 4 November 2014, openly condemned Ankara's 'unilateral action' against the RoC. The motion reads:

> The European Parliament underlines the fact that Ankara's attitude directly threatens the sovereignty of the Republic of Cyprus; Turkish maritime surveys must be seen as both illegal and provocative; demands that Turkish vessels operating in waters in and around the EEZ of Cyprus be withdrawn immediately.[201]

Other EU officials released statements condemning Turkey. For example, the President of the European People's Party (EPP), Joseph Daul, released a statement about Turkey's dispatching of military vessels close to locations where ENI-KOGAS were drilling for gas:

> I am astonished by the recent military threats of Turkey, an EU candidate country, against the Republic of Cyprus, an EU Member State, and its right to utilise its EEZ. Turkey's threats undermine the EU's energy security and show sweeping contempt towards the sovereign rights of an EU Member State. Moreover, Turkey's actions have seriously harmed the UN-sponsored peace talks.[202]

Turkey kept a firm stance on the issue despite the EU's condemnation. On 21 October 2014, when the negotiations had already stalled, Ahmet Davutoğlu reiterated Ankara's claim to distribute the resources fairly 'as resources of the unified Cyprus state' and declared his willingness to seek a solution based on this principle. He remarked: 'We have the right to conduct seismic studies there, according to agreements signed between Turkey and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. We will always use this right'.[203] This statement reflects the evolution of Ankara's foreign policy, described in chapter 3, towards more

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[201] European Parliament. Joint Motion for A Resolution. European Parliament resolution on Turkish actions creating tensions in the exclusive economic zone of Cyprus (2014/2921(RSP) 10 November 2014
http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=MOTION&reference=P8-RC-2014-0211&language=EN

[202] Offshore Energy, Cyprus Halts Pace Talks as Ankara Plans to Deploy Seismic Vessel https://www.offshoreenergytoday.com/cyprus-halts-peace-talks-as-ankara-plans-to-deploy-seismic-vessel/

[203] Hürriyet Daily News, 'Turkey 'determined' to continue gas exploration amid threats from Greek Cyprus'. 22 October 2014
http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-determined-to-continue-gas-exploration-amid-threats-from-greek-cyprus-73315

unilateral and assertive positions. This evolution reverberates throughout the power narrative depicting Turkey as a powerful regional power.

The less securitised and more economy-oriented approach of the JDP, reflected in the narrative depicting Turkey as a powerful regional power, was initially welcomed by the TRNC elites, which saw the JDP as more willing to achieve a peaceful solution in Cyprus. However, the application of the first economic protocol in 2010 showed that, in exerting its role of big brother, Ankara was also willing to impose harsh austerity measures on TRNC, making full use of its hard power. As Balkır and Yalman (2009) explain, there is a parallelism between Turkey and TRNC's economic policy and TRNC adopted the Turkish lira as its currency. However, the

> total lack of monetary policy autonomy meant the importation not only of inflation, albeit with a short time lag, but also of the stabilisation measures to deal with the consequences. Allegedly, all economic evils were being imported from Turkey, including the crises which had characterised the Turkish economy intermittently. In the absence of international recognition, Turkey would also play the role of the IMF for the TRNC economy, by initiating stabilisation programmes through the signing of economic protocols, whenever it deemed it necessary (Balkır and Yalman 2009: 55).

Ardemagni believes the 2010 economic protocol is a landmark moment in the relation between the TRNC and Turkey. She believes that, by linking an aid package to Northern Cyprus with the implementation of top-down measures of privatisations and austerity, Turkey turned from 'security guarantor' to 'economic guardian', amplifying the scope of its intervention in the domestic realm. In Ardemagni's words, Ankara's decision derives from Turkey's transformation during the JDP: 'Ankara aligned with the globalisation trend, adopting neo-liberal policies which were also exported to the TRNC, to strengthen a patron-client relation (...) instead of promoting gradual autonomy from the so-called motherland (...).'[204] Hence, Turkey made full use of authority, not only in defending the interests of TRNC but also imposing painful economic measures on the Turkish Cypriots.

[204] Ardemagni, Eleonora. ISPI Associate Research Fellow. Face-to-face interview with the author. Milan, May 2018

The previous round of the negotiations had started in March 2008. Initially, the Greek Cypriot leader Demetris Christofias had to deal with Mehmet Ali Talat, an old friend and fellow leftist. The good relation between the two leaders gave its fruits: more than 250 meetings and important steps towards normalisation were achieved, such as the opening of a new crossing point in central Nicosia and another in the north-west of the island. (International Crisis Group 2014: 4) The talks froze again in 2012 for several reasons, including the election in April 2010 of a new Turkish Cypriot leader, Dervis Eroğlu, supporter of a two-state settlement, who suspended the negotiations when the RoC took the six-month EU presidency in July 2012. (International Crisis Group 2014: 6) On that occasion, Turkey showed considerable solidarity to TRNC, adopting a very tough stance on the issue. In his speeches, Erdoğan reiterated that security and territorial concessions demanded of the Turkish Cypriots were not acceptable. He also said that 'if "southern Cyprus" were to assume the presidency of the EU Council on 1 July 2012, then Ankara would freeze its relations with the EU because it could not work with a presidency that it does not recognise'. (Morelli 2013: 8) The then Deputy Prime Minister Besir Atalay reiterated the threat of Turkey freezing ties with the EU in response to Cyprus' EU presidency[205], signalling a new low point in Turkey/EU relations. European Parliament member and member of the Parliament's EU-Turkey Joint Parliamentary Committee Andrew Duff hinted that Erdoğan's comments were an 'appalling twist to Turkey's policy toward Cyprus'.[206] The standoff, however, did not result in frozen ties in the end.

The vast majority of my interviewees agree that the election of the JDP marked a watershed moment in the Turkey-TRNC relations, marking a shift towards a more active role on the part of Turkey in favour of a peaceful solution. Görener and Ucal (2011: 369) affirm that 'Erdoğan's willingness to take risks and challenge Turkey's traditional positions has nowhere been as evident as in the Cyprus issue. (...) The importance of this development lies in the fact that Turkey's stance on the Cyprus issue was long considered "state policy," meaning

[205] Jonathon Burch. Turkey to freeze EU ties if Cyprus gets EU presidency. Reuters, 18 September, 2011
https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-cyprus/turkey-to-freeze-eu-ties-if-cyprus-gets-eu-presidency-idUSTRE78H20L20110918

[206] Cyprus Mail, "Erdogan comments irk EU officials," 22 July, 2011,
http://www.cyprusedirectory.com/cyprusguide/cyprus.aspx?ID=23041

that it was above the purview of governmental politics and not open for discussion'. A high ranking member of TRNC Presidency describes it as a 'paradigm shift' and says:

> (Before the JDP) Turkey was not very much helpful on the reunification-related matters. According to their terms, a solution was not reachable because it was unacceptable for the Greek Cypriots. (...) With the JDP this has changed. They gave enormous support when Mr Talat came to power. On that those days, Turkey was going through a transformation process. The EU reforms for them were of paramount importance, and they were taking reforms packages, constitutional reforms and like this so we felt very positively about this, and it was a very positive effect for us.[207]

This remark speaks to the importance of the EU membership perspective that was so initially prominent in the narrative 'Turkey as a powerful regional power' for Turkish Cypriots, which thought Turkey's Europeanisation process to have positive spillovers for the reunification of Cyprus. Professor Ahmet Sozen of Eastern Mediterranean University, Famagusta, confirms this view. He claims that Turkey changed its position about negotiations from a supporter of status quo to an active supporter of a solution, at least at the beginning of the JDP rule: 'It was very clear that Erdoğan was saying that the previous policy of North Cyprus solution was over and Turkey is now for peace'.[208] The journalist Ulaş Barış also remarks that the coming to power of the AKP sparked new hopes among the TRNC population: 'it was the first time that we expected a good solution here. If asked which is the best party for the Cyprus problem, I am going to say "the AKP".' [209]

The only interviewee that does not agree with the dominant view that the JDP transformed Turkey's approach to the Cyprus issue is Osman Ertuğ, former de facto Ambassador of TRNC to the US one of the framers of the TRNC's Unilateral Declaration of Independence. He claims that 'Turkey consistently looked upon Cyprus as a national issue. It did not change with the change of governments. Every government supported this policy as they do today. It

[207] High ranking official, TRNC Presidency. Face-to-face interview with the author. Nicosia, March 2017.

[208] Sozen, Ahmet. Assoc. Prof. Dr., Political Science and IR, Eastern Mediterranean University. Face-to-face interview with the author. Famagusta, March 2017.

[209] Barış, Ulaş. journalist at *Kıbrıs Postası*. Face-to-face interview with the author. Nicosia, March 2017.

has been very consistent and stable in support of the settlement'[210]. Turkey has indeed consistently defended the preservation of the Constitution in accordance with the London and Zurich Agreements, pointing to political equality of the two sides as a basis for peace. However, I believe that the JDP showed a more active and flexible stance in the first years of the 2000s, also due to the importance that the Cyprus reunification had for Ankara's EU membership process.

The evolution of Turkey's EU membership process under the JDP hugely impacted the way Ankara behaved in the framework of the Cyprus negotiations. The JDP's decision to support the Plan prepared in 2004 by the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan is a case in point. The plan was first presented in November 2002 and revised twice before the Secretary-General of the United Nations presented the final version to the Parties on 31 March 2004. The elaboration and discussion of the Annan Plan, then, overlapped with the election of the JDP in November and marked a redefinition of the position of Turkey on the Cyprus issue. As former Minister of Foreign Affairs and former Ambassador to the UN Yaşar Yakış explains in one of my interviews: 'Despite the reluctance of both mainland Turks and Cypriot Turks, the JDP government decided to support the Plan. President Erdoğan took a major political risk by deciding to demonstrate leadership rather than leading from behind'. Not only did Turkey invested the UN Secretary-General with the necessary power of arbitration to institute a time-bound programme for completing the Cyprus talks (Uslu 2011), but it pressured TRNC leadership in 'form of lobbying, propaganda and the sending of emissaries, i.e. AKP MPs, to induce the Turkish Cypriots to accept the Annan Plan and transform it into a final agreement'. (Kamburoğlu 2015: 274) This was in line with Ankara's foreign policy goals: indeed, these were the heights of Turkey's path towards the EU membership when the prospects of joining the EU were concrete and Turkish foreign policy was showing more and more signs of convergence with the EU. (Eralp et al. 2017) TRNC adopted Turkey's position, showing a high degree of acceptance of Turkey's positions.

However, 76 percent of Greek Cypriots rejected the Annan Plan in the referendum in 2004. The reasons for this rejection are summarised in a letter dated 7 June 2004 from the

[210] Ertuğ, Osman former de facto ambassador of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) to the United States of America from 2002 to 2007, (de facto Chief of Mission to the United Nations). Face-to-face interview with the author. Nicosia, March 2017.

Permanent Representative of the RoC to the UN, Andreas D. Mavroyiannis, addressed to the Secretary-General. Mavroyiannis refers to 'legitimate concerns' about the question of Turkish mainland settlers; the permanent stationing of Turkish military forces in Cyprus; and (c) the expansion of Turkey's guarantor powers' rights that would over empower Turkey.[211] According to Theophylactou (2012: 104), Greek Cypriots rejected the Plan because it effectively satisfied most, if not all, of Ankara's demands. Fears of a potential over-empowerment of Turkey feature prominently among the reasons for the Greek Cypriots' rejection.

The rejection was hard to overcome for both the Turks and the Turkish Cypriots. While 'Cypriot Turks followed Erdoğan's advice and voted in favour of the Annan Plan, the Greek Cypriots voted against it. Despite this, the EU admitted to the EU the Greek Cypriots who voted against the EU policy and refused to admit the Turkish Cypriots who voted in line with the EU policy'.[212] The granting of EU membership to the RoC in 2004 without a solution of the reunification problem made the already difficult EU-Turkey relationship even worse. Sozen claims[213] that the 2004 referendum was a big disappointment to Erdoğan: 'In his mind, the EU failed to deliver its promises to Turkish Cypriots (...) The Turkish Cypriots were left out in the cold in a way, not rewarded for the peaceful support of the Annan Plan. He was so disappointed with the Europeans. Then, after the Syria crisis, the accumulated hatred is surfacing even more.' Ankara's disappointment with the EU reflects on the evolution of Turkey's soft power narratives, which – as explained in Chapter Four – have been displaying more and more resentment towards the EU.

The EU used the Additional Protocol – extending Turkey's Customs Union with the EU to the newly acceding members, including the Republic of Cyprus – as a legal pretext for the normalisation of relations between Turkey and the RoC, but the Turkish government strongly

[211] UN General Assembly. Letter dated 7 June 2004 from the Permanent Representative of Cyprus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General. 8 June 2004 http://dag.un.org/bitstream/handle/11176/22686/A_58_835%3BS_2004_464-EN.pdf?sequence=21&isAllowed=y

[212] Yakış, Yaşar. Turkish politician and retired ambassador. Former Foreign Minister. Face-to-face interview with the author. Ankara, March 2017.

[213] Sozen, Ahmet. Assoc.Prof.Dr., Political Science and IR, Eastern Mediterranean University. Face-to-face interview with the author. Famagusta, March 2017.

protested for this decision. The two parties reached a deadlock. While the EU ‘emphatically asked for the opening of Turkish airports and seaports to the vessels of the Republic of Cyprus, the Turkish government insisted on the simultaneous lifting of all restrictions in Cyprus, including the movement of goods, services and people from the Northern part of the island'. (Eralp 2009: 161) A solution was found in 2006 when the EU decided to freeze negotiations on eight chapters until the Turkish government met its obligations under the Additional Protocol and recognised the RoC.

On the one hand, this solution prevented a potential train-wreck in the EU-Turkey relations, with the EU making use of its political and economic leverage towards Turkey, without suspending the membership process; on the other, though, it further slowed down the already slow membership process. (Eralp 2009: 161) Here, again, Turkey emerged as the only actor defending TRNC's interests, at risk of even jeopardising its EU ties, confirming and reinforcing its big brother image in the TRNC as ‘common sense’. The fact that the RoC became a full EU member without a solution to the conflict, then, meant a blow for Turkey's image, one that would contribute to bitter ties with the EU for the years to come. With the freezing of the eight negotiations chapters, it became clear that Cyprus was the key factor for proceeding in accession negotiations, but also that Turkey would not step back from its position of defender of TRNC, adding to its soft power among Turkish Cypriots.

6.2.2. Landmark moments before the JPD period

This section tries to sketch the key dates that marked Turkey’s gradual involvement in Cyprus and defined its role for Turkish Cypriots. I analyse these key dates in reverse chronological order because these events’ impact on the outcome is less direct compared to the events listed in the previous section. Similar to the previous section and the other case study I use in this thesis, my interviews complemented the consultation of secondary sources (especially history books and papers); indeed, the interviewees were asked during the interviews to mention the landmark dates defining relations between Turkey and TRNC. My objective, therefore, is not to review the following events in details or to establish a comprehensive timeline of events in Cyprus, but to single out the most relevant ones in light of my analysis of Turkey’s soft and hard power.

Turkey started getting involved in the affairs of Cyprus in the 1950s. At that time, the island was a British colony that the British Empire was trying to cling on to. (Ioannides 2014: 60) Because of its strategic location, Cyprus was seen as vital for the British interests, especially around the time of the Suez crisis in 1956, when Egyptian President Nasser nationalised the Suez Canal, until that moment owned and operated by a joint British-French company. (Summers 2009) Before the 1950s, Turkey did not have a coherent strategy for Turks living outside its boundaries; Republican People's Party foreign minister Necmettin Sadak, and the Democratic Party's Minister of Foreign Affairs Fuat Köprülü argued on several occasions that Turkey had no Cyprus problem (Uzer 2010: 115).

Domestic, regional and international factors shaped Turkey's more active foreign policy and involvement in Cyprus. First, Turkey transformed from a one-party state into a multi-party system: in 1950, Turkey held its first truly democratic elections, and the Republican People's Party, in power since 1923, was replaced by the Democratic Party. The neo-elected government followed a conservative-nationalist line both domestically and internationally. For example, the call to prayer (*ezan*), which Atatürk had changed from Arabic to Turkish, came back to the Arabic version; the Turkish official discourse started corroborating the image of Turkey as a Muslim nation. (Uzer 2010: 146) The growing relevance of public opinion in Turkey's politics impacted Ankara's Cyprus policy. Public opinion in Turkey started campaigning in favour of Turkey's involvement, including media campaigns conducted by the newspaper *Hürriyet* named 'Cyprus is Turkish' and 'Partition or death' and numerous Cyprus demonstrations in all the major cities in Turkey throughout the 1950s. (Uzer 2010: 145) In other words, during the 1950s, the idea of Cyprus being a national cause consolidated itself among Turks and started reverberating through the political elites and to a certain extent, it is still valid today: Turkish foreign and security policy establishment place 'special emphasis on the geo-strategically vital location of the island of Cyprus for the country's defence and security'. (Kaliber 2012: 383) In other words, Turkey's historical and institutional environment constructed Cyprus as an issue of national significance (Özkeçeci-Taner 2005, Bilgin 2007).

In Cyprus, the decade of the 1950s was crucial, for it marked a turning point in the Greek Cypriots' organised fight against the British rule on the island and for *enosis*, that is, the unification of Cyprus with Greece. *Enosis* had been a national aspiration for Greek Cypriots, shaping their national identity since the Ottoman period. (Kıralp 2017: 1) In 1955, Greek

Cypriots founded the paramilitary organisation EOKA (National Organisation of Cypriot Fighters) which began attacking both the British colonial administration and the Turkish Cypriot community. (Oberling 1982) The EOKA formation prompted the Turkish Cypriots to demand *Taksim* (the partition of the island) and to form, in 1957–58, the Turkish Cypriots established the paramilitary organisation TMT (Turkish Resistance Organization). The TMT requested arms and experts from Turkey and, in 1958, the Turkish army started to train and equip the organisation (Uzer 2010: 145).

The official trigger of Turkish involvement was the UK's desire to counter EOKA and the Greek influence at large. The EOKA was, in fact, responsible for the killing 371 British servicemen on the island between 1956 and 1959. (Summers 2009) According to Kıralp (2017: 1), the UK decided to play the 'Turkish card' against the Greeks, requesting Turkey to play a more active role and adopting a form of 'divide and rule' strategy on the island, with the recruitment of Turkish Cypriots as police patrols against EOKA. In 1955, the UK invited Greece and Turkey to a tripartite conference in London, making Turkey an 'official party to the conflict'. (Uzer 2010: 121) In 1959, Turkey, Greece, the UK and Cypriot community leaders (Archbishop Makarios III for Greek Cypriots and Fazıl Küçük for Turkish Cypriots) drafted a constitution of Cyprus, together with two Treaties of Alliance and Guarantee, which institutionalised the role of Turkey, Greece and the UK as guarantors of the independence, territorial integrity and security of the Republic of Cyprus, undertaking to prohibit any activity aimed at promoting, directly or indirectly, either union of Cyprus with any other State or partition of the Island. Cyprus was declared independent on 16 August 1960[214]. The decade of the 60s saw increasing interethnic violence to which Turkey responded with increasing military involvement. In 1960, Turkey suffered a coup d'état, which overthrew the Democratic Party, but General Cemal Gürsel, the head of the military junta, declared its willingness to support the status quo in Cyprus (Uzer 2010: 131) The attacks in 1963 ('bloody Christmas') and 1964 against Turkish Cypriots' villages led to a Turkish air raids and bombing of the Greek targets which were condemned by international powers, especially the US and USSR. While Turkey planned a military operation, the US President Lyndon Johnson sent a letter to Ankara to prevent any further action. (Uzer 2010: 131) Eventually, the US and UK decided to divide the island as the growing conflict between Greece and

[214] Article II of Treaty of Guarantee. Signed at Nicosia, on 16 August 1960. UN Peacemaker https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/CY%20GR%20TR_600816_Treaty%20of%20Guarantee.pdf

Turkey, as well as Makarios's non-aligned and pro-Soviet policies, constituted threats to NATO interests in the Eastern Mediterranean. (Kıralp 2017: 3) The violence in the island continued and Turkey, despite the international constraints, kept acting in defence of the Turkish Cypriots. As one of my interviewees recalls:

> In 1964 the Turkish Air Forces first intervened in Cyprus, Kokkina (Erenköy). I was a fighter there. It was the first time we were attacked by a strong Greek Army. We were just about to be massacred basically, and Turkey sent their air force and knocked out the positions of the Greek Army. There was an agreement, and we were saved. In 1968, again, a Turkish Cypriot canton was surrounded by the Greek Cypriots and Greek Army in the Kofinia area which is in Limassol landmark area. Turkey gave an ultimatum to Greece and said: "Unless you take out your troops from the island, I will send my army.[215]

By sending its air force and giving an ultimatum to Greece, Turkey showed its willingness to defend the Turkish Cypriots.

While international factors (the opposition of US and USSR) were not in favour of a Turkish operation in 1964, things changed in the decade of the 70s: 'Turkey increased its naval capability and significantly improved its relations with the Soviet Union. The United States was preoccupied with the Watergate scandal and the Secretary of State Henry Kissinger's apprehension towards Makarios's neutralist foreign policy offered an international system that was very much conducive to Turkish military intervention.' (Uzer 2010: 131) Therefore, the international context changed and, when there was a Greek-instigated coup d'état on the island, Turkey intervened on 20 July 1974.

The 1974 intervention is, understandably, a landmark moment mentioned by all of my interviewees. The consequences of the intervention dramatically changed the relationship between Turkey and the TRNC, the political and security architecture of the island and Turkey's role in the region. The next section, while unpacking the causal mechanism explaining the deadlock of the 2014 reunification talks, draws heavily on this landmark moment and describes its consequences in more detail.

[215] Olgun, Ergun. Businessperson and Negotiator at TRNC Presidency. Face-to-face interview with the author. Nicosia, March 2017.

6.3. Constructing the causal mechanism

This section builds on the two chains of events outlined in the previous sections to present the causal mechanism explaining the selected outcome (the deadlock of the 2014 round of the Cyprus peace negotiations). Similar to the previous chapter, I adopt Parsons' (2007) logics of explanations to get a detailed and multi-faceted explanation. As remarked in the introduction of this chapter, this specific outcome is part of a larger process that cannot be analysed completely separately. The causal mechanism explains the outcome focusing on the impact of Turkey's soft and hard power on TRNC negotiating position. The causal mechanism comprises a structural, institutional and ideational part. The first one is structural, dealing with the material constraints TRNC faces. These are exogenous constraints dictated by a given material structure shaping the TRNC government's preferences – that is, full conformity with Turkey. The geographical factor is even more relevant in this case study than it was in the previous one. Armenia is cursed by the lack of access to the sea and is surrounded by its most bitter enemies (Turkey and Azerbaijan), but TRNC position is even more difficult: it is the smaller part of a divided island, and the Turkish Cypriots are a minority that had to deal with the harassment of a majoritarian group of ethnically, linguistically and religiously different people for decades. The lack of international recognition contributes to the fact that Turkish Cypriots suffer even more from the ‘landlock mentality'.

Similar to Armenia, there is a lack of energy resources in the northern part of Cyprus. The discovery of gas in 2011 deepened the conflict with the Greek Cypriots over scarce resources instead of becoming a trigger for cooperation, partly because of TRNC and Turkey's assertive stance in demanding equal exploration and exploitation rights. But TRNC also lacks a vital resource, that is, fresh water. Water scarcity began to afflict Northern Cyprus since the 1960s, and the trend has not been reverted. Agriculture is the backbone of the TRNC economy; it is mostly small-scale farming, with citrus fruit cultivation being the primary export. (Gozen and Turkman 2008: 241) Lack of cooperation with the south and lack of

efficiency in the use of a scarce but vital resource make the problem even worse. Mason and Bryant (2017) report that the bulk of water (60-80%) is used for agriculture, no appropriate studies or policies guide the consumption and supply of agricultural water. Some of the big hotels have built their desalinisation plants, but 'these remain unregulated so that there is no assessment of their effect on seawater'. (Mason and Bryant 2017: 6) In this context, the construction of underwater pipeline taking water from the Anamur river in Southern Turkey to TRNC, financed by the Turkish Aid Commission and completed between 2013-2015 was a major 'engineering feat'. (Mason and Bryant 2017: 15) Similar to gas, water did not become a field where the two Cypriots communities and some claim that it did not even better relations between Turkey and TRNC. According to Yakış:

> Turkey constructed a huge aqueduct with a capacity to carry 75 million cubic meters of fresh water from Anatolia to Cyprus. Half of it is destined for irrigation. Turkey paid around 450 million US dollars for it. This project could change many paradigms in Cyprus. Despite this, the Turkish Cypriot community welcomed the project with little enthusiasm. This may be due to the Turkish community's lukewarm attitude to be over-reliant on mainland Turkey.[216]

The infrastructural project, therefore, furthered even more the TRNC dependence on Turkey resource-wise and reinforced the structural part of the causal mechanism.

Economic dependence on Turkey is also evident and dictated by a mix of structural and human-made factors. Primarily, it is the political situation – the island's partition and the fact that Turkey is the only state that recognises TRNC – that determines the economic dependence on Turkey. Fikri Toros, President of the Turkish Cypriot Chamber of Commerce, confirms in one of my interviews that the economic importance of Turkey for TRNC and its business community: '70 % of our imports are from Turkey and 56 % of our exports are to Turkey. One can very confidently say that Turkey is our main trading partner and our leading partner in politics as well as in economics'. Middle Eastern countries, the Gulf countries and some Caucasian countries are other trading partners for TRNC, but all exports need to go via Turkey: 'Only 5 % of our exports reach European markets so we can say that our main export markets are the Caucasus and the Middle East. (...) There are challenges because of indirect logistics, meaning all commercial cargos and passengers come to North Cyprus via a

[216] Yakış, Yaşar. Turkish politician and retired ambassador. Former Foreign Minister. Face-to-face interview with the author. Ankara, March 2017.

Turkish port. This increases the land fee.'[217] Flying tourists also need to fly via Turkey, increasing travelling costs.

The TRNC's state budget depends on Turkish assistance. Exact data are difficult to retrieve, but according to a recent study, in 2016 Turkey has given Northern Cyprus an aid of 1 billion and 404 million dollars (excluding the money for the water pipeline).[218] This dependence makes the TRNC extremely fragile and vulnerable to any shocks affecting the economy of Turkey. The financial crisis in Turkey in 2001 exposed the fragility of TRNC economy, too. During the crisis, the Turkish lira lost over 70% of its value within a few days, and Turkey experienced a severe deterioration of financial sector balance sheets, dramatic increases in interest rates, high economic and political uncertainty, the closures of many small and large businesses and a rise in unemployment. (Okumus, Altinay, and Arasli 2005: 95). Umut Bozkurt, a lecturer at the Eastern Mediterranean University in Cyprus, remarks[219] that the financial crisis made the Turkish Cypriots realise that 'the system set up after 1974 was falling apart because so many people after the banking crisis had lost their money and Turkey resisted sending money to the government so that it could call them to *Bankazadeler*', that is, the 'Bank disaster survivors' translated literally.

Similar to TRNC economic dependence on Turkey and the Armenian relation with Russia, dependence on Turkey security-wise is based on human-made factors, but it is presented as structural by many of my interviewees. Turkey is a seen as a guarantor of the survival of TRNC. After the 1974 intervention, Turkey has a stable military presence on the island. Estimates in 2014, when the outcome happened, ran at 30.000 Turkish soldiers in Northern Cyprus[220]. Turkey's role as a guarantor of Turkish Cypriots' security has historically been so significant that is extremely difficult for the majority of Turkish Cypriots to envisage a safe

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[217] Toros, Fikri. President of the Turkish Cypriot Chamber of Commerce. Face-to-face interview with the author. Nicosia, March 2017.

[218] KKTC Ekonomi Durum Raporu http://www.kei.gov.tr/media/1653/2016-edr-22022018_fontdocx.pdf p.110

[219] Bozkurt, Umut Assist. Prof. Dr., Vice Chair Political Science and IR. Eastern Mediterranean University. Face-to-face interview with the author. Famagusta, March 2017.

[220] Al Jazeera Turk, Ülke profili: Kuzey Kıbrıs Türk Cumhuriyeti. 19 July 2014 http://www.aljazeera.com.tr/ulke-profili/ulke-profili-kuzey-kibris-turk-cumhuriyeti

future without Turkish military presence, at least in the short/medium-run. As Bozkurt remarks: 'All Turkish Cypriots feel that the fate of their country is linked to Turkey's. Some are happy about that, and some are very concerned about that'.[221] Individual political views determine, according to the scholar, individual positions vis-s-vis Turkey's role in TRNC.
TRNC's overreliance on Turkey applies to all levels, economic and political and security. It reverberates through the Turkish official rhetoric, as well. Sozen and other interviewees mentioned a famous declaration by Erdoğan: '*bizde ne varsa sizde aynesi'*, namely 'whatever we have in Turkey, you are going to have in North Cyprus'. While he meant it a positive way (he was speaking about the water pipeline and other infrastructures), additional interpretations in TRNC grasped messages such as 'we will save and protect the Turkish Cypriots forever' to 'your fate is intrinsically linked to ours'.[222] The upcoming analysis of the ideational part of the causal mechanism further displays and unpacks this dependence.

The second part of the causal mechanism responds to Parsons' institutional logic, in which mechanisms of path dependency play an important role[223]. The institutional part is not as strong as it was in the case of Armenia, where membership in the Eurasian Economic Union was perceived by many as a 'natural choice', being the continuation of Armenia being a member in the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). However, the reluctance of Turkish Cypriots to perpetuate the institutionalised security structures and especially the Turkish guarantorship – a prominent issue in the ideational part of the mechanism – may also speak to this logic. There is an interesting element pointed out by one of my interviewees related to the survival of TRNC elites. According to Murat Soysal, assistant of the Turkish Cypriot member of the Committee on Missing Persons, most of the politicians in TRNC support the status quo despite the overall benefits of reunification. A comprehensive settlement would be against their interest because the institutional reconfiguration after the

[221] Bozkurt, Umut Assist. Prof. Dr., Vice Chair Political Science and IR. Eastern Mediterranean University. Face-to-face interview with the author. Famagusta, March 2017.

[222] Sozen, Ahmet. Assoc. Prof. Dr., Political Science and IR, Eastern Mediterranean University. Face-to-face interview with the author. Famagusta, March 2017.

[223] Institutions are human-made, hence modifiable. Often, they are affected by path dependence, defined by historical institutionalists as when choices formed with the creation of an institution have a constraining effect on the future (Greener 2005:62). This dynamic occurs because of institutions' tendency towards inertia and the costs and efforts of reverting established patterns.

reunification would cause a decrease in the number of parliamentary seats assigned to TRNC: 'In the TRNC we have 50 members of the parliament, a government, a prime minister, *this* minister and *that* minister. This will change with reunification. (...) How do you expect these people to support a comprehensive settlement? I would like to exclude Akıncı because he wanted to have a settlement as much as Anastasiades. But this is the case with all the other parties.'[224] According to this logic, many TRNC politicians and officials would only pay lip service to the goal of reunification, while preferring the privileges they enjoy in the current situation.

The third and last part of the causal mechanism is the ideational one, examining how the adoption of certain ideational elements—culture, norms, ideas, practices— led people to interpret their environment and 'interests' in certain ways. (Parsons 2007: 19) This part is the one that speaks most to Turkey's soft power, which I operationalise through soft power narratives that are perceived as 'natural' by the targeted audiences. In this case study, the 'big brother' narrative is, by far, the most prominent one declined in other sub-narratives (mainly, 'Turkey as a saviour' - similar to the case of Armenia - or 'Turkey as a motherland'). The narrative of 'Turkey as a powerful and resilient regional power' has a limited impact, due to the dependence on Turkey and the idea of 'shared fate'.

The first dimension of the ideational part of the mechanism is the perception among Turkish Cypriots of Turkey as 'saviour'. The website of TRNC Foreign Ministry reads: 'During the difficult years between 1963 and 1974, the Republic of Turkey was the main supporter of the Turkish Cypriots in their struggle. Turkish Cypriots managed to survive during these years with the firm financial and moral support of Turkey.'[225] Turkey's intervention in favour of its kinspeople in Cyprus understandably generated a sense of gratitude and indebtedness that many of my interviewees share still today. When asked to indicate the landmark moments defining TRNC-Turkey relations, a high-ranking member of TRNC Presidency simply

[224] Soysal, Murat. Assistant of the Turkish Cypriot member of the Committee on Missing Persons. Face-to-face interview with the author. Nicosia, March 2017.

[225] TRNC Deputy Prime Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Relations with Turkey http://mfa.gov.ct.tr/foreign-policy/relations-with-turkey/

answered: 'They came and sacrificed their lives here in 1974. This is the key historical event'.[226]

After the intervention, not only did Turkey consolidate its saviour image, but it also became the *only* actor protecting the interests and safety of Turkey Cypriots, acting more and more like a big brother. The isolation and lack of alternatives increased the feeling of fear among Turkish Cypriots and their psychological dependence on Turkey's protection. Even though the probability of intercommunal violence today is low, Turkish Cypriots would hardly renounce Turkey's guarantorship. The experience of Sozen confirms this psychological attitude:

> I have been conducting public opinion polls on both sides of the island with a think-tank that we (the EMU) are working since 2009. The majority of the Turkish Cypriots say; "I am not going to accept this solution if Turkey is not a guarantor for Cyprus". (...) Due to the existential threat that came from the Greek Cypriots, the majority of people want and trust a Turkish guarantee in a future solution. [227]

Bozkurt confirms this view and highlights that the role of Turkey as a big brother is perceived as natural, even among those who criticise it:

> Most of the Turkish Cypriots want Turkey as a guarantor. (...) They are afraid because of what happened in Cyprus back in the 60s. (...) Interestingly, I know some people that are very pro-reconciliation and pro-peace. They are criticising Turkey all the time, but also support Turkey's guarantorship. (...) We do not trust the EU to protect us if something happens. We do not trust the federal police, either. (...) It is a psychological fear. Some people would not accept a deal unless Turkey is somehow part of it.

Due to the international isolation, Turkey also became the only door to the world for Turkish Cypriots. In this respect, Turkey acts as the 'only bridge connecting the TRNC and the Turkish Cypriots with the rest of the world on humanitarian and vital issues. Even the basic human rights of the Turkish Cypriots such as transportation, telecommunication and postal

[226] High ranking official, TRNC Presidency. Face-to-face interview with the author. Nicosia, March 2017.
[227] Sozen, Ahmet. Assoc.Prof.Dr., Political Science and IR, Eastern Mediterranean University. Face-to-face interview with the author. Famagusta, March 2017.

services are provided through Turkey.'[228] This function provides Turkey with considerable soft and hard power[229]. According to Olgun, 'In a globalised world, isolation and the fact that there has to be a touchdown in Turkey for flights to come to North Cyprus naturally makes the Turkish Cypriots dependent or even over-dependent on Turkey to be able to leave. Turkey is the only door. (...) That provides Turkey with significant means if it wants to use them.'[230] Smeekes et al. (2017) demonstrate that members of a community are more likely to support their ingroup historical narrative when they feel threatened, as this helps them to cement their ingroup identity. In the case of TRNC, the authors specify that the ingroup narrative defines Turkey as a saviour against Greek Cypriot domination. (Smeekes et al. 2017: 286) Therefore, Turkey's image as a protector of TRNC security and economy fuels gratitude among Turkish Cypriots, enhancing the effectiveness of Turkey's 'big brother' narrative in TRNC. At the same time, Ankara's remarkable political leverage may generate fears of overdependence among Turkish Cypriots rather than being a soft power source. Here it becomes clear how thin the line separating hard and soft power is. It also shows that a Gramscian reading of soft power is useful in unpacking the links between the hard and soft dimensions of power. Indeed, the extent to which Turkey's role as a benevolent, big brother is perceived as common sense in TRNC determines the effectiveness of Ankara's soft power, which, in turn, contributes to cementing its influence and the achievement of foreign policy objectives.

Other interviewees also mention the narrative 'Turkey as a mother country (*ana vatan*)' as a powerful factor, which is stronger than in the case of Russia-Armenia relations. However, this is a problematic narrative, at times, because it entails a degree of hierarchy even bigger than the saviour and big brother dimensions. As Sozen says,

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[228] TRNC Deputy Prime Ministry and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Relations with Turkey http://mfa.gov.ct.tr/foreign-policy/relations-with-turkey/

[229] The role of Turkey as the only door to the world was scaled down, at least for many citizens, after the easing of border restrictions in 2003. Then, hundreds of Greek and Turkish Cypriots crossed the island's dividing line for the first time in nearly 30 years, and many Turkish Cypriots acquired the RoC passport. However, little has changed trade and transportation-wise formally.

[230] Olgun, Ergun. Businessperson and Negotiator at TRNC Presidency. Face-to-face interview with the author. Nicosia, March 2017.

> "The motherland or babyland (*yavru vatan*) discourse" has been with us forever from the very beginning. It is creating an allergy especially with pro-solution and pro-EU and left-wing people in North Cyprus. This has been probably communicated to Turkey so many times, but the Turkish officials continue to use it. Some of them were due to ignorance, and some of them do it deliberately. I don't know the number, but there are dozens of Turkish elites who are using it for a purpose like a situation "I am your mother, and I am one who decides".[231]

The narrative describing Turkey as a powerful and resilient state also reinforces some elements of the big brother narrative in TRNC. The fact that Turkey is more and more wealthy and relevant is crucial for TRNC due to its dependence on the Turkish economy, but it also feeds into the ideational part of the causal mechanism: Turkey is seen as is the economic benefactor, with the means to act for the welfare of TRNC. Toros mentions the 'remarkable contributions to Northern Cyprus in terms of the infrastructural extended condition, uplifting of our infrastructural quality, the economic growth, their contributions to states budget as well as their subsidies towards the projects in the North' and confirms that Turkey is the only foreign investor, which is of key importance particularly in sectors like tourism, higher education and health. He also compares the current situation with the past economic failures: 'The economic growth in 1974 was negligible. Today it is approximately %2 per annum. The Turkish Cypriots had only %5 of the share in GDP before 1974 on the whole island of Cyprus. Today we have about %25 of the total GDP of the island.'[232] Turkey largely contributes to these economic successes. The economic growth increasing Turkey's capabilities over the last 15 years also determined more ambitious investments, such as the above-mentioned water pipeline project. But according to Bozkurt, Turkey's growth is a source of pride for many Turkish Cypriots in itself:

> Many people feel excited about Turkey as being a bigger power. There is a lot of fascination with Turkey's significant growth since 2002. Even if you tell them that Turkey's growth is on a shaky foundation and this growth is a result of construction sector, they do not go to the details, but they are so impressed with the airport

[231] Sozen, Ahmet. Assoc.Prof.Dr., Political Science and IR, Eastern Mediterranean University. Face-to-face interview with the author. Famagusta, March 2017.
[232] Toros, Fikri. President of the Turkish Cypriot Chamber of Commerce. Face-to-face interview with the author. Nicosia, March 2017.

> when they go to Istanbul. Especially right wing people think "Turkey, our motherland, is growing."[233]

Other ideational factors include ethnic, language and religious links. They have historically established a cultural bond between Turkey and TRNC that is particularly strong in light of the ethnic, language and religious differences between Turkish and Greek Cypriots. In this regard, the 'Turkey as a Muslim democracy' narrative should be present, since it stresses the co-existence and compatibility of Islam and democracy. However, two factors – one structural and one contingent – scale down the importance of this narrative and cultural affinities at large: the 'island mentality' in TRNC and Turkey's evolution toward an Islamisation of society, explained in Chapter Three and Four.

The 'island mentality' is what some of my interviewees called the notion of isolated communities perceiving themselves as exceptional or superior to others, mainly because of lacking social exposure. The concept is sometimes used in psychology and even in (geo)politics: for instance, the British have often been attributed 'island mentality' by continental Europeans, who referred to the 'stubborn aloofness of British politics to Continental affairs'. (Dijkink 1998: 297) Turkish Cypriots' historical experience as an isolated minority caused them to distrust the Greek Cypriots (Michael 2007: 592), and turn towards Turkey (Bryant 2004: 903). At the same time, some interviewees mentioned a process of cultural differentiation from Turkey due to the 'island mentality'. For instance, Yakış claims that 'islanders have allergies to exogenous ideas', clinging on to ingroup narratives.[234] Yusuf Kanlı, a popular Turkish Cypriot journalist at the Hurriyet Daily News, describes this phenomenon accurately:

> We tend to believe that we are special people (and that) that Cyprus is the centre of the world. We tend to believe that we are superior to everyone else. Also, the Greek Cypriots do not consider that they are superior to the mainland Greeks. We have always believed that we are superior to the Turks in Turkey. There are reasons for it. About 99.9 % of the Turkish Cypriots or the Greek Cypriots are university graduates. At least 90 % of the Turkish Cypriots or the Greek Cypriots speak minimum two languages.

[233] Bozkurt, Umut Assist. Prof. Dr., Vice Chair Political Science and IR. Eastern Mediterranean University. Face-to-face interview with the author. Famagusta, March 2017.
[234] Yakış, Yaşar. Turkish politician and retired ambassador. Former Foreign Minister. Face-to-face interview with the author. Ankara, March 2017.

> They have elements of British, Greek, Roman, Arabic and many other cultures. They are more tolerant, but they know who they are. They are islanders.[235]

This 'island mentality' is also mentioned among scholars. Uzer (2011: 115) also writes of how Turkish Cypriot identity, while identifying closely with mainland Turkey, has historically displayed its peculiarities: 'in fact, one could quite plausibly argue that identity was situational, to the extent that Turkish Cypriots considered themselves as Turks when they were in Cyprus, to differentiate themselves from the Greek Cypriots, as Cypriots when they were in Turkey, to differentiate themselves from the mainland Turks, and again as Turkish when they were in a European setting'.[236] Therefore, if on the one hand, the 'island mentality' causes the landlock feeling deepening Turkish Cypriots dependence on Turkey, on the other hand, it makes Turkish Cypriots different.

According to a TRNC Negotiation Board Member, some elements of this mentality perdures, but 2004 was a turning point that dramatically changed Turkish Cypriots' way of thinking:

> We have a pathetic way of thinking, we see Cyprus as the centre of the world (...), but since 2004, things have changed. The Turkish Cypriots saw the light at the end of the tunnel; they saw that they could exist as a community, not being a small child of Turkey, not being a minority in Cyprus. (...) We have this motivation of the European Union, and in that sense, I think the Turkish Cypriots made big steps integrating with the European societies and adapted to the European way of life, institutions or values.[237]

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[235] Kanlı, Yusuf, journalist at Hurriyet Daily News. Face-to-face interview with the author. Ankara, November 2017.

[236] But while the 'island mentality' is a recognized factor, Turkey's Kemalist values have contributed to shaping the identity of Turkish Cypriots over the decades, providing Turkey with considerable soft power. According to Uzer (2011: 115): 'Nationalism among Turkish Cypriots developed by emulating Atatürk's reforms and by trying to establish close contacts with the motherland'. In 1948, the Green Island magazine (yeşil ada mecmuası), which was for more than three years the main pan-Turkist publishing vehicle, showed that Turkish Cypriots were blood brothers, but also they were as Kemalist as, if not more Kemalist than their counterparts in Anatolia. (Özkan 2014: 544)

[237] Negotiation Board Member, TRNC Presidency. Face-to-face interview with the author. Nicosia, March 2017.

This openness to the world and especially to Europe was certainly favoured by Cyprus' history (Turkish Cypriots have suffered from centuries of foreign domination, which exposed them to coloniser very diverse regarding religion and culture) and by the current diaspora[238]. However, the effect of the EU anchor mentioned by Bozkurt seems more controversial. The membership granted to the RoC in 2004 without a solution to the conflict and the EU's unsuccessful attempts to play a mediator role caused grievances among the Turkish Cypriots. The vast majority of my interviewees today downsized the EU factor in achieving a solution or even resent an allegedly disruptive role in the negotiations process. The loss of hope in the EU is likely not only to deepen dependence on Turkey but also to enhance that 'island mentality', disengagement and sense of isolation among many Turkish Cypriots. The result of TRNC's sense of political and economic isolation has 'tied Northern Cyprus to Turkey in ways that no independent state would be bound (…) and, at the same time, caused a sense of being cut off from the world, of languishing in another time' (Hatay and Bryant 2008: 429).

The second factor scaling down cultural affinities between TRNC and Turkey has to do with Turkey's domestic evolution, which is analysed in details in the chapter tackling Russia's and Turkey's foreign policies and in the narrative 'Turkey as a Muslim democracy'. The increasing illiberal turn taking Erdoğan's government worries all interviewees in general. In particular, the specific aspect of increasing Islamisation of Turkey results very unpopular among my interviewees. Despite being Muslim, religion does not occupy a prominent role in the daily like of Turkish Cypriots. For a high-level TRNC official, Islam is rather a cultural phenomenon, but the 'Turkish Cypriots hardly go to the mosque except for *Bayrams* (religious holidays in Islam) and, after they go to mosques, they eat *Kebap* and drink alcohol'.[239] A TRNC Negotiation Board Member confirms that Turkish Cypriots keep their religious practices strictly in an individualistic and private sphere: 'Turkish Cypriots right now want to distance themselves from Turkey because they do not think that Turkey, today, represents the Turkish Cypriot identity. We do not have that strong part of Islam in our identity or our daily lives or in our way of self-identification. We have a different culture with (...) a different way of practising Islam and a more democratic and human rights

[238] According to a 2012 estimate, there is almost one million Turkish Cypriots living abroad, mainly in Turkey, the United Kingdom, Australia, and the United States.
http://www.starkibris.net/index.asp?haberID=125704

[239] High ranking official, TRNC Presidency. Face-to-face interview with the author. Nicosia, March 2017.

oriented approach. It is really hard to associate with today's Turkey.'[240] This means that, while the fact that Turkey's economic prosperity is a good thing for TRNC is common sense, Turkey's political and religious evolution is seen as damaging for TRNC society.

Fears of Turkey's attempt to increase the role of Islam in TRNC seem to concern Turkish Cypriots society across-the-board, regardless of the political orientation. As Bozkurt explains,

> Right-wing Turkish Cypriots feel a little uneasy about Turkey's association with the Islamic groups because nationalist Turkish Cypriots are secular. So many mosques have been built here with the JDP; there is a deliberate policy of injecting the island with Sunni Islam. They are depriving fans of Alawites for example; the Alawites want to set up *cemevi* (Alevis' places of worship), there's no money for them, but Turkey keeps on sending money for mosques everywhere.[241]

Foreign analysts point to Turkey's political use of religion in an attempt to assimilate and 'Turkicise' the island. Ardemagni, for instance, sees in concepts such as 'modernisation' and 'development' political vectors of convergence and incremental assimilation: 'economic dependency paves the way also to rising social penetration by Turkey (ex. mosques, imam schools, "Turkification"), since it further reduces the space for local ownership.'[242] Michael (2014) claims that just as Atatürk used secularism to integrate the Turkish Cypriots into the Turkish nation, today the JDP is using Islam to re-integrate the Turkish Cypriots, re-conceptualising them not as 'Turks of Cyprus' but as 'Muslim Turks of Cyprus'. (Michael 2014: 15) However, the Turkish Cypriots look at the JDP's abandonment of Kemalist secularism and their embrace of political Islam with fear, for they suspect it is resulting in an "Islamification" of the island. (Boone 2016: 190) In other words, Turkey is failing to build consensus over the fact that Ankara's increasingly conservative and religious shift is

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[240] Negotiation Board Member, TRNC Presidency. Face-to-face interview with the author. Nicosia, March 2017.

[241] Bozkurt, Umut Assist. Prof. Dr., Vice Chair Political Science and IR. Eastern Mediterranean University. Face-to-face interview with the author. Famagusta, March 2017.

[242] Ardemagni, Eleonora. ISPI Associate Research Fellow. Face-to-face interview with the author. Milan, May 2018

beneficial for Northern Cyprus, too. Hence, the evolution of the 'Turkey as a Muslim democracy' narrative seems to pose a risk for Turkey's soft power in TRNC.

Energy politics seems to be the main cause of the suspension of peace talks in Cyprus in 2014. However, this is only a symptom of a larger problem: the entrenched distrust between the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities, sometimes fuelled by the actions of external powers, such as Turkey and Greece. To build a comprehensive causal mechanism for this outcome and define Turkey's role in it, Turkey-TRNC relations need to be unpacked more broadly. Ankara was able to shape TRNC policy preferences and position in the negotiations thanks to its hard and soft power. Similar to Armenia, TRNC depends on Turkey for its security and economy, but the extent of the dependency is far bigger in this case study.

Furthermore, the domestic evolution of Turkey, especially its illiberal turn, Islamisation and drifting away from the 'EU path', appear to be problematic for Turkey's soft power. During the first years of the JDP rule, there was genuine enthusiasm in TRNC for Turkey's emphasis on economic progress and its European perspective, both elements of the narrative 'Turkey as a powerful regional state'; nowadays, most of my interviewees confirm that the Turkish Cypriots regret the weakening of Turkey's EU perspective. The evolution of the narrative 'Turkey as a Muslim democracy' also concerns Turkish Cypriots, who are traditionally jealous of their secularism – being 'perhaps the most secular Muslim group in the world' (Michael 2014: 20). Turkey's 'Big Brother' narrative is the strongest, highlighting the thin line separating hard and soft power. On the one hand, this narrative provided Turkey with some soft power, especially based in Turkey's defence of TRNC's interests and its image of a 'natural' protector of TRNC. However, the attractiveness of Turkey's soft power appears to be threatened by Ankara's domestic evolution.

6.4. Conclusion

This chapter has explained the deadlock of the 2014 round of reunification talks in Cyprus, with the objective of unpacking how Turkey §impacted TRNC's policy choices and negotiating position. It claimed that quarrels over the exploitation of energy resources determined the suspension of reunification talks. Yet this was only one of many episodes

showing a deep lack of trust between the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities – a decades-long situation also involving external powers, such as Turkey and Greece. The causal mechanism explaining this outcome focused on the role of Turkey's hard and soft power in affecting TRNC's policy choices. In particular, I wanted to trace which of Turkey's soft power narratives are accepted as common sense by TRNC.

The causal mechanism comprises three parts: one structural, one institutional and one ideational. All three parts are necessary for the mechanism to work, but the structural and ideational are the most prominent ones. The structural part speaks to Turkey's hard power and the situation of TRNC's overdependence on Turkey, which perdures today. The ideational part relates to Turkey's soft power, but it relies heavily on hard power: for example, the 'Turkey as a big brother' narrative would not be effective had Turkey not have the means to protect TRNC and provide for its welfare. This shows the bond between hard and soft power.

Nevertheless, not all of the soft power narratives making up the ideational part of the causal mechanism are equally effective among Turkish Cypriots. My analysis and fieldwork show that the 'Turkey as a big brother' narrative is widely accepted as common sense and is considered to play in favour of Turkish Cypriots, also due to the lack of alternatives. In other words, Turkey's protection, the essence of the big brother narrative, is perceived as natural, but the structural and institutional lack of alternatives keeps furthering this dependence on Turkey. On the other hand, the evolution of the narratives 'Turkey as a powerful regional state' and 'Turkey as a Muslim democracy' is seen as more problematic, because it implies both a weaker EU perspective and a growing role of Islam in Turkey.

Hence, the illiberal turn and Islamisation of Erdoğan's government are damaging Turkey's image in TRNC. The JDP renegotiated official notions of Turkishness – shifting away from Kemalist values and embracing both Islamic values and the Ottoman legacy – and this is impacting TRNC's own notion of Turkishness. (Boone 2016: 280) The specific aspect of increasing role of Islam in Turkey results very unpopular among my interviewees and supports the claim that the conservative evolution of the narrative 'Turkey as a Muslim democracy' results not attractive (contrary to Armenia, where the population would endorse Russia's conservative agenda). Should this disconnect grow, structural factors (economic and

political dependence on Turkey) may take over the ideational ones, reducing the soft power of Turkey in TRNC.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS

My thesis analysed Russia's and Turkey's soft power under the governments of Vladimir Putin and Tayyip Erdoğan, respectively. Soft power is the ability to attract and co-opt, rather than coerce or give financial incentives. (Nye 2011) The concept is popular to the extent that states as diverse as the United Kingdom, Japan and Saudi Arabia claim to have incorporated soft power policies into their foreign policy tools. However, the original definition of the concept (Nye 1990, 2004, 2011) has liberal biases that limit the application of soft power only to liberal democracies. In my thesis, I aim to address this shortcoming. First, I argue that a revised concept of soft power through a Gramscian reading (Zahran and Ramos 2010) would provide us with a common theoretical framework that could be applied to all countries, liberal and illiberal democracies alike. Second, I claim that – contrary to what Nye (2013) argues – illiberal powers may have soft power. Turkey's and Russia's soft power is different from their hard power – for instance, their military – but relies on it. I argue that hard power and soft power are intertwined; the analysis of my case studies support this claim, showing that, despite massive use of hard power, Russia and Turkey were able to exert soft power in Armenia and TRNC, respectively.

Scholars have been underscoring the liberal biases present in Nye's concept, which is based on universal and liberal democratic values, making it a 'Western' concept. (Keating and Kaczmarska 2017; Tafuro Ambrosetti 2017; Sherr 2013; Gallarotti 2011; Zahran and Ramos 2010) This acknowledgement drove my research, which is structured around a few core research questions. First, I wanted to find out whether it is possible to speak of soft power in the case of 'illiberal democracies' (Zakaria 1997), that is, countries where democratically elected governments do not always abide by democratic values, and civil society faces severe constraints, as it is increasingly happening in both Turkey and Russia. Can 'illiberal democracies' use a concept created for US foreign policy and embedded in liberal Western values? If so, what alternative theoretical frameworks can help researchers carry out this analysis better? To answer these questions, I looked at Nye's definition of soft power, unpacked it to single out strengths and flaws, and found ways to re-conceptualise and

operationalise the concept with reference to 'illiberal democracies'. Drawing on Antonio Gramsci's understanding of 'hegemony' and 'common sense', I defined soft power as the 'ability of a state or a state's ruling elite to influence the international discourse such that certain policies, worldviews, and narratives are framed as "common sense", paving the way for the establishment of power relations'. Such a definition of soft power builds upon the idea of 'consensus-building', wherein the notion of 'consensus' is not meant to be normatively loaded and associated with 'universal' and 'democratic' values. Therefore, the definition I propose can be a suitable analytical tool to both frame and study the soft power of all countries, regardless of their political systems or if they are Western or non/Western.

My second puzzle was around the operationalisation of the concept of soft power. How is it possible to define and assess a concept as abstract as soft power? Common ways to operationalise the concept include looking at opinion polls measuring the popularity of a country among foreign audiences; analysing specific soft power institutions and policies such as the ones promoting language; or assessing the popularity of cultural products, such as a TV series abroad. While touching upon these indicators, I chose to focus on 'soft power narratives'. Narratives are useful tools to understand a country's collective identity-making processes and its domestic and foreign policy, and therefore soft power. I built upon the work of constructivist and critical scholars who associated soft power with language and power, and I selected three 'soft power narratives' for Turkey and three for Russia. I then proceeded to apply political discourse analysis (van Dijk 1997) to written texts, including transcriptions of official speeches, foreign policy concepts, and press releases by top Turkish and Russian officials, especially current presidents Putin and Erdoğan. Barnett (1999: 23) defines a narrative as a 'story that is joined by a plot' and contains indications about which defining moments shaped a country's past and should determine its future. I selected Russia and Turkey's main soft power narratives and illustrated, through quotes, how these narratives reverberate throughout Russia and Turkey's domestic and foreign policies. The three selected narratives for Russia are: I) Russia as a champion of multilateralism and multipolarity; II) Russia as a conservative power; III) Russia as a big brother. The three selected narratives for Turkey are: I) Turkey as a powerful and resilient regional power; II) Turkey as a Muslim democracy; III) Turkey as a big brother. I argue that focusing on how certain narratives are accepted as 'natural' ('common sense' à la Gramsci), regardless of their actual content, is an effective way to operationalise soft power and can help overcome the Western-liberal biases of Nye's formulation of the concept. Furthermore, narratives constitute a way to

operationalise soft power, whose effectiveness can be assessed through several methods (interviews, focus groups, discourse analysis, etc.).

Third, I aimed to assess how targeted audiences perceive Russia and Turkey's soft power narratives – ultimately, to evaluate the effectiveness of soft power. Coming from a non-positivist tradition, my goal was not to 'measure' the effectiveness of soft power in precise, quantifiable terms (i.e., number of mosques built by Turkey in a country X) nor did I want to establish a strict causal relation between the achievement of an outcome X and the existence of a country's soft power. Therefore, I have chosen to use the 'explaining-outcome process-tracing' methodology, as outlined by Beach and Pedersen (2013). This methodology is based on complex rather than linear causality and allows researchers to build comprehensive causal mechanisms that explain an outcome taking into account both material factors, such as economic incentives, and immaterial ones, such as soft power. I selected two political outcomes that I considered very relevant and wanted to explain in the framework of my soft power analysis. For Russia, I focused on Armenia's decision to join the Russia-led regional integration project, the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), rather than pursuing integration with the EU as initially planned. Armenia's economy and security largely depend on Russia, but Yerevan maintains historical and cultural ties with Moscow. How did Russia's soft power impact this outcome? For Turkey, I chose the suspension of the 2014 peace negotiations in Cyprus, a process in which Turkey acts as the guarantor of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). Why did the negotiations fail? How did Turkey influence the outcome? In particular, how did it shape TRNC's interests and negotiating position? After describing the outcome and reviewing the academic literature dealing with it, I have constructed a causal mechanism explaining the outcome following an inductive path, that is, proceeding backwards from the outcome. I drew on existing literature and extensive fieldwork conducted in Turkey, Cyprus, Russia and Armenia to build a complex and multifaceted explanation for both outcomes, taking into account the role of both hard and soft power.

The analysed narratives show that the governments of Turkey and Russia are increasingly dissatisfied with what they perceive as a West-dominated liberal order and are hence willing to challenge it, also through soft power. The Economist Intelligence Unit has recorded a general trend towards the deterioration of democracy: 89 countries in their ranking appear to be regressing in 2017, compared with only 27 improving the quality of their democracy. Turkey and Russia (and their leaders) are often quoted, in international media and academic

articles, as consequences of the crisis that hit liberal democracy or even as threats to it. The results of my analysis indeed highlight that, despite some important differences, Turkey and Russia share substantial similarities as for the way they understand soft power. The first similarity is that the political evolution at the domestic level – what I called the 'illiberal turn' – led both countries to increasingly construct their images in opposition to the 'West', mainly the EU and the US. Turkey and Russia are following patterns of increasing illiberality, as shown in the chapter 'Russia's and Turkey's Foreign Policy: the illiberal turn'. Over the last years, civil liberties and the space for political opposition shrunk so much to justify defining Turkey and Russia 'illiberal democracies', namely democratically elected governments 'routinely ignoring constitutional limits on their power and depriving their citizens of basic rights and freedoms'. (Zakaria 1997: 22) This illiberal evolution influenced their foreign policy, which became more personalistic (centred around Putin and Erdoğan) as well as their understanding and the application of their soft power. This understanding is decoupled from the liberal, universal values underpinned by the definition of Nye. Russia and Turkey's narratives are increasingly constructed around their ability to constitute an alternative to liberal democracy, rather than being part of it. The anti-Western tone emerged from my analysis can appeal to like-minded elites in the neighbouring countries as well as Euro-sceptic groups in the EU and critics of US foreign policy.

They also use similar soft power narratives, which in some case draw from their hard power as well. This speaks to the indivisibility of power: hard and soft power are intertwined and in the case studies analysed, both Turkey and Russia played on their hard power (military might that provides them with means to protect less powerful allies or economic might justifying their image as successful models) to boost their soft power. They also build on historical links – based on their imperial role and shared past – and cultural ones – such as common religion, language, or conservatism, to construct their soft power narratives and policies. In particular, the big brother narrative was used in both Armenia and TRNC, building on Russia and Turkey's roles as saviours. In the case of Russia, it played the role of Armenia's main security provider vis-s-vis the Ottoman Empire first and Azerbaijan after. In the case of Turkey, its role as saviour is associated to the 1974 military operation in Cyprus in defence of Turkish Cypriots. In both cases, Turkey's and Russia's images as big brothers are perceived as common sense in TRNC and Armenia. Academic literature, my interviews, the opinion poll and anecdotal evidence collected during my fieldwork in Armenia and TRNC suggest that this view is shared by both local political elites and large sectors of the society.

The structural and institutional lack of alternatives contributes to making Turkey's and Russia's big brother role to be perceived as a necessary – even 'natural' – fact affecting TRNC's and Armenia's policy choices.

Conservative values are present in both narratives 'Russia as a conservative power' and 'Turkey as Muslim Democracy'. The effects that these narratives had on their targets, however, differed. They were endorsed by the deeply conservative Armenian society, especially among those who criticise the EU democracy promotion activities in Armenia. A particularly relevant claim made by this narrative that highly resonates in Yerevan is that the 'West' threatens traditional family models through the promotion of LGBT rights. The spiritual and cultural affinity with Russia is indicated as common sense, while the EU is often described as attempting to impose alien values – such as respect for sexual minorities' rights – on the Armenian society. On the other hand, the narrative 'Turkey as Muslim Democracy', especially in light of its conservative evolution, was mentioned as problematic by almost all of my interviewees in TRNC. Given that secularism is a highly-treasured value among Northern Cypriots, who see the increasingly relevant role of religion in public life in Turkey and the conservative policies adopted in fields such as alcohol consumption with preoccupation. Many of my interviewees expressed a fear that the JDP is attempting to change the Northern Cypriots' way of life and this is causing a growing disconnect between Turkey and TRNC in the cultural sphere.

The narrative depicting Russia as a champion of multilateralism and multipolarism appears not to have influenced the alignment of the Armenian government's preferences with Russia's: it is hardly mentioned in my interviews and did not feature as a prominent element in the process-tracing analysis. In TRNC, on the other hand, the narrative depicting Turkey as a powerful and resilient state did have an impact in shaping TRNC foreign policy preferences, but it evolved over time. The narrative was very much appreciated at the beginning of the JDP rule because of the economic boom that Turkey experienced over the last decade; the TRNC economy depends on the Turkish one, so it is common sense in TRNC that a flourishing economy in Turkey is beneficial for TRNC as well. Furthermore, Ankara's EU perspective, which was very strong during the first years of the JDP rule, was also a source of soft power for Turkey, but also a reason for hope for the Turkish Cypriots, who perceived the EU factor as having an important impact on the reunification process. However, now that Ankara's EU membership process is stalled and this narrative is more and

more constructed in opposition to the EU, the narrative emerges as no longer relevant in my analysis.

My thesis aimed to contribute to the literature on soft power and Russian and Turkish foreign policies. As for the first aspect, I propose a three-step process – redefining soft power conceptually, operationalising it through narratives and assessing it through process-tracing – that allows analysing the soft power of all countries, not only liberal democracies. The popularity of soft power, especially among IR practitioners, does not translate automatically into the solidity of the concept as an analytical tool. In my literature review, I point to some of the challenges that many scholars encounter when using soft power, especially with states that may not share the same liberal universal values to which Nye's concept refers. While I argue that soft power is still useful to highlight the cultural, historical and psychological mechanisms that explain how an actor exerts power over another, I also highlight the need to adjust and sharpen the concept to apply it to non-Western, rising powers. The three-step process I propose builds on a redefinition of the concept of soft power, involving an ontological shift (thanks to the application of Gramscian insights) and also a new framework to operationalise the concept (through soft power narratives) that can be applied to other countries and contexts in future research.

Another contribution is the empirical assessment of soft power based on the application of process-tracing methodology on two highly relevant instances. My analysis unpacked and explained two specific political outcomes that have cross-country relevance for Turkey, Russia and the EU. I believe that power is contextual, so I do not wish to make general claims extendable to other case studies. To quote Kramer (2016: 48): 'Even though a leader might have the capacity to do something at a particular time or in a particular place, this does not necessarily mean that he or she will possess the same capacity to achieve the same results at a different time or in a different place. The results attained by the exercise of political power are necessarily context-dependent.' However, the results matter on different levels. First, enhanced historical explanations, even if context-specific, can help sharpen theory. (George and Bennett 2005: 148) Second, the cases are relevant to see how Russia and Turkey applied their soft power in practice and how their narratives are received by relevant targets (political elites in Armenia and TRNC). For Russia, the biggest success is that its image as 'big brother' is still very much alive. The alliance with Russia is preserved even after the regime change occurred in Armenia in April-May 2018. The new Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, elected after a series of protests that forced former Prime Minister Serzh

Sargsyan to resign, claimed that he is not willing to change Armenia's geopolitical alliances. He stated that the alliance with Russia remains crucial for Armenia, as it forms part of Armenia's security system, and that his government 'will continue its policy towards the Eurasian Economic Union and the Collective Security Treaty Organization'.[243] Even if it is still too early to assess the evolution of Russian-Armenian relations under Pashinyan's rule, from his declarations and actions, it seems that Russia's key role for Armenia's security is taken for granted and remains common sense. In TRNC, my interviews and opinion polls hint to the existence of widespread gratitude towards Turkey due to its past role as a saviour. Similar to my Armenian case study, Ankara's current role as big brother may generate some discomfort among some sectors of the TRNC elites and society, but it is perceived as common sense. The deadlock of 2017 negotiations suggests that Turkey's role continue to be crucial and TRNC elites do not question it. Turkish Cypriot president Mustafa Akıncı reiterated it and explicitly said that Turkey is the 'sole guarantor for the security of Cyprus if an agreement is reached to reunite the island'.[244] However, TRNC is more dependent on Turkey, the only country who recognises it as a state, than Armenia is on Russia. In the case of Armenia, it is easier to control the dependency factor, which is also a prominent feature of Yerevan's relations with Moscow. Armenia has a more diverse foreign policy and, in January 2018, signed the EU-Armenia Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA), therefore continuing a limited integration with the EU. TRNC, on the other hand, is dependent on Turkey to such an extent that it makes the line between soft and hard power blur even more. At the same time, there is increasing dissatisfaction towards Ankara's current role of big brother, also because of the illiberal internal evolution Turkey is going through. As explained earlier, the conservative shift may hinder Turkey's soft power in TRNC in the future. However, in the analysis of my case study soft power was still at play because TRNC considered that it was common sense to align its negotiating positions with Turkey's.

My thesis has some limitations. My analysis confirmed something that is proved in the literature and recognised by the same Nye (2011): it is difficult to make a sharp demarcation

[243]Vestnik Kavkaza, 'Pashinyan: alliance with Russia crucial for Armenia', 7 June 2018. http://vestnikkavkaza.net/news/Pashinyan-alliance-with-Russia-crucial-for-Armenia.html

[244] Daily Sabah, 'TRNC says Turkey's guarantee in Cyprus is not negotiable', 16 January 2017 https://www.dailysabah.com/diplomacy/2017/01/16/trnc-says-turkeys-guarantee-in-cyprus-is-not-negotiable

between soft and hard power. This fine line makes a precise assessment of the effectiveness of soft power difficult, and this is indeed the biggest limitation that my research has. The need to downplay the consequences of this shortcoming can open up new promising research avenues. My thesis can be the starting point for future studies to broaden my redefinition of soft power and shed light on new ways to operationalise the concept. Analyses of how the evolution of the domestic situation in Armenia and TRNC affect these countries' relation with Russia and Turkey would be interesting. They would show the evolution of how targeted audiences perceive Russia and Turkey's soft power narratives. At the same time, future studies may concentrate on how domestic shifts in power-projecting countries can have an impact on their soft power narratives (for example, after the June 2018 Presidential elections in Turkey or in the case of a possible end of the sanction regimes against Russia and improvement of the relations with the West).

Other case studies for Turkey and Russia can be analysed to increase the strength of the comparative approach used in my thesis. For instance, adding targeted countries that have a strong historical and political link with the power-projecting country, but enjoy a clear EU perspective too, such as Bosnia and Herzegovina for Turkey or Serbia for Russia. Finally, including other power-projecting countries in the study would also enhance the soft power scholarship. Especially, researchers could compare the use of soft power by liberal democracies such as Japan or Canada to the use of power by Turkey and Russia to delve more into differences and possible similarities. The evolution of Turkish and Russian soft power will depend on a variety of factors, both internal and external, which are impossible to predict. My research can help track and understand this evolution, both because it dissected Turkish and Russian soft power's strengths and weaknesses and because it showed that soft power is not a prerogative of liberal democracies only.

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APPENDICES

A. LIST OF INTERVIEWEES IN RUSSIA AND ARMENIA (CHAPTER 5)

Russia:

1. Avetikyan, Gevorg. IMARES Program Associate Director, Professor, European University at St. Petersburg. Face-to-face interview with the author. St Petersburg, Russia. April 2016
2. Isachenko, Tatiana, Prof. of International Economic Relations and Foreign Economic Relations, MGIMO University. Expert, RIAC. Face-to-face interview with the author. Moscow, Russia. May 2016
3. Krickovic, Andrej. Assistant Professor, Faculty of World Economy and International Affairs, National Research University Higher School of Economics. Face-to-face interview with the author. Moscow, Russia. May 2016
4. Krivoguz, Mikhail Igorevich. Senior Fellow, Institute of World Economy and International Relations of the Russian Academy of Sciences (IMEMO). Face-to-face interview with the author. Moscow, Russia. May 2016
5. Lomagin, Nikita. Vice-Rector for GR, Academic Director of the ENERPO Program, Professor, Department of Political Science and Sociology, European University at Saint Petersburg. Face-to-face interview with the author. St Petersburg, Russia. April 2016
6. Markedonov, Sergey. Director of the Department for Problems of Ethnic Relations at the Institute for Political and Military Analysis in Moscow, Associate professor of Russian State University for the Humanities, expert of Russian International Affairs Council. Face-to-face interview with the author. Moscow, Russia. June 2016
7. Shakhnazaryan, Nona. Research Fellow, Centre for Independent Social Research (CISR), St Petersburg, Russia. Skype interview, July 2016.
8. Sherov-Ignatiev, Vladimir G., Associate Professor, SPbSU, Face-to-face interview with the author. St Petersburg, Russia. April 2016
9. Silaev, Nikolai. Senior Researcher at Moscow state institute of international relations, Institute of International Studies. Face-to-face interview with the author. Moscow, Russia. June 2016

10. Vaganov, Andrei Aleksandrovich, representative from the Interparliamentary Assembly of CIS. Face-to-face interview with the author. St Petersburg, Russia. June 2016
11. Vinokurov, Evgeny. Economist, Director of the Centre for Integration Studies at the Eurasian Development Bank, Face-to-face interview with the author. St Petersburg, Russia. April 2016

Armenia:

1. Bagdasaryan, Gegam. President of Stepanakert Press Club and Editor-in-chief of analytical monthly 'Analyticon', Face-to-face interview with the author. Yerevan, Armenia. February 2017
2. Chalupová, Andrea. Political Officer at the EU Delegation to Armenia. Face-to-face interview with the author. Yerevan, Armenia. February 2017
3. Geghamyan, Varuzhan. President of the Armenian National Cultural Autonomy of St Petersburg. Face-to-face interview with the author. St Petersburg, May 2016. Follow up: Yerevan, Armenia. February 2017
4. Giragosian, Richard. Director, Regional Studies Center (RSC). Face-to-face interview with the author. Yerevan, Armenia. February 2017
5. Grigoryan, Armen. Visiting scholar at the Central European University, Department of Political Science. Email interview, December 2016
6. Kostanyan, Tigran. Senior manager, Stabilization Loans, Eurasian Development Bank in Yerevan. Face-to-face interview with the author. Yerevan, Armenia. February 2017
7. Mariam Matevosyan, Policy Fellowship and Program Coordinator at Open Society Foundations, Armenia. Face-to-face interview with the author. Yerevan, Armenia. February 2017
8. Poghosyan, Armen. Deputy Director of the Representative Office of the Eurasian Development Bank in Yerevan. Face-to-face interview with the author. Yerevan, Armenia. February 2017
9. Poghosyan, Tevan founder of the International Center for Human Development (ICHD) Former MP (independent), Parliament of the Republic of Armenia. Face-to-face interview with the author. Yerevan, Armenia. February 2017
10. Shadunts, Alen. Program Coordinator; at Open Society Foundations, Armenia. Face-to-face interview with the author. Yerevan, Armenia. February 2017

11. Tumasyan, Mushegh A. former Deputy Minister of Economy, Chairman/Research Director of the ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND RESEARCH Centre (EDRC). Face-to-face interview with the author. Yerevan, Armenia. February 2017
12. Yenokyan, Aghasi, founder of the Armenian Centre for Political and International Studies, editor-in-chief of the news agency 1in.am. Face-to-face interview with the author. Yerevan, Armenia. February 2017
13. Zolyan, Mikayel. Analyst of the Regional Studies Centre. Face-to-face interview with the author. Yerevan, Armenia. February 2017

B. LIST OF INTERVIEWEES IN TURKEY AND TRNC (CHAPTER 6)

1. High-ranking official, Turkish MFA. Face-to-face interview with the author. Ankara, March 2017
2. Ardemagni, Eleonora. ISPI Associate Research Fellow. Face-to-face interview with the author. Milan, May 2018
3. Aygın, Esra. Freelance journalist. Face-to-face interview with the author. Nicosia, March 2017.
4. Barış, Ulaş. Journalist at Kıbrıs Postası. Face-to-face interview with the author. Nicosia, March 2017.
5. Negotiation Board Member, TRNC Presidency. Face-to-face interview with the author. Nicosia, March 2017.
6. Bozkurt, Umut Assist. Prof. Dr., Vice Chair Political Science and IR. Eastern Mediterranean University. Face-to-face interview with the author. Famagusta, March 2017.
7. High-ranking official, TRNC Presidency. Face-to-face interview with the author. Nicosia, March 2017.
8. Eronen, Orhan. Businessperson / political activist (Dayanışma, Nicosia). Face-to-face interview with the author. Ankara, November 2017.
9. Ertuğ, Osman. Former de facto ambassador of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) to the United States of America from 2002 to 2007, (de facto Chief of Mission to the United Nations). Face-to-face interview with the author. Nicosia, March 2017.
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19. Toros, Fikri. President of the Turkish Cypriot Chamber of Commerce. Face-to-face interview with the author. Nicosia, March 2017.
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21. Yakış, Yaşar. Turkish politician and retired ambassador. Former Foreign Minister of the Republic of Turkey. Face-to-face interview with the author. Ankara, March 2017.

C. ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL

UYGULAMALI ETİK ARAŞTIRMA MERKEZİ
APPLIED ETHICS RESEARCH CENTER

ORTA DOĞU TEKNİK ÜNİVERSİTESİ
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February 08, 2017

Subject: Human Subjects Ethical Review Board Decision

To: Eleonora Tafuro

From: Human Subjects Ethical Review Board, Middle East Technical University

Dear Ms. Tafuro,

We would like to inform you that your study, supervised by Dr. Başak Kale and entitled **"Building a Sphere of Influence in Their Neighbourhood: The Soft Power of Turkey and Russia"** has been approved by the Human Subjects Ethical Review Board of the Middle East Technical University.

For your future references the approval protocol number of your study is **2017-SOS-011,** and the approval will be valid between January 08, 2017 and March 30, 2018

With Kind Regards,

Prof. Dr. Canan SÜMER
Chair

Prof. Dr. Mehmet UTKU
Board Member

Prof. Dr. Ayhan SOL
Board Member

Doç.Dr. Yaşar KONDAKÇI
Board Member

Prof. Dr. Ayhan Gürbüz DEMİR
Board Member

Assist. Prof. Dr. Pınar KAYGAN
Board Member

Assist. Prof. Dr. Emre SELÇUK
Board Member

D. CURRICULUM VITAE

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WORK EXPERIENCE

RESEARCH FELLOW // Jan 2018 - to date
Italian Institute for International Political Studies (ISPI), via Clerici 5. Milan
* Research on Russia's foreign policy, Russia-Turkey and Russia-EU relations, EU enlargement and neighbourhood policies
* Drafting of policy briefs, commentaries and book chapters

MARIE CURIE EARLY STAGE RESEARCHER // Sep 2014 – Sept 2017
Middle East Technical University (METU), Ankara, Turkey
* Research and Publications on Russian and Turkish Foreign Policy in the framework of the Power and Region in a Multipolar Order (PRIMO) Project
* Organisation of outreach activities, including chairing a seven-panel section in the 2017 edition of the European International Association Studies (EISA) conference.

JUNIOR RESEARCHER // Oct 2012 – Aug 2014
Foundation for International Relations and Foreign Dialogue (FRIDE). Rue de Confédérés, 47. Brussels
* Research and Publications on EU-Russia relations and EU neighbourhood policies
* Research and project assistance: European Strategy and Policy Analysis System (ESPAS) governance and power report, an analysis of long-term global trends and the challenges and options for the EU (In collaboration with Chatham House). http://europa.eu/espas/pdf/espas-report-governance-power.pdf

RESEARCH ASSISTANT // Oct 2011 – July 2012
Barcelona Centre for International Affairs (CIDOB). C/Elisabets, 12. Barcelona
* Research assistance on European affairs and Russia's domestic and foreign policies
* Background research, editing of reports and organisation of conferences

PROJECT ASSISTANT // Mar 2009 – July 2009 (EU-funded internship)
Fundación Promoción Social de la Cultura, c/ Huertas 71, 5° D.cha. Madrid
* Assistance in drafting development aid projects
* Researching, translating and drafting posts for the NGO's website
* Organisation of international seminars and conferences

EDUCATION

PhD. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS // Sept 2014 – Sept 2018

Middle East Technical University (METU), Ankara, Turkey
* Writing of doctoral thesis (monograph): "Building a Sphere of Influence in their Neighbourhood: A Comparative Analysis Of Turkey's And Russia's Soft Power". Supervisor: Associate Professor Başak Kale (METU) bkale@metu.edu.tr

MSc. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS (Bilingual, English and Spanish) // Sep 2010 - Sep 2011
Barcelona Institute of International Studies (IBEI), Barcelona, Spain
Thesis title: "The Effects of the Financial Crisis on the European Commission's Discourse on Enlargement. The Case of the Western Balkans' Accession to the EU"
Final mark: 8.8/10

MA IN EUROPEAN STUDIES // Nov 2007 - Mar 2010
University of Roma Tre, Rome, Italy
Thesis title: "The Kanun Code in Modern Albanian History."
Final mark: 110/110 cum laude

BSc. POLITICAL SCIENCE // Nov 2003 – Jul 2007
University of Salento, Lecce, Italy
Thesis title: "Turkey in the EU: The Issue of Compliance with the Political Copenhagen Criteria."
Final mark: 110/110

LANGUAGE SKILLS

ITALIAN: mother tongue // **ENGLISH**: Fluent (reading, written and spoken)
SPANISH: Fluent (reading, written and spoken) // **FRENCH**: Intermediate // **TURKISH**: low intermediate // **RUSSIAN**: elementary

REFERENCES

* Dr HARTMUT MEYER, Director of the European Studies Centre, St. Antony's College, Oxford University, hartmut.mayer@spc.ox.ac.uk
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LIST OF PUBLICATIONS (selection)

* "The Turkish framing of Democracy and Human Rights" in R. Marchetti & N. Levrat (ed.) *Framing Power Europe? EU External Action On Democracy and Human Rights in a Competitive World*. Routledge, forthcoming
* "Power and Politics in the Field: Young, Female, European Researchers' Experiences East of the EU" (with A.M. Lantukh), *PRIMO Working Paper*, forthcoming
* "The Western Balkans: Still Living the EU Dream?", ISPI Dossier, 14 May 2018, https://www.ispionline.it/en/pubblicazione/western-balkans-still-living-eu-dream-20515

* “Russia’s Diplomatic Agenda: a Real Global Strategy?”, ISPI Dossier, 12 March 2018 http://www.ispionline.it/en/pubblicazione/russias-diplomatic-agenda-real-global-strategy-19823
* “Linking Status with Soft Power: Call for a joint research agenda”, All Azimuth V0, N0, 1-9 6 July 2017
http://www.allazimuth.com/2017/07/06/linking-status-with-soft-power-call-for-a-joint-research-agenda/
* “Building a Sphere of Influence in Their Neighbourhood. The Soft Power of Turkey and Russia”. *PRIMO Working Paper* No. 5, January 2017
* “Fatal Attraction? Russia’s soft power in its neighbourhood”, *FRIDE Policy Brief*, May 2014
* “Russia: the limits of assertiveness” (with M. Laruelle), in G. Grevi and D. Keohane (ed.), *Challenges for European Foreign Policy in 2014: The EU’s extended neighbourhood*, Madrid/Brussels: FRIDE, January 2014
*“The Eastern Partnership after Vilnius: stay the course and engage the people” (co-authored), *FRIDE Policy Brief*, December 2013
*“Can the EU help foster democracy in Russia?”, *FRIDE Policy Brief*, October 2013
* “Rusia está cambiando. Elecciones presidenciales 2012” (with C. Claudín), *CIDOB Dossiers*, March 2012

IN THE MEDIA

Media presence in Italian and international media outlets including: The Washington Post, TRT World, Rai Italia, El País, Carnegie’s Strategic Europe, ESglobal, Euronews, Huffington Post, Radio France International, La Razón, La Vanguardia.

E. TURKISH SUMMARY/TÜRKÇE ÖZET

Bu tez çalışmasında Vladimir Putin ve Recep Tayyip Erdoğan'ın yönetimi altındaki Rusya ve Türkiye'nin yumuşak güç eksenindeki konumları incelenmiştir. Yumuşak güç zorlama ya da mali teşvikler sunma yerine cezbetme ve ikna edebilme yeteneği olarak tanımlanır. (Nye 2011) İngiltere, Japonya ve Suudi Arabistan gibi çok farklı ülkelerin yumuşak güce dayalı politikalara dış politika aracı olarak yer verdiklerini iddia ettikleri günümüz dünyasında bu kavramın son derece popüler olduğu söylenebilir. Ancak kavramın orijinal tanımına (Nye 1990, 2004, 2011) bakıldığında yumuşak gücün yalnızca liberal demokrasilerce başvurulabilecek bir araç olması sonucunu doğuran liberal eğilimli bir yaklaşım dikkat çekmektedir. Okuduğunuz çalışmada da bu noktadaki eksiklik ele alınmaktadır. Öncelikle Gramsci'nin yaklaşımına dayanan bir perspektiften (Zahran ve Ramos 2010) yeniden formüle edilen yumuşak güç kavramının, liberal olsun olmasın yönetimi seçimle gelen tüm ülkeler için geçerli bir ortak teorik çerçeve sunduğu belirtilmektedir. Ardından, Nye'ın (2013) görüşlerinin aksine, Türkiye ve Rusya'nın askeri güç gibi kaba kuvvet unsurlarından farklı nitelikte ancak bir yandan da bunlara dayanan bir yumuşak güce sahip olduğu ifade edilmektedir. Kaba kuvvet ve yumuşak gücün iç içe geçmiş oluşundan hareketle, incelenen örneklerle bu iddia desteklenmekte ve ciddi ölçüde kaba kuvvet kullanımına karşın Rusya ve Türkiye'nin sırasıyla Ermenistan ve KKTC üzerinde yumuşak güçlerini de tatbik edebildiği gösterilmektedir.

Bu konuda çalışan yazarlar Nye'ın ortaya koyduğu ve evrensel ve liberal demokratik değerlere dayanan kavramın liberal eğilimlerini vurgulayarak bunun 'Batılı' bir kavram olduğunu vurgulamaktadırlar. Buradaki çalışma da bu tespitten hareketle bazı temel araştırma soruları ekseninde yapılanmıştır. Öncelikle Türkiye ve Rusya'da giderek kendisini hissettiren bir olgu olarak 'bağnaz (illiberal) demokrasiler' (Zakaria 1997), yani demokratik seçimle gelen ancak demokratik değerlere her zaman bağlı kalmayan hükûmetlerin yönettiği, sivil toplumun ciddi kısıtlamalarla karşı karşıya kaldığı ülkeler bağlamında yumuşak güçten bahsedebilmenin mümkün olup olmadığı irdelenmiştir. 'Bağnaz demokrasiler' ABD'nin bazı dış politika araçlarını tanımlamak için geliştirilen ve liberal Batı değerleriyle bütünleşik bir kavramı kullanabilirler mi? Eğer bu mümkünse araştırmacıların bu analizi daha güçlü bir şekilde yapabilmeleri için hangi alternatif teorik çerçevelere başvurulabilir? Bu sorulara yanıt bulmak bağlamında Nye'ın yumuşak güç tanımı incelenmiş, güçlü ve zayıf yanlarını

ortaya koyabilmek amacıyla çeşitli boyutları belirlenmiş, ve 'bağnaz demokrasilere' atıfla kavramı yeniden kavramsallaştırmanın ve işlerlik kazanmasını sağlamanın yolları bulunmuştur. Antonio Gramsci'nin 'hegemonya' ve 'sağduyu' anlayışından hareketle bu çalışmada yumuşak güç, 'bir devletin ya da devletin hâkim elitlerinin belirli politikaları, dünya görüşlerini ve anlatıları "sağduyu" olarak lanse etmek ve böylelikle güç ilişkilerinin istedikleri doğrultuda yönlendirmek amacıyla uluslararası söylemi etkileyebilme yeteneği' olarak tanımlanmıştır. Böylesi bir yumuşak güç tanımında 'mutabakat oluşturma' fikri temel alınsa da, buradaki 'mutabakat' normatif bir içeriğe dayanan, 'evrensel' ve 'demokratik' değerlerle ilintili bir nosyon değildir. Bu bağlamda, burada ortaya konulan tanım, Batılı olsun olmasın ve siyasi sistemleri ne olursa olsun, tüm ülkelerin yumuşak gücünün değerlendirilmesi ve çerçevesinin belirlenmesine yönelik uygun bir analiz aracı olarak görülebilir.

Bu noktada karşılaşılan ikinci mesele yumuşak güç kavramının uygulamaya konulmasıyla ilgilidir. Yumuşak güç gibi soyut bir kavram nasıl tanımlanıp değerlendirilebilir? Kavramı hayata geçirmekte sıklıkla başvurulan araçlar arasında, ülkenin dilini öğretmeye ve kullanımını artırmaya yönelik olanlar gibi belirli yumuşak güç kurum ve politikalarının incelenmesi, ya da TV dizileri gibi kültür ürünlerinin yurt dışında ne kadar tutulduğunun değerlendirilmesi gibi yollarla bir ülkenin dışarıda ne ölçüde popüler olduğunu tespit etmeye yönelik kamuoyu araştırmaları sayılabilir. Bu tür göstergelerin yanında 'yumuşak güç anlatılarına' da odaklanılmıştır. Anlatılar bir ülkenin kolektif kimlik oluşturma süreçlerini, iç ve dış politikalarını, ve dolayısıyla yumuşak gücünü anlama bağlamında faydalı araçlardır. Yumuşak gücü dil ve güç ile ilişkilendiren konstrüktivist ve eleştirel yazarların çalışmalarından hareketle Türkiye ve Rusya için üçer 'yumuşak güç anlatısı' belirlenmiştir. Ardından, resmi konuşmaların dökümleri, dış politika konseptleri ve şu anda ülkelerinde Başkanlık görevini yürütmekte olan Putin ve Erdoğan başta olmak üzere önde gelen Türk ve Rus yetkililerin basın açıklamaları gibi yazılı metinler üzerinden siyasi söylem analizi uygulanmıştır. Barnett (1999: 23) anlatıyı 'belirli bir tema ile birlikte sunulan' ve bir ülkenin geçmişini şekillendiren belirli olayların geleceğine de yön vermesi gerektiğine işaret eden bir 'öykü' olarak tanımlar. Bu noktada Rusya ve Türkiye'nin başlıca yumuşak güç anlatıları belirlenerek alıntılar üzerinden bu anlatıların Rusya ve Türkiye'nin iç ve dış politikalarında nasıl yansıma bulduğu gösterilmiştir. Rusya bağlamında seçilen üç anlatı şunlardır: I) Çok taraflılık ve çok kutupluluğun savunucusu olarak Rusya; II) Muhafazakar bir güç olarak Rusya; III) Ağabey olarak Rusya. Türkiye bağlamında seçilen üç anlatı ise şöyledir: I) Güçlü

ve dayanıklı bir bölgesel güç olarak Türkiye; II) Müslüman bir demokrasi olarak Türkiye; III) Ağabey olarak Türkiye. Bazı anlatıların içerikleri ne olursa olsun 'tabii' (Gramsci'nin tabiriyle 'sağ duyu') olarak kabul edilmesine odaklanmanın, yumuşak gücü işlevsel kılmanın etkili bir yolu olduğu ve kavramın Nye'ın ele aldığı şeklindeki Batılı-liberal eğilimlerin üstesinden gelmede yardımcı olabileceği düşünülmektedir. Ayrıca anlatılar, etkinliği (mülakatlar, odak grupları, söylem analizi gibi) çeşitli yollarla değerlendirilebilecek yumuşak gücü işlevsel kılmanın bir yoludur.

Bu çalışmada yapılmaya çalışılan bir diğer değerlendirme, politikaların hedef kitlelerinin Rusya ve Türkiye'nin yumuşak güç anlatılarını nasıl algıladığı ile ilgili olup, bu bağlamda amaç yumuşak gücün etkinliğini değerlendirmektir. Elinizdeki tez çalışmasında pozitivist geleneğin dışında bir yaklaşımla amaçlanan, yumuşak gücün etkinliğini niceliksel bir ölçekte net olarak 'ölçmek' (örneğin Türkiye'nin X ülkesinde inşa ettirdiği camilerin sayısı üzerinden) ya da bir ülkenin yumuşak gücünün varlığıyla X sonucuna ulaşılması arasında katı bir nedensellik ilişkisi tesis etmek değildir. Bu kapsamda Beach ve Pedersen (2013) tarafından çerçevesi çizilen 'açıklama-sonuç süreç-izleme' metodolojisinin kullanılmasına karar verilmiştir. Söz konusu metodoloji lineer nedensellikten ziyade karmaşık nedenselliğe dayanmakta ve araştırmacıların hem iktisadi saikler gibi maddi etkenleri, hem de yumuşak güç gibi maddi olmayan etkenleri değerlendirerek bir sonucu açıklayan kapsamlı nedensellik mekanizmaları geliştirebilmesine olanak tanımaktadır. Konuyla ilgili olduğu düşünülen ve yumuşak güç analizi çerçevesinde açıklanmak istenen iki siyasi çıktı belirlenmiştir. Rusya bağlamında, Ermenistan'ın AB ile entegrasyona yönelik önceki politikaları sürdürmek yerine Rusya liderliğindeki bölgesel entegrasyon projesi olan Avrasya Ekonomik Birliğine (EEU) katılma kararına odaklanılmıştır. Ermenistan'ın ekonomisi ve güvenliği büyük ölçüde Rusya'ya dayansa da Erivan'ın Moskova ile tarihi ve kültürel bağları da kayda değerdir. Rusya'nın yumuşak gücü bu sonucu nasıl etkilemiştir? Türkiye bağlamında Türkiye'nin Kuzey Kıbrıs Türk Cumhuriyetinin garantörü pozisyonunda olduğu Kıbrıs'taki barış görüşmelerinin 2014'te askıya alınması örneği ele alınmıştır. Görüşmelerin başarısız olmasının nedeni nedir? Türkiye bu sonuçta nasıl etkili olmuştur? Özellikle de KKTC'nin çıkarlarını ve müzakeredeki pozisyonunu nasıl şekillendirmiştir? Sonuçları tanımlayıp bu konudaki akademik literatürü gözden geçirdikten sonra tümevarımsal bir yaklaşımla sonucu açıklayan nedensellik mekanizması ayrıntılandırılmış, ve bu suretle sonuçtan geriye doğru bir analiz gerçekleştirilmiştir. Türkiye, Kıbrıs, Rusya ve Ermenistan'da gerçekleştirilen kapsamlı alan çalışmaları ve mevcut literatürden hareketle, hem kaba kuvvet hem de

yumuşak gücün oynadığı rolü dikkate alarak her iki sonuçla ilgili karmaşık ve çok boyutlu bir açıklama geliştirilmiştir.

İncelenen anlatılar Türkiye ve Rusya'da hükûmetlerin Batının hâkim olduğu liberal düzenle ilgili memnuniyetsizliğinin giderek arttığını ve bu düzene yumuşak gücü de kullanarak meydan okuma istidadını ortaya koymaktadır. The Economist Intelligence Unit demokrasinin gerilemekte olduğu yönünde genel bir trend tespit etmiştir: 2017'de 89 ülkede demokrasi gerilemekteyken sadece 27 ülkede demokrasinin kalitesinde gelişme görülmüştür. Türkiye ve Rusya (ve bu ülkelerin liderleri) uluslararası medyada ve akademik çalışmalarda sıklıkla liberal demokrasiyi etkileyen krizin sonuçları, hatta bazen doğrudan doğruya demokrasi için tehdit olarak değerlendirilmektedir. Burada yer verilen analizin sonuçları da, aralarındaki bazı önemli farklara karşın Türkiye ve Rusya'nın yumuşak güce bakış açıları bağlamında büyük benzerlik sergilediğini vurgulamaktadır. İki ülkenin benzeştiği ilk nokta, ülke içindeki siyasi evrimin, ki bu 'illiberal (bağnaz) dönüşüm' olarak betimlenebilir, her iki ülkeyi de esasen AB ve ABD'de yansımasını bulan 'Batıya' karşı duran bir imaj inşa etmeye yönlendirmiş olmasıdır. Türkiye ve Rusya, 'Rusya'nın ve Türkiye'nin Dış Politikası: Bağnaz Dönüşüm' başlıklı bölümde de ortaya konulduğu üzere giderek belirginleşen bir biçimde liberallikten uzaklaşmaktadır. Son yıllarda temel haklar ve siyasi muhalefetin hareket alanı o denli kısıtlanmıştır ki Türkiye ve Rusya artık 'bağnaz demokrasi' olarak anılmakta ve demokratik seçimle gelen iktidarların 'düzenli olarak anayasada iktidara getirilen sınırlamaları göz ardı ettiği ve vatandaşların temel hak ve hürriyetlerini ortadan kaldırdığı' ülkeler olarak görülmektedir. (Zakaria 1997: 22) Bağnazlık yönündeki bu dönüşüm ülkelerin dış politikasını ve yumuşak güç anlayış ve uygulamalarını da etkilemiş ve (Putin ve Erdoğan'ı eksen alan) daha kişisel bir yaklaşımı hâkim kılmıştır. Bu anlayış Nye'ın tanımının altında yatan liberal ve evrensel değerlerden ayrı durmaktadır. Rusya ve Türkiye'nin anlatıları giderek daha yoğun bir biçimde liberal demokrasinin bir parçası olmaktan ziyade ona alternatif oluşturabilme yetenekleri ekseninde şekillenmektedir. Buradaki analizde kendisini gösteren Batı karşıtı yaklaşım komşu ülkelerin benzer yaklaşım içindeki elitleri ile AB'de Avrupa konusuna şüpheci bakan kesimler ve hatta ABD dış politikasını eleştirenler açısından cazip görülebilir.

Bu kesimler de benzer yumuşak güç anlatılarına başvurmakta ve bazı durumlarda bunu kendi kaba kuvvetlerine de dayandırmaktadırlar. Bu noktada gücün bölünmezliği kendisini hissettirmektedir: kaba kuvvet ve yumuşak güç iç içe geçmiş olgulardır ve burada analiz

edilen örneklerde hem Türkiye hem de Rusya yumuşak gücünü artırmak için kaba kuvvetten (daha zayıf müttefikleri koruma imkânı sunan askeri güç ya da başarılı birer örnek olarak imajlarının altında yatan ekonomik güç) yararlanmıştır. Bunların yanında geçmişteki imparatorluk yapılarına ve paylaşılan deneyimlere dayanan tarihi bağlar ve ortak bir din, dil, ya da muhafazakarlık gibi kültürel bağlar üzerinden de yumuşak güç anlatı ve politikalarını inşa edebilmektedirler. Özellikle ağabey anlatısı Rusya'nın ve Türkiye'nin kurtarıcı rolüne atıfla hem Ermenistan'da, hem de KKTC'de kullanılmıştır. Rusya örneğinde ülkenin önce Osmanlı İmparatorluğu, sonra da Azerbaycan'a karşı güvenliğini sağlamadaki rolü vurgulanmıştır. Türkiye'nin kurtarıcı rolü ise Kıbrıs'taki Türkleri korumak için 1974'te Kıbrıs'a yapılan askeri müdahale ile bağlantılıdır. Her iki örnekte de Türkiye'nin ve Rusya'nın ağabey imajı KKTC'de ve Ermenistan'da doğal bir olgu olarak görülmektedir. Literatür, yapılan mülakatlar, anket sonuçları ve Ermenistan ve KKTC'deki alan çalışmaları sırasında karşılaşılan anekdotlara dayalı bulgular, bu yaklaşımın hem yerel siyasi elitler hem de toplumun büyük kesimlerince paylaşıldığını göstermektedir. Yapısal ve kurumsal bir alternatifin bulunmayışı da Türkiye ve Rusya'nın ağabey rolünün, KKTC ve Ermenistan'ın politika tercihlerini etkileyen gerekli, hatta 'tabii' bir somut gerçek olarak algılanmasına katkıda bulunmaktadır.

Gerek 'muhafazakar bir güç olarak Rusya' gerekse 'Müslüman bir demokrasi olarak Türkiye' anlatılarında muhafazakar değerler kendilerini hissettirmektedir. Ancak bu anlatıların hedef kitle üzerindeki etkileri farklı olmuştur. Rusya'nın anlatısı Ermenistan'ın son derece muhafazakar toplumu, özellikle de AB'nin Ermenistan'daki demokrasiyi teşvik eden faaliyetlerini eleştirenler arasında kolaylıkla kabul görmüştür. Bu anlatıda öne çıkarılan ve Erivan'da olumlu yankı bulan iddialardan birisi 'Batı'nın' LGBT haklarının öne çıkarılması yoluyla geleneksel aile modelini tehdit ettiği yönündedir. Rusya'nın ruhani ve kültürel yakınlığı sağ duyuya uygun bir olgu olarak görülmekte, AB ise çoğu zaman cinsel azınlıkların haklarına saygı gösterilmesi gibi Ermenistan toplumuna yabancı değerleri empoze etmeye çalışmakla itham edilmektedir. Öte yandan özellikle de geçirdiği muhafazakar dönüşüm ışığında 'Müslüman bir demokrasi olarak Türkiye' anlatısı KKTC'de mülakat yapılan hemen herkesin sorunlu gördüğü bir nokta olarak dile getirilmiştir. Dinin Türkiye'de kamusal alanda giderek artan önemini ve alkol tüketimi gibi alanlarda benimsenen muhafazakar politikaları endişeyle izleyen Kuzey Kıbrıs halkının laikliğe büyük önem atfettiği de görülmektedir. Bu çerçevede yapılan mülakatların birçoğunda AKP'nin

Kuzey Kıbrıs'taki yaşam tarzını değiştirmeye çalıştığı ve bunun da Türkiye ile KKTC arasında kültürel boyuttaki ayrışmaya hız kazandırdığı dile getirilmiştir.

Rusya'yı çok taraflılık ve çok kutupluluğun bir savunucusu olarak betimleyen anlatının Ermenistan hükûmetinin tercihlerini Rusya'nınkilere yakınlaştırma konusunda bir rol oynamadığı görülmektedir. Bu konu yapılan mülakatlarda pek dile getirilmemiş ve süreç-izleme analizinde de öne çıkan bir unsur olmamıştır. Öte yandan KKTC'de Türkiye'yi güçlü ve dayanıklı bir devlet olarak betimleyen anlatı KKTC'nin dış politika tercihlerini şekillendirmede belirli bir rol oynamıştır. Ancak bu noktada da bir değişim görüldüğü anlaşılmaktadır. Geride kalan on yıllık dönemde Türkiye'de yaşanan ekonomik gelişme sayesinde AKP iktidarının ilk dönemlerinde bu anlatı oldukça olumlu karşılanmıştır. Zira KKTC ekonomisi Türk ekonomisine dayanmaktadır ve bu bağlamda Türkiye ekonomisinin canlılığının KKTC açısından olumlu görülmesi doğaldır. Dahası, AKP iktidarının ilk yıllarında Ankara'daki güçlü AB perspektifi de hem Türkiye'nin yumuşak gücünü besleyen bir diğer kaynak, hem de AB faktörünü adanın yeniden birleşmesi sürecinde önemli bir etken olarak algılayan Kıbrıslı Türkler açısından ümit verici bir gelişme olarak görülmüştür. Ancak bugün artık Ankara'nın AB üyeliği sürecinin hızının kesilmiş olmasıyla bu anlatı giderek daha büyük ölçüde AB'ye karşı duruş olarak şekillenmekte ve burada yer verilen analizle ilişkisini yitirmektedir.

Bu çalışma yumuşak güç ve Rusya ile Türkiye'nin dış politikaları konusundaki politikalara katkıda bulunmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu çerçevede, analizin ilk unsuru olan yumuşak güç kavramıyla ilgili olarak yalnız liberal demokrasilerin değil tüm ülkelerin yumuşak gücünü analiz etmeye olanak tanıyan üç aşamalı bir süreç önerilmiştir: yumuşak güç kavramının tanımına yeni bir yaklaşım getirilmesi, kavrama anlatılar üzerinden işlerlik kazandırılması, ve süreç-izleme yoluyla tablonun değerlendirilmesi. Özellikle uluslararası ilişkiler alanında çalışan uygulamacılar arasında yumuşak gücün popüler bir kavram oluşu, her zaman bu kavramın muteber bir analitik bir araç olmasını sağlayamamaktadır. Literatür taraması kısmında özellikle Nye'ın ortaya koyduğu şekliyle kavramın atıfta bulunduğu liberal evrensel değerlerin bazılarını paylaşmayabilen devletler bağlamında yumuşak güç konseptini ele alan bazı yazarların karşılaştığı sorunlara işaret edilmektedir. Bir aktörün bir diğeri üzerinde gücünü uygulayışını açıklayan kültürel, tarihi ve psikolojik mekanizmaları vurgulamada yumuşak gücün yine de yararlı bir araç olduğu teslim edilirken bir yandan da kavramı yükseliş trendinde olan Batı dışı güçler bağlamında da kullanabilmek için düzenlemek ve

netleştirmek ihtiyacı da vurgulanmaktadır. Burada ortaya konulan üç aşamalı süreç yumuşak güç kavramının yeniden tanımlanmasına dayanmaktadır. Bu kapsamda (Gramsici içgörülerin uygulanması sayesinde mümkün olan) bir ontolojik kayma ve (yumuşak güç anlatıları üzerinden) gelecekteki araştırmalarda başka ülkeler ve bağlamlarda da uygulanabilecek şekilde kavrama işlerlik kazandırmaya yönelik yeni bir çerçeve ortaya konulmaktadır.

Bu çalışmanın literatüre bir diğer katkısı da konuyla son derece ilgili iki örnek bağlamında süreç-izleme metodolojisinin uygulanmasına dayanarak yumuşak gücün ampirik bir değerlendirmesinin yapılmasıdır. Burada yer verilen analiz Türkiye, Rusya ve AB açısından ülkelerin ötesinde sonuçları olan iki belirli siyasi çıktıyı ortaya koymakta ve açıklamaktadır. Gücün bağlamsal niteliği ışığında başka vaka çalışmalarını da kapsayabilecek şekilde genel iddialarda bulunmak pek cazip gelmemektedir. Kramer'ın (2016: 48) ifadesiyle ‘bir liderin belirli bir zamanda ya da yerde belirli bir fiili yapabilme yeteneği olsa da bu, her zaman için farklı bir zaman ya da yerde aynı sonuçları doğuracak şekilde aynı gücü kullanabileceği anlamına gelmez. Siyasi gücün kullanımıyla elde edilen sonuçlar doğal olarak bağlamdan etkilenmektedir.' Ancak sonuçlar farklı düzeylerde etkili olabilmektedir. Öncelikle bağlama özel olsa da tarihi gerçeklere dayalı açıklamalar geliştirildikçe teori daha somut bir form almaktadır. (George ve Bennett 2005: 148) Ayrıca Rusya ve Türkiye'nin yumuşak güçlerini ne şekilde kullandığı ve anlatılarının hedef kitlece (Ermenistan ve KKTC'deki siyasi elitler) nasıl algılandığını görebilmek bağlamında ele alınan örnekler önemlidir. Rusya açısından en büyük başarı 'ağabey' imajının halen muhafaza edilebilmesidir. Rusya ile olan ittifak Ermenistan'da Nisan-Mayıs 2018'de meydana gelen rejim değişikliği sonrasında dahi yürürlükte kalmıştır. Ermenistan'ın eski Başbakanı Serzh Sargsyan'ın istifasını getiren bir dizi protesto sonrasında seçilen yeni Başbakanı Nikol Pashinyan Ermenistan'ın jeopolitik ittifaklarını değiştirmek istemediğini belirtmiştir. Rusya ile ittifakın Ermenistan açısından önemini ve Ermenistan'ın güvenlik sisteminin bir parçası olduğunu ifade etmiş ve hükûmetinin 'Avrasya Ekonomik Birliği ve Kolektif Güvenlik Anlaşması Örgütü ile ilgili politikalarını sürdüreceğini' belirtmiştir. Her ne kadar Pashinyan iktidarı döneminde Rus-Ermeni ilişkilerinin evrimini değerlendirmek için henüz çok erken olsa da, söylem ve edimlerine bakıldığında, Rusya'nın Ermenistan'ın güvenliği bağlamındaki kilit rolü sorgulanmamakta ve doğal bir olgu olarak görülmektedir. KKTC'de ise yapılan mülakatlar ve anketler geniş kesimlerin Türkiye'ye geçmişteki kurtarıcı rolünden dolayı şükran duyduğunu göstermektedir. Ermenistan örneği üzerinde yapılan çalışmaya benzer biçimde, KKTC'de de Ankara'nın mevcut ağabey yaklaşımı elitler ve toplumun bazı kesimlerinde bir

nebze rahatsızlık yaratsa da halen doğal bir olgu olarak değerlendirilmektedir. 2017'deki müzakerelerin kilitlenmesi Türkiye'nin kritik rolünün devam ettiğini ve KKTC'deki elitlerce sorgulanmadığını göstermektedir. KKTC Cumhurbaşkanı Mustafa Akıncı da bu noktanın altını çizmiş ve 'adayı birleştirmeye yönelik bir anlaşmaya varılması durumunda Türkiye'nin Kıbrıs'ın güvenliğinin tek garantörü' olduğunu açıkça ifade etmiştir. Ancak Ermenistan'ın Rusya'ya bağımlılık düzeyine kıyasla KKTC'nin kendisini tanıyan tek devlet olan Türkiye'ye daha büyük ölçüde bağımlı olduğu unutulmamalıdır. Ermenistan'ın durumunda bağımlılık düzeyini kontrol altında tutabilmek daha mümkündür ve bu durum Erivan'ın Moskova ile olan ilişkilerinde öne çıkmaktadır. Ermenistan'ın daha büyük çeşitlilik arz eden bir dış politikası mevcuttur ve Ocak 2018'de AB-Ermenistan Kapsamlı ve Geliştirilmiş Ortaklık Anlaşmasını (CEPA) imzalayarak AB ile sınırlı entegrasyon sürecini devam ettirmiştir. Öte yandan KKTC yumuşak güç ile kaba kuvvet arasındaki çizgiyi daha da belirsiz hale getirecek biçimde Türkiye'ye bağımlı bir konumdadır. Aynı zamanda Türkiye'nin yaşamakta olduğu bağnazlık yönündeki değişim sürecinin de etkisiyle Ankara'nın ağabey rolüne karşı duyulan memnuniyetsizlik artmaktadır. Daha önce de belirtildiği üzere muhafazakarlığa kayış gelecekte Türkiye'nin KKTC'deki yumuşak gücünü sekteye uğratabilir. Ancak buradaki vaka çalışmasından hareketle varılan analizde, KKTC'nin müzakerelerdeki pozisyonunu Türkiye'nin pozisyonuna paralel konumlandırmayı tabii görmesinden ötürü yumuşak gücün halen etkisini sürdürdüğü sonucuna varılmıştır.

Yine de bu çalışmanın bazı kısıtlamalarının olduğu da belirtilmelidir. Buradaki analizde literatürde zaten ortaya konulmuş ve konsepti ortaya atan Nye (2011) tarafından da kabul edilmiş bir nokta teyit edilmiştir: yumuşak güç ve kaba kuvvet arasında net bir çizgi çizmek zordur. Böylesi bir çizgi çizmenin kolay olmayışı yumuşak gücün etkinliğinin hassas bir değerlendirmesini yapmayı da güçleştirir. Bu da mevcut çalışmanın en büyük sınırlamasına işaret etmektedir. Bu noktadaki eksikliğin sonuçlarını ikinci plana atma ihtiyacıysa ümit verici araştırma alanlarının yolunu açabilir. Bu bağlamda bu çalışma kapsamında ortaya konulan yumuşak güç tanımını daha da genişletecek ve konsepte işlerlik kazandırmanın yeni yollarına ışık tutacak başka çalışmaların yolu da açılmış olabilir. Ermenistan ve KKTC'deki durumun bu ülkelerin Rusya ve Türkiye ile ilişkilerinde nasıl bir evrimi beraberinde getirdiğini inceleyen çalışmalar ilginç olabilir. Böylesi çalışmalarla hedef kitlelerde Rusya ve Türkiye'nin yumuşak güç anlatısıyla ilgili algının ne şekilde evrildiği ortaya konulabilir. Yumuşak gücünü kullanan ülkelerin kendi içindeki değişimlerin de (örneğin Türkiye'de Haziran 2018 Cumhurbaşkanlığı seçimleri sonrasında ya da Rusya'ya karşı uygulanan

yaptırımların sona ermesi ve Batı ile ilişkilerin düzelmesi ihtimali ışığında) yumuşak güç anlatıları üzerinde nasıl bir etkisi olduğuna odaklanan çalışmalar da yapılabilir.

Türkiye ve Rusya örneklerini inceleyen başka çalışmalar burada başvurulan karşılaştırmalı yaklaşımın gücünü elbetteki artıracaktır. Örneğin gücünü kullanan ülke ile güçlü tarihi ve siyasi bağları olan ancak bir yandan da net bir AB perspektifi içindeki ülkelerin analize eklenmesi oldukça verimli olabilir. Örneğin Türkiye açısından Bosna Hersek, Rusya açısından da Sırbistan örnekleri analiz edilebilir. Son olarak, yumuşak güç kullanan başka ülkelerin de analize dâhil edilmesi bu alandaki literatürü zenginleştirecektir. Araştırmacılar özellikle yumuşak gücün Japonya veya Kanada gibi liberal demokrasilerce kullanımını Türkiye ve Rusya gibi ülkelerce kullanımıyla karşılaştırarak çeşitli farklılık ve muhtemel benzerlikleri irdeleyebilirler. Türkiye ve Rusya'nın yumuşak gücünün evrimi aslında öngörülmesi mümkün olmayan bir dizi iç ve dış etkene bağlıdır. Bu araştırma böylesi bir evrimi izleme ve anlamaya yardımcı olabilir. Zira hem Türkiye ve Rusya'nın yumuşak gücünün güçlü ve zayıf yanlarını irdelemekte, hem de yumuşak gücün sadece liberal demokrasilerin tekelindeki bir olgu olmadığını göstermektedir.

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