

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF PUBLIC SERVICE
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THESES

Nikolett PÉNZVÁLTÓ:

**The Place of Russia in the Foreign, Security and Defense
Policies of Turkey, 2016–2019**

Ph.D. Dissertation

Thesis advisors: Dr. habil. Anna MOLNÁR, Dr. András RÁCZ

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RESEARCH PROBLEM

The history of bilateral security **relations between Turkey and Russia can be described primarily as conflicting**, considering the historically most determining events such as centuries of Turkish-Russian wars or Turkey's NATO membership. The latter by definition has constituted a conflict with the Soviet Union and after 1990 with post-Soviet Russia that have both perceived NATO as a key source of threat.

However, while the present thesis was researched and written in the years of 2016-2020, Turkey and Russia have been **cooperating in several strategically important areas**. Their coordinated actions in Syria, the joint strategic energy projects or Turkey's procurement of the Russian-made S-400 Triumf air defense system are all demonstrative examples. Meanwhile, since the 2016 coup attempt in Turkey the regime of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has been pursuing an increasingly authoritarian approach, which further exacerbates existing tensions with Ankara's Western allies.

Moscow's increasingly assertive foreign policy endangers Turkey's interests. Following the annexation of Crimea in 2014, the balance of power in the Black Sea has clearly been tilted in favor of Russia. Thereafter, with the Syrian intervention in 2015 – even if the operation was *de jure* not a unilateral Russian intervention but an act of military assistance, based on Syria's request and a bilateral military agreement – **Moscow stepped out of its traditional sphere of influence and appeared in the southern neighborhood of Turkey, directly threatening Turkey's regional interest**, for example regarding the Kurdish question. By looking at the map, one may even argue that Russia has basically surrounded Turkey with its military presence.

Hence, Stephen Walt's balance of threat theory¹ as well as historical experiences would suggest that recalling the memory of a dozen wars and the Cold War confrontation, Ankara would strengthen its place in the Western alliance system. However, this is not what is happening, begging the question why Turkey opts to act against this logic. **Why does Ankara not attempt to counterbalance Moscow's growing influence more decisively?** How can the seemingly changing international orientation of Turkish foreign policy be conceptualized?

¹ WALT, Stephen M.: Alliance Formation and the Balance of World Power. *International Security*, Vol. 9, 1985/4. pp. 3–43.

AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

The research aims to:

1. Provide a **comprehensive, theoretical explanation** of Turkey's foreign, security and defense policy whilst testing the selected theoretical framework.
2. Identify the **factors** that **encourage and limit** the cooperation between Turkey and Russia, and thus **mark the limits** of Turkish foreign, security and defense policies' **room for maneuver**.
3. **Make predictions** about Turkish-Russian relations relying on the theoretical framework.

HYPOTHESES

The dissertation tests the following hypotheses:

- H1: **Neoclassical realism** provides an appropriate theoretical framework for interpreting contemporary Turkish-Russian relations, provided that we incorporate **strategic culture and regime security** considerations **as intervening variables** in the analysis.
- H2: The primary goal of Turkey's explicit cooperation with Moscow is to **soft balance² the United States**, and the cooperation is mainly motivated by state-level factors.
- H3: Close, long-term and stable cooperation between Turkey and Russia has fundamental **limitations**, especially **at the level of the international system**.
- H4: **If its alliance system does not guarantee its security against the threats that Turkey perceives as most vital and immediate, then Ankara will cooperate** with the adversary that it perceives less threatening at that particular moment, namely **with Russia** (depending on Moscow's willingness). However, it is **not an alternative** to Turkey's current relationship with the EU and NATO.

² I build on Judith Kelley's definition, who defines soft balancing as "a strategic effort by a weaker actor in overall structural terms to increase influence vis-à-vis a stronger actor via non-military means. Importantly, soft balancing differs from hard balancing not only in methods, but also in goals. That is, soft balancing is not limited to military issues, and it does not seek a permanent confrontational stance. Rather, the goal is to nudge the other party back to a cooperative framework of mutual, rather than one-sided concessions and leadership." KELLEY, Judith: Strategic Non-cooperation as Soft Balancing: Why Iraq was not Just about Iraq. *International Politics*, Vol. 42, 2005/2. pp. 153–173. p. 154.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The dissertation focuses on the contemporary relationship between Turkey and Russia, especially **on the period 2016–2019**. In this research I analyze the relations between Turkey and Russia (and indirectly the relations between Turkey and the West) **primarily from Turkey's perspective**. However, I consider it important to **present the Russian** viewpoint, and to involve Russian authors and Russian sources in the study as well. Furthermore, I believe that in order to understand bilateral relations between Turkey and Russia it is also **essential to examine Turkey's and Russia's relationship with the West**.

In disciplinary terms, the research classifies itself as part of the **international security studies** research field. Since it is an interdisciplinary subject, it also draws on key works of international studies, political science, law, military science, history and economics – however, none of these fields are given a prominent role over security studies.

My research is **problem- and case-focused**. As **an explanatory case study**, it explores **causal links that** help explain the characteristics of the cooperation between Turkey and Russia itself, as well as its limitations. The greatest advantage of the case study approach lies in its ability to provide the researcher with an opportunity to explain extremely complex social phenomena comprehensively and in-depth, thus, it allows the assessment of tools, means and reasons behind Turkey's actions.

The primary methodological tool I use in this dissertation is **explaining-outcome process tracing**.³ At the same time, my research also verges on **theory-testing process tracing** and attempts to formulate conclusions that can contribute to theories examining the balancing behavior of states in the international system and within alliances (balance of power, balance of threat, alliance security dilemma, soft balancing and omnibalancing). Arguably, these can be tested on other cases in further research.

Regarding the theoretical framework, the research is based on the theory of **neoclassical realism**, which emphasizes the role of domestic political factors in addition to the structural constraints of the international system.⁴ A realist starting point is also necessary, because I think that a realist approach is the closest one to the culture and

³ BEACH, Derek – PEDERSEN, Rasmus Brun: *Process-Tracing Methods: Foundations and Guidelines*. University of Michigan Press, 2019.

⁴ ROSE, Gideon: Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy. *World Politics*, Vol. 51, 1998/1. pp. 144–172. p. 146.

traditions of Turkish and Russian foreign policy-making. We may perceive Turkey and Russia as “modern states” according to the terms of Robert Cooper,⁵ where state interests and principles of Machiavellianism are dominating, and where war is a political tool. Hence, a realist approach is well applicable for analyzing the foreign policy behaviors of both states. However, I needed such a theory that is able to examine both the systemic and the state levels. A neorealist approach, that focuses on the distribution of capabilities between units, cannot explain the normalization of Turkish-Russian relations started in 2016, nor the subsequent cooperation and strategic projects between the two countries. (A liberal approach, on the other hand, cannot effectively explain the sharp shifts within the Turkish-Russian relationship, since the benefits of bilateral economic cooperation can be considered to be essentially permanent.) Literature review also supported my assumption that such a theoretical framework was needed that is able to handle variables on different analytical levels. The neoclassical realist approach is in line with the methodology of process tracing, since neoclassical realism also works with different variables, it seeks to explain the dependent variable (that is, a given outcome, a foreign policy step); it looks for **the independent and intervening variables** that determine and influence it. Thus, following the comprehensive, three-level approach of neoclassical realism (independent, intervening and dependent variables), the factors that encourage and limit Turkish-Russian cooperation will be examined **at the level of both the international system and the states in question.**

The dissertation analyzes a **wide range of Hungarian, English, Turkish and Russian primary and secondary sources.** I consider it extremely important to have a **critical attitude** whilst reviewing and analyzing individual sources and conducting document and data analysis. Additionally, the fact needs to be taken into account that Western conceptual categories are not always or not one-on-one applicable to other regions of the world – to the two examined states in this case. For this reason, considering and critically engaging with certain perceptions that characterize Turkish and Russian strategic culture when it comes to key issues such as threat perceptions is of utmost importance.

⁵ COOPER, Robert: *The Postmodern State and the World Order*. Demos, 2000.

SUMMARY OF THE ANALYTICAL CHAPTERS

After the **first, introductory chapter**, the **second chapter** of the dissertation **introduces the theoretical framework**. It presents the theoretical approach of neoclassical realism, the independent and intervening variables, and in the case of the dependent variable, namely Turkish foreign policy, the different balancing theories applied in the dissertation (balance of threat theory, soft balancing, omnibalancing).

The third chapter provides a brief **overview of the transformation of factors determining Turkey's foreign policy** in the framework of neoclassical realism. In order to prove the hypotheses, it is essential to analyze the context and to reveal the drivers of Turkish foreign policy. Among the independent variables, I analyze the transformation of the international system, Turkey's relative power, and so-called structural modifiers, such as geography or Turkey's NATO membership. In the case of intervening variables, the main elements of Turkish strategic culture and the regime-building process of the Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, AKP), which has been ruling Turkey since 2002, are examined. At the level of the dependent variable, the chapter introduces the main characteristics of the Turkish foreign policy during the AKP-era.

The **fourth chapter**, still as part of the context, briefly **overviews the history** and the most important stages **of Turkish-Russian** relations in a chronological order, from the First World War to the present day.

Subsequently, the fifth and sixth chapters study the scope of the Turkey-Russia relationship: **the fifth chapter examines the limits of Turkish-Russian cooperation, and the sixth chapter examines its incentives** at the level of both the international system and the states. I examine the limiting factors of the Turkish-Russian cooperation at the level of the international system in four subchapters: first I present the role of Turkey's NATO membership, then I discuss the main regional conflicts between Turkey and Russia (Nagorno-Karabakh, Ukraine, Cyprus, Libya, Syria), and the conflicting regional interests of the two states in their overlapping spheres of influence. Afterwards I analyze the extent to which Turkey's economy is dependent on the West, and lastly I point out the differences in Turkey's and Russia's energy policy interests. I examine the state-level limitations of Turkish-Russian cooperation along two factors. First, I examine the extent to which the conflict-rich history and imperial past of the two states constitute an obstacle to cooperation, and second, I highlight how the two countries' confronting religious and ethnic leadership roles bring conflicts into the bilateral relations.

The sixth chapter examines the incentives for Turkish-Russian cooperation. Looking at incentives on the systemic level the chapter first sheds light on joint Turkish-Russian efforts to reduce the influence of the United States. The analysis then turns towards examining the role of economic interdependence in the relations between Turkey and Russia, and finally the characteristics of the Turkish-Russian energy policy interdependence are discussed. At the unit-level, in the case of incentives for Turkish-Russian cooperation, I first highlight the role of the historically rooted mistrust towards “the West” that arguably characterizes both states, and then I analyze how Western criticisms affects the Turkish and Russian regimes. Next, I examine the normative dimension of soft balancing, and finally, I also incorporate issues from the information space in this part of the study.

The seventh chapter of the dissertation **examines the role of the United States in the development of Turkish-Russian relations through** the process tracing analysis of two current case studies, **the war in Syria and the procurement of the S-400 system.** While examining the two case studies that test the Turkish-Russian cooperation in strategic fields after 2016, I first present the case and its detailed background, and thereafter, during the evaluation I draw a causal chain, through that I also test my hypotheses formulated in the first chapter.

The dissertation concludes with the **eighth chapter, which summarizes the results, formulates conclusions, the new scientific results,** and the recommendations of the thesis.

RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH

Reviewing the literature revealed that views regarding the driving forces of the Turkish-Russian relationship and the assessment of its possible future development are highly diverse. I pointed out that one of the main factors that explains such conspicuous contrasts between scholarly arguments is the very difference in the levels of analysis. This was one of the reasons why I selected neoclassical realism for the theoretical framework of the dissertation, which, as I argue, can examine the factors at the level of the international system and the state together, and can thus help draw a more accurate and more balanced picture of the foreign policy behavior of states. In the dissertation I tested the theory of neoclassical realism through a specific case study, namely through the relationship between Turkey and Russia. I have proved that **the analytical framework of**

neoclassical realism has a strong explanatory power for understanding the foreign policy behavior of Turkey. The level of international system and the level of the state – or, according the terminology of neoclassical realism, independent and intervening variables – may push states into different directions. State-level factors push Turkey-Russia relations towards cooperation, while the level of international system pushes them towards conflict. Hence, anyone focusing exclusively on one level of the analysis, may end up with false conclusions about Turkey-Russia bilateral relations, leading to ungrounded expectations. Consequently, it is of utmost importance to study both levels of the analysis simultaneously. Although it requires extensive and in-depth background knowledge on a particular topic, I encourage the more frequent use of the neoclassical realist analytical framework in foreign and security policy research due to its comprehensive explanatory power.

There is currently no consensus in the neoclassical realist literature on which intervening variables are the most appropriate to use, although the need to employ the same variables consistently has been articulated earlier. Neoclassical realist authors have predominantly studied democratic states so far. However, authoritarian systems are different and in explaining their foreign policy behavior, in my view, different intervening variables should be prioritized. Based on the results of my research, I argue **that in the case of authoritarian states, strategic culture and regime security (i.e. essentially the threat perceptions of the society and regime in question) should be selected as intervening variables.** Strategic culture is fundamental, as on the one hand, the arising collective expectations limit the room for maneuver of decision-makers, and on the other hand, a common strategic culture allows the elites to use a language that makes it easier for them to gain the citizens' support for strategic decisions.⁶ Studying strategic culture is central to both democratic and authoritarian systems. Nevertheless, authoritarian regimes typically have such a high degree of structural autonomy that instead of examining the institutional and bureaucratic constraints binding political leadership – that axiomatically characterize democracies, but play a significantly smaller role in authoritarian regimes – regime security approach has bigger explanatory potential. **In authoritarian states, remaining in political power is often associated with survival in the physical sense. Leading elites thus equate regime security with national security;** regime security then becomes a primary driver of foreign policy as well, often

⁶ KUPCHAN, Charles A.: *The Vulnerability of Empire*. Cornell University Press, 1994. p. 90.

blurring the line between external and internal security. Regime security should therefore appear as a specific intervening variable in the analysis.

I have proved that **the relationship between Turkey and the United States plays a crucial role in the development of Turkish-Russian relations. The primary goal of Turkey's explicit cooperation with Moscow is to soft balance the United States.** Despite rising multipolarity, in an international system still characterized by U.S. hegemony, "classic" hard balancing does not pay off, and maintaining membership in the same alliance it is not an option either. However, there is another kind of balancing strategy: soft balancing might enable states to convince Washington to change its certain policies, without using military force. In the dissertation I highlighted that states have the ability to hard balance one state and soft balance another (the hegemon) at the same time. Ankara is hard balancing Russia through its NATO membership and soft balancing the United States through its cooperation with Russia. (Paradoxically, Turkey's NATO membership is one of the factors that has originally made cooperation with Russia possible, since it has reduced the probability of a Russian military attack against Turkey.) **The balance of threat theory explains why U.S. policy needs to be counterbalanced.** On the one hand, **certain steps taken by Washington**, such as U.S. support for certain Kurdish groups, **are perceived by Ankara as a more acute threat than that of Russia.** On the other hand, the Turkish and Russian **regimes consider Western criticism as a threat for their own survival.**

I have demonstrated **that the drivers of Turkish-Russian bilateral relations were fairly constant over the past roughly hundred years.** During the history of Turkish-Russian cooperation, the necessity to balance the West has emerged on numerous occasions. Ankara turned to Russia when it had not received the expected support from its Western partners to address the perceived threats. The historical overview thus confirmed that the **current Turkish policy cannot be considered as new, but instead balancing is a historically well-demonstrated Turkish foreign policy practice.** Therefore, there has been no such event as "change" in Turkey's strategic orientation either. The historical overview also underlined that the conflicts between Turkey and Russia are primarily driven by conflicting/overlapping interests due to the two countries' geographic proximity. The analysis also highlighted that the "Kurdish question"/terror issue is an integral part of the Turkish threat perceptions, which played an important role in shaping Turkey's relations with both Washington and Moscow.

I have identified the drivers of Turkish-Russian cooperation and confrontation in the period of 2016–2019. The research has confirmed my hypothesis that **the Turkish-Russian relationship should not be interpreted in itself, but instead in a Turkey-Russia-West triangle**. The analysis shows that **Turkish-Russian cooperation has been directed almost entirely against the West**. At the level of the international system, aspirations for independence can be identified, as well as the need to diversify foreign relations due to the challenges faced by the Western order. At the same time, **cooperation is motivated above all by state-level factors**, the most important among these being resentment (fear, mistrust) against the West that is arguably present in both countries; the goal of maintaining regime stability (the regimes solidarize against Western criticism); and the normative counterbalancing of the West. It is the state-level factors (i.e. the level of societal and regime perceptions) that make U.S. hegemony interpreted as a threat, which, consequently, makes soft balancing against the West necessary. As I argue, Ankara and Moscow look at their cooperation as a mean of this balancing.

While examining the Turkish-Russian cooperation, we must also mention the economic factors. There are strong economic ties between the two countries that clearly have an impact on bilateral relations. Economic interdependence serves as an incentive to maintain a good relationship. However, **the benefits of economic cooperation can be considered to be essentially permanent, and economic considerations alone cannot effectively explain the shifts within the Turkish-Russian relationship**. Nor can close economic cooperation prevent the spillover of tensions stemming from other factors – these will be summarized in the following paragraph – just as it did not serve as a kind of “shield” to protect bilateral relations in the case of the Su-24 incident.⁷

While cooperation is largely motivated by state-level factors, **the limitations of the Turkish-Russian rapprochement**, on the other hand, can be found **predominantly at the level of the international system**. The spheres of influence of the two states overlap. The geographical proximity of Turkey and Russia implies that they can increase their influence only at the expense of the other. Their interests in the surrounding regional conflicts clash typically at the strategic level, and their goals are incompatible. These points further strengthen the perception that foreign policy is a zero-sum game, an approach that has already been strongly present in the strategic culture of the two countries. The two countries are members of opposing alliance systems. This is true even

⁷ 24 November, 2015 the Turkish Air Force shot down a Russian Su-24M attack aircraft, which was flying at the Turkey-Syria border. The incident resulted in a remarkable estrangement of the bilateral relations.

if the characteristics of the two alliances (NATO and CSTO) are rather distinct and the two states have different roles in them, meaning that while Russia is clearly the central state of the CSTO, this is not the case with Turkey in NATO. It is important to point out that Ankara is trying to counterbalance not only the United States but also Moscow at the same time: the most serious hard counterweight to Russia is Turkey's NATO membership. However, in the surrounding regions Ankara usually seeks to balance the Russian threat – beside the collective defense guarantees – primarily through local actors, not through the West, thus preventing the escalation of the confrontation between Russia and the West, since it would significantly reduce Turkey's room for maneuver.

Despite joint energy projects (TurkStream, Akkuyu nuclear power plant), the two countries have fundamentally different goals in the field of energy policy, as Turkey is interested in cheap import and diversification of natural gas import sources, while Russia's goal is to keep up expensive export and maintain its leading export position. Ankara's large and in the near future irreplaceable economic dependence on Western states acts as an additional limiting factor for Turkish-Russian cooperation and points to the limitations of Turkey's policies toward the West. There are state-level constraints on Turkish-Russian cooperation as well. However, these can be identified only partly as reasons (such as the "modern state" worldview, using the term of Robert Cooper, which is based on mistrust of other states and interest policy). Rather, they are present either as the consequence of conflicts due to structural factors (such as historical grievances) or as tools that can easily be utilized and used in these conflicts (such as ethnic and religious identities).

Finally, I have supported the above results through the examination of **two detailed, current case studies, the war in Syria and the Turkish S-400 procurement**. I have demonstrated the presence of state-level incentives ("Kurdish issue"/terrorist issue; Turkish perception of an immediate external threat; the domestic political benefits of securitization) and the constraints at the level of the international system (Turkey's and Russia's incompatible end goals in Syria; Turkey's NATO membership as an obstacle to deeper military cooperation). I have also demonstrated Turkey's observable practice of soft balancing. With its steps towards Moscow, Ankara is willing to send a message to its Western allies and to convince them to take Turkish interests more into account. In both case studies, the following process has been observed: (1) The starting point is the divergence of the perceptions of Turkey and the United States; (2) Turkey turns to the United States to address a perceived particular threat issue, but receives an unfavorable

response; (3) Turkey opens toward Moscow and takes a soft balancing step against the United States.

Based on the findings of the analysis, a forecast for Turkish-Russian relations might be made. In case the security interests of the Turkish regime outweigh the security interests of the Turkish state, this discrepancy will inevitably lead to serious conflicts between Turkey and the United States in the short term. At the same time, Turkish-Russian cooperation continues to have significant, mainly structural obstacles. **Relations with Russia are not a viable alternative to the West for Turkey**, for the reasons explained above. If the assumptions of neoclassical realism are correct – and so far they have been supported by the history of Turkish-Russian relations – then the level of the international system (NATO, economic dependence on the West/Western sanctions, regional clashes between Turkey and Russia) will force Turkey and the United States back into a cooperative framework. Turkey's balancing therefore remains soft, does not become hard. **Turkey is not likely to meet the conditions necessary to change its strategic orientation.**

We must also not forget that the **Turkish-Russian relationship** has historically been **quite volatile**. As the Su-24 incident has shown, the two countries can become enemies in each other's eyes overnight. Therefore, whilst discussing Turkish-Russian cooperation, **it is always worth keeping in mind its fragility.**

NEW SCIENTIFIC RESULTS

1. **I was the first to prepare a comprehensive overview** in Hungarian of contemporary Turkish-Russian foreign, security and defense policy relations after 2016, all that with incorporating Turkish and Russian sources simultaneously.
2. I have tested the theory of neoclassical realism as well as soft balancing through a specific case study. **I have proven that in the case of studying the foreign policy behavior of authoritarian states, strategic culture and regime security** (i.e. essentially the threat perceptions of the society and regime in question) **have serious explanatory potential** among or instead of the various intervening variables employed primarily to study democratic states, which has mainly been in the focus of neoclassical realists so far.

3. **I have proven that Turkish-Russian relationship cannot be interpreted in isolation, without incorporating their relationship with the West in the analysis.** Instead, relations of Moscow and Ankara are to be interpreted in a Turkey-Russia-West triangular framework.
4. **I have proven that Ankara's primary motivation behind the development of Turkish-Russian relations is to soft balance the United States.** Thus, there is no strategic reorientation happening; from Turkey's perspective, relations with Moscow are basically an instrument of its relations with the United States.
5. **I have proven that the obstacles of a close, long-term and stable Turkish-Russian cooperation can be found primarily at the level of the international system.** Turkey at the moment does not meet the conditions necessary to change its strategic orientation. For Turkey, there is no real alternative to NATO membership in terms of military security and cooperation with the European Union in economic terms – even if the intervening variables, especially the divergence of Turkish and Western threat perceptions on security issues bearing key importance for Ankara, encourage cooperation between Turkey and Russia. This cooperation does not change and cannot change the structural determination of Turkey's EU and NATO relationship, nor does it resolve the conflict between Turkey's and Russia's incompatible strategic goals in their overlapping spheres of influence.
6. **I have proven that if its alliance system does not guarantee its security against the threats that Turkey perceives as most vital and immediate, then Ankara will cooperate with Russia,** an adversary that is perceived as less threatening at that given time (paradoxically, partly due to the collective defense guarantees provided by NATO) – if Russia is willing to cooperate. However, **the extent to what Ankara perceives Russia as a threat is volatile.** Russia, as we could see after the Su-24 incident, might become the primary threat to the Turks.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF THE RESEARCH RESULTS, RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of the research may be used in several fields. The dissertation analyzes and synthesizes a significant volume of Hungarian and international literature. It **provides** the

reader **an** easy-to-apply and adaptable **interpretive framework and toolkit** for analyzing Turkish foreign policy, as well as a comprehensive picture of Turkish-Russian relations.

The results of the research **may be used in education** at the National University of Public Service and other universities, mainly in international studies and security and defense policy courses, but the results, due to their relevance to Hungary, can be utilized **during training programs** held in the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and also at the units of the Defense Forces and their affiliates. Turkey's importance is reflected in **Hungary's National Security Strategy published in April 2020**, which **names Turkey** as a "*rapidly emerging regional power and NATO ally*" that "*plays an important role in the security of Europe and Hungary due to its geostrategic location.*" "*We are interested in exploiting the potential of Hungarian-Turkish political, economic, cultural and defense industrial cooperation as widely as possible.*"⁸ The research shows how **important it is to understand and pay attention to Turkish perceptions** in order to successfully cooperate with Turkey, both in bilateral and multilateral frameworks – all that of course in compliance with Hungary's obligations under international treaties. Based on the theoretical framework outlined in the dissertation and the results of the research, a certain degree of **forecast can be given** about the development of Turkish-Russian and Turkish-Western relations, which may also support the work of the Hungarian government.

In the field of scientific research, the dissertation **provides a model, theoretical and methodological basis for** applied research, **the study of Turkish foreign, security and defense policy, and bilateral cooperation in general**. On the theoretical level, the results of the research (the proposed intervening variables of neoclassical realism and the combination of balance of threat, omnibalancing, and soft balancing theories) should be tested in further cases as well. Regarding the **future research directions**, I also suggest a **more detailed analysis of the regional level** in future studies on the relationship between Turkey and Russia, and to examine the extent to which it modifies and fine-tunes this relationship. This aspect has received less attention in the dissertation. In future studies further consideration should be given also to a **detailed examination of the Libyan conflict** as a separate case study, partly to test the methodology and partly to confirm (or refute) the hypotheses formulated in the present research.

⁸ 1163/2020. (IV. 21.) Korm. határozat Magyarország Nemzeti Biztonsági Stratégiájáról. *Magyar Közlöny*, No. 81. Online: <http://www.kozlonyok.hu/nkonline/index.php?menuindex=200&pageindex=kozltart&ev=2020&szam=81> [2020. 05. 02.]

LIST OF THE AUTHOR'S RELATED PUBLICATIONS

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SHORT ACADEMIC BIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHOR

Nikolett Péntzváltó was born in 1992 in Keszthely, Hungary. She graduated as an International Relations Expert and as a Turcologist from Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE) in Budapest in 2014. She obtained her Master's degree in Security and Defense Policy at the National University of Public Service (NUPS) in 2016. Along with her Master's degree, she received NUPS's Pro Juventute Award.

During her university years, she received numerous student awards, she was a recipient of the Fellowship granted by the Republic of Hungary and a fellow of the New National Excellence Program. Between 2015 and 2016, she was the professional vice-president of the Advanced College for Security Policy. In 2017, she took second place at the National Scientific Students' Association Conference.

Since 2016, she has been working as an external research fellow at the Institute for Strategic and Defense Studies. Since February 2020, she has been the Turkey expert of the Migration Research Institute.

In addition to her research work, she has been an external lecturer at the NUPS and the Pázmány Péter Catholic University.

She is a member of the Hungarian–Turkish Friendship Association and the Military Science Department of the National Association of Doctoral Students.

She has been author of 25 publications, that are listed in the Database of Hungarian Scholarly Works (MTMT).