

The political dimension of drone warfare: The use of Turkish drones in Nagorno- Karabakh.

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3rd of August 2021

A Thesis submitted to the Board of Examiners
in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of
Master of Arts in Conflict Studies & Human Rights

Supervisor: Gijs Verbossen

Date of Submission: 3rd of August 2021

Programme Trajectory: Internship Report (15 ECTS) and Thesis Writing (15 ECTS)

Word count: 15239 words

Abstract

After a cease fire of 25 years, new clashes occurred between Armenia and Azerbaijan during the Second Karabakh War in September 2020. These clashes proved to be more violent and intense compared with earlier battles, due to the increased military support that Turkey provided to Azerbaijan in the form of Turkish manufactured drones. This development came as a surprise, as Turkey had refrained itself from intervening in this conflict for the past 25 years. It leads to questions about why Turkey decided to intervene after those 25 years. A comparative analysis between earlier cases of Turkey's drone warfare indicate that Turkey's foreign policy has changed from being cautious and western oriented, to assertive and focused on hard power projection.

By the use of the multiple hierarchy model in combination with regional security complex theory, this thesis tries to explain the motivations behind this change in foreign policy by the Turkish government. In doing so, Turkey's relationship with both Western organisations as the Russian Federation will be examined in relation to Nagorno-Karabakh. This form of historical analysis combined with primary source analysis, will illustrate how Turkey's intervention using drones can be explained through security dynamics in the region and power relations with Russia. Consequently, Turkey's new foreign policy indicates why it is perceived as a growing drone power and how its strategic use of these drones demonstrates the new future of drone warfare.

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1. Introduction

“Turkey Jumps Into Another Foreign Conflict, This Time in the Caucasus” (Gall, 2020). This statement, a headline of an article in the New York Times on October 1st, 2020, describes Turkey’s recent aggressivity in its foreign policy. Their intervention in Nagorno-Karabakh marked a new military operation executed by the Turkish government, after it already increased its presence in the Middle East by intervening in Syria and Libya. On all three battlefields, Turkish intervention was characterised by one specific weapon: Turkish-made armed drones (Fahim, 2020). These drones had a major impact on regional conflicts and are believed to be the reason for Turkish strategic success in all three areas. Consequently, this new form of warfare seemed to indicate a potential change in Turkish foreign policy. After years of maintaining peace and stability in the South Caucasus under the principle of ‘zero problems with neighbours’, Turkey’s foreign policy started to take a more assertive direction during the latest clashes (Aras and Akpınar, 2011; Gall, 2020).

The assertiveness of the Turkish government (hereafter, Ankara) in the South Caucasus is unexpected, considering that it has refrained from intervening in earlier clashes in this area. Tensions between Armenia and Azerbaijan have been one of the main issues in the South Caucasus, as both states clash over Nagorno-Karabakh, a region located in the southwest of Azerbaijan. A ceasefire that was implemented in 1994, with the help of the Russian Federation, largely succeeded in maintaining peace in region, although a resurgence of violence was occasionally noted (Askerov, 2020). While Ankara diplomatically supported its ally Azerbaijan, it refrained from military intervening in the region. According to various analysts, Ankara was concerned a military intervention would lead to a confrontation with Russia, as both countries sought to gain more influence in the area (Cornell, 1998; Aydin, 2004; Ebrahimi et al., 2014; Vatankhah and Navazeni, 2021). Besides, Turkey also preferred a good relationship with Western allies, which would be harmed if it intervened in the regional conflict. Hence, it was expected by these analysts that Turkey would refrain from intervening and accepting Russia’s growing influence in the region. Noticeably, these assumptions were eventually proven wrong during the Second Karabakh War, that erupted on the 27th of September 2020 (Safi, 2020).

It remains unknown what exactly caused the Second Karabakh War, but what became clear is that the revival of violence in September 2020 was the most intense conflict since the ceasefire was signed in 1994. After 44 days of fighting, the Russian Federation was once again able to reach a ceasefire between the two states that was signed on the 9th of November 2020 (Team of the Official Website of the President of Russia, 2020b). The impact of the conflict only became even more apparent afterwards. As of July 2021, the International Crisis Group (n.d.) has reported almost 6000 casualties as a result of the Second Karabakh War. In comparison to that number, the think tank reported that 180 militaries were killed in the 5 years before the war, excluding a four-day conflict in 2016. It demonstrates how the recent war is nothing compared to the clashes this region has

experienced over the past years. Various analysts argue that this change in intensity is caused by the involvement of Turkey in this conflict, as it provided direct support to Azerbaijan (Dixon, 2020; Fahim, 2020b; Kramer, 2020) .

Contrary to the Turkey's previous foreign policy in the South Caucasus, it went all-in from day one in the Second Karabakh war. On the 27th of September 2020, the Turkish department of foreign affairs published a statement in which it condemned Armenian attacks and states it would "Stand by Azerbaijan whichever way it prefers" (Republic of Turkey: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2020). In reality, Turkey became directly engaged in this conflict in support of Azerbaijan. Rumours sparked about Turkish F-16s being active in the region and Syrian militants fighting on behalf of Turkey and Azerbaijan against Armenian forces (Fahim, 2020; Kramer, 2020; Safi, 2020; United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, 2020). While Turkey denied these claims, it was less secretive about its provision of weapons to Azerbaijani forces. On the contrary, it were Turkish drones that caught the eye of many observers, as they believe that this weapon helped Azerbaijani forces prevail over the Armenian forces in the area (Dixon, 2020; Fahim, 2020b; Sabbagh, 2020). Accordingly, the drones provided an opportunity to carry out precise attacks far away from the front line. Moreover, these drones were able to destroy combat systems that were used by Armenian forces, mainly of Russian origin. These drones challenged the regional status quo, controlled by Russia, and helped Azerbaijan regain control over areas that it lost in the First Karabakh War (Ilić and Tomašević, 2021).

With the major strategic successes that the Turkish drones achieved, rumours sparked that these drones could not have been operated by Azerbaijani pilots (Eckel, 2020; Gabuev, 2020; Roblin, 2020; Sabbagh, 2020). Joint military exercises between the two states were first reported in July, where Turkish drones were deployed during trainings between Turkish troops and Azerbaijani forces (Gatopoulos, 2020). As Turkish drones were used so effectively and quickly in Nagorno-Karabakh, which requires a lot of training, it seems implausible that Azerbaijan did this by itself. Besides, running a drone operation is a significant investment, especially for a country that used these type of drones for the first time on a battlefield (Eckel, 2020). As Turkey already had experience with operating these drones in Libya and Syria, it seems probable that they were involved in the operationalisation of these drones. Although these claims cannot be proven at this point, it does seem unlikely that Azerbaijan would be able to use these drones successfully in Nagorno-Karabakh without the help of Ankara, even if this would only include training.

The successful use of Turkish drones started a new discussion on current day warfare, as it marked the third battlefield in 2020 where Turkish drones delivered Turkey a strategic win. However, the case of Nagorno-Karabakh was different compared to previous cases and the more common implementation of drones. The academic field on drone warfare commonly focuses on using drones

against terrorist organisations, especially by Western states (Hofman, 2020; Hudson et al., 2011; Vogel, 2020) In Nagorno-Karabakh, drones operated in an interstate conflict, thus supporting Azerbaijan in targeting forces of another state. According to Sabbagh (2020), civil society organisations have warned for this development, as the low cost of drone warfare might fuel conflict between neighbouring states. Ilić and Tomašević (2021) adds that the Second Karabakh war indicated a turning point in the world of warfare, as it illustrated how a small state can be successful on a battlefield by the mass use of drones. The effectiveness of Turkish drones also prompted international interest and reactions. In May 2021, Poland became the first NATO country that bought Turkish drones, and it was claimed that Saudi Arabia showed interest in buying Turkish drones (Reuters, 2021). In December 2020, rumours also sparked about the UK establishing a new armed drone programme in the wake of the success of Turkish drones in Nagorno-Karabakh (Sabbagh, 2020). Turkish drones really started to change the dynamics of drone warfare.

This research tries to position itself in the middle of changing foreign policies and new tactics of drone warfare. Turkey's passive stance in the South Caucasus lasted for over 25 years, but surprisingly changed during the Second Karabakh War. Accordingly, Turkey got drawn in a full-on interstate war, in which it also risked a confrontation with Russia, which was an enormous risk that it did not dare to take earlier. This research will demonstrate why this change occurred and it will also focus on the political dimension that was behind this intense use of drone warfare. In that sense, this research contributes to the debates on the change in the global use of drone warfare. It presents an explanation for foreign implementations of drones, apart from the more common understanding of terrorist threats, and demonstrate the political implications of drone warfare. Besides, this case present a less common usage of drone warfare in interstate conflicts between neighbouring states. Therefore, the analysis of this specific case offers new in-depth insights to scholarly debates over the future of drone warfare.

Thus, the core of this research is to understand the reasons behind the strategic choice for drone usage in the Second Karabakh War and understand what this usage is telling about Turkish foreign policy. Additionally, this research will provide an analysis of Turkish foreign policy and the relations it kept with its Western allies and Russia. This analysis will be conducted by the use of regional security complex theory and combining this with the multiple hierarchy model as formulated by Douglas Lemke (Lemke, 2002a). With the help of this analytical framework, the research will provide an answer to the following main question:

What are the motivations behind the use of drone warfare by the Turkish government in 2020 during the revival of conflict in the region Nagorno Karabakh?

Accordingly, six sub-questions are formulated that will help in answering the main question:

1. What has been Turkey's role in the region after the first cease fire was signed in 1994?

2. How has the Turkish use of drones developed since the investment in drone production in 2010?
3. What conclusions can be drawn on the use of drone warfare by the Turkish government based on earlier cases?
4. Did Turkey's relationship with Western organisations influence its new foreign policy in the South Caucasus?
5. Did Turkey's relationship with the Russian Federation influence its foreign policy in the Caucasus?

These sub-questions will be answered in five different chapters. The next chapter will discuss the historical context of the conflict, the parties involved and the development of Turkish drone industry. Therefore, this chapter will answer the first two sub-questions and provide the reader with the necessary information for the analysis of this thesis. Additionally, chapter 3 will also be introductory, as this section will elaborate on the analytical framework and the chosen methodology for this research. Thereafter, the fourth chapter will compare three cases of drone warfare by the Turkish government and answer the third sub-question. This chapter is mainly focused on understand Turkey's foreign policy and will illustrate why this research will focus on Turkey's relations with Western organisations and Russia in the last two chapters. The relationship between Turkey and Western organisations will be discussed to indicate whether changes occurred and if these were made deliberately in connection with the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh. The sixth chapter will conduct a similar analysis but will focus on the relationship with Russia. Consequently, these final two chapters will discuss the last two sub-questions and afterwards, all findings will lead to an answer to the research question.

2. Regional perceptions on the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh

The first part of this section will provide an answer to the first sub-question: What has been Turkey's role in the region after the first cease fire was signed in 1994? This includes a brief explanation of the conflict and the parties involved. The remaining part of this chapter will shortly discuss the creation and development of Turkish drones by answering the second sub-question: How has the Turkish use of drones developed since the investment in drone production in 2010? The purpose of answering these two sub-questions is to provide a clear overview of the empirical case and lay the foundations for the proposed research.

2.1 The conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh.

Tensions between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh already started around 1920 (Cornell, 1998). Nagorno-Karabakh, a border region located in Azerbaijan, was largely inhabited by Armenians at that time. Nevertheless, the region was assigned to Azerbaijan in 1921, which sparked angered responses from Armenian institutions but did not immediately result in a conflict (Mooradian and Druckman, 1999). Hence, violent clashes only appeared around the time that the Soviet Union started to collapse. The population of Nagorno-Karabakh started to oppose the Azerbaijani government and confrontations between Azeris and Armenians led to the First Karabakh War in 1988 (de Waal, 2010). In the years that followed, the Republic of Artsakh, meaning Nagorno-Karabakh, declared its independence in 1992, while Armenia was able to invade seven administrative regions in Azerbaijan (Ruys and Rodríguez Silvestre, 2021). As battles continued, various parties attempted to mediate in this conflict, including the United Nations (UN) and Russia. Eventually, Russia's efforts successfully led to a cease fire in 1994, which acknowledged the seven areas Armenia won from Azerbaijan, including Nagorno-Karabakh (Askerov, 2020).

In the years prior to the Second Karabakh War, tensions were still present. Clashes happened occasionally, including the more recent confrontation in 2016, the so called four-day war (Askerov, 2020; *BBC News*, 2016). However, the cease fire itself was never fully violated and stayed in place. On the 27th of September 2020, the cease fire was official violated, which resulted in a 6-week war, referred to as the Second Karabakh War (Safi, 2020). While it remains unknown which party started the conflict, it turned into a full-on war in which drones and long-range rocket artillery were commonly used. On the 9th of November 2020, Russia was able to reach a new cease fire between the warring parties. This ceasefire increased Russia's presence in the region, as its peacekeepers would oversee the Lachin corridor between Armenia and Azerbaijan (Dixon, 2020). Besides, Azerbaijan was able to regain the territories it lost in the first war, making it the clear winner in this war (Ruys and Rodríguez Silvestre, 2021).

The intensity of the Second Karabakh War is mainly caused by the support of regional actors, as they provided advanced military support, including drones and long-range rocket artillery. Various

scholars already argued at the beginning of this war that the presence of regional powers, such as Turkey, Russia and Iran, might turn this conflict into a regional one (Iddon, 2020; Safi, 2020a; Saragerova, 2020). This prediction was partly wrong, as the conflict remained within the borders of Armenia and Azerbaijan, but the involvement of Turkey and Russia did influence the course of the war. Turkey provided its drones to Azerbaijan, which are considered to be the most important weapon that contributed to Azerbaijan's victory in this war (Dixon, 2020; Gabuev, 2020; Kramer, 2021; Sabbagh, 2020;). Russia took a more mediating role in the conflict, even though it still openly supported Armenia by the delivery of its weapons, including air defence systems and multiple rocket launchers (Wezeman et al., 2021). Consequently, Russia and Turkey got involved in yet another conflict, after both parties faced each other earlier in Syria and Libya. Therefore, the bilateral relations between Turkey and Russia might have further complicated this war. As this interference of other parties cannot be ignored, the next section will discuss the regional dynamics further.

2.2 Parties involved in this conflict.

The aim of this section is to provide an overview of the involvement of regional parties in this conflict. Over the past decades, three regional states prominently wanted to mediate between the warring parties: Iran, Russia, and Turkey (German, 2012). These states were mainly trying to increase their own influence and power in the Caucasus, at the expense of each other (Betts, 1999; Cornell, 1998). Apart from this general motive, each country also had its own interests that it pursued while becoming involved in this conflict. Accordingly, these interests will be mentioned in the following section, only looking at developments that occurred since the 1990s up until the beginning of the Second Karabakh war.

Starting with Turkey, it has been the only state that has openly supported Azerbaijan over the past decades. Both states are closely tied in terms of language, ethnicity and culture, which created a strong bond between the two parties, only strengthened by the animosity both states experienced with Armenia (Cornell, 1999). Ever since the achievement of the ceasefire, Ankara has been interested in increasing its influence in the region and developing itself as a regional power (Cornell, 1998). Turkey aspired to function as a bridge between the east and the west, for which it needed more influence in the region to accomplish this (Betts, 1999). Nonetheless, different scholars believe that Turkey never had the intention to replace or challenge Russia due to its power in the region (Cornell, 1998; German, 2012; Sayari, 2000; Pashayeva and Göksel, 2011). For this reason, it seemed unlikely that Turkey would get involved heavily in the South Caucasus. Ankara rather expanded its cultural, political, and economic relations with Turkic republics, including Azerbaijan. It repeatedly shown interest in the oil and energy resources in Azerbaijan, proposing to traverse their pipelines through Turkey, which was accomplished over a decade ago (Ekinci, 2017).

Accordingly, Turkey rather took a passive approach in this region to secure its main interests. Ankara still supported Azerbaijan but refrained from truly interfering. According to various scholars, Turkey's relationship with the Russian Federation and Western countries were more important compared to its relationship with Azerbaijan (Cornell, 1998; German, 2012; Sayari, 2000; Pashayeva and Göksel, 2011). Intervention would only lead to escalations, which was strongly discouraged by Western states and Russia even warned Turkey to not get involved in the South Caucasus. As a result, Turkey did not want to jeopardize its relationship with either one of them and protected its main interests by not getting involved in the conflict. Furthermore, Turkey later adopted a foreign policy of zero problems with the neighbours, where it wanted to improve regional relations. Turkey's position in the Caucasus supported the meaning of that foreign policy (Süss and Satanakis, 2021).

In the wake of this foreign policy, Turkey also started to focus less on Western initiatives. At a certain point, Turkey even tried to reconcile with Armenia, but these efforts were not successful (Pashayeva and Göksel, 2011). In the light of these developments, Turkey's policy in the region drastically changed in 2020. It has supported Azerbaijan in diplomatic ways, such as imposing a blockade on Armenia, but Turkey's military support was new. Arguably, Turkey's efforts of executing joint military exercises might have encouraged Azerbaijan to become more assertive (Ilić and Tomašević, 2021). Apart from that, Turkey's arms sales increased heavily in 2020, partly caused by the sale of Turkish drones to Azerbaijan. It was even rumoured by Armenia that Turkey directly support Azerbaijan, by the provision of military personnel (Keddie, 2020). While these claims were denied and have not been proven yet, these developments demonstrate how Turkey's approach became more active over the course of just a few months.

As been briefly touched upon, Turkey's policy in the South Caucasus demonstrated a certain extend of cautiousness towards Russia's position in the region. Generally, Russia is seen as the most powerful regional state in the South Caucasus. Over the past decades, Russia's influence grew as it was the only mediator that successfully implemented two ceasefires in the region (Cornell, 1998; Gabuev, 2020). It was also appointed as one of the co-chairs in the OSCE Minsk Group, an initiative that aims at finding a peaceful solution to the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh. Russia's role was further strengthened by the warring parties, as both of them saw Russia as a desired intermediary and enjoyed good relations with the Russian Federation (Betts, 1999). Armenia was seen as Russia's strategic ally, as multiple Russian troops were stationed in Armenian territories. This situation increased Russia's military presence in the region (Markedonov, 2018). On the other hand, it was in Russia's interest to keep Azerbaijan satisfied so it would still accept the ceasefire. Therefore, Russia also provided weapons to Azerbaijan (Güneylioğlu, 2017).

Russia's main interest in this region was to defend its own powerful position. As a mediator, it implemented a ceasefire that assured Russia's military presence in the South Caucasus, increasing its

influence in the region (Shirinyan, 2013). As it was the most powerful state compared to the other regional powers, Russia sought to expand its influence and prevent Turkey and Iran from gaining any significance in the region (Cornell, 1998). On a more personal level, Russia was also interested in keeping former Soviet republics under its influence after the collapse of the Soviet Union. By this principle, Russia started its first mediating efforts in the 1990s (Betts, 1999).

During the Second Karabakh war, Russia's approach to the conflict remained similar to earlier situations. It still sold weapons to both parties and even limited its support for Armenia, as it did not get directly involved in this conflict despite the aggressiveness of both Azerbaijan and Turkey (*BBC News*, 2020). While Azerbaijan might have won the war at the expense of Armenia, Russia still won the war for influence in the region. The ceasefire that Russia reached with both parties highlighted its power in the region. Apart from that, Russia also successfully kept Turkey away from the mediation process, despite its efforts to get invited to the negotiation table. Additionally, Russia's military presence in the region as its peacekeepers controlled the border region between Armenia and Azerbaijan (Gabuev, 2020).

Iran is considered to be the third regional power in the South Caucasus, but refrained from taken a specific approach during the Second Karabakh War. Nevertheless, its role cannot be neglected as it still belongs to the region and has been involved in the conflict before. Back in the 1990s, Iran was mainly interested in strengthening its relationship with Muslim regions in the former Soviet Union. Similar to Turkey, Iran saw itself as a bridge between Central Asia and the Middle East in which it could gain significant regional influence (Betts, 1999). It tried a similar approach compared to Russia, by portraying itself as a mediator in the conflict, but its efforts were never successful (Cornell, 1999). In comparison to Russia, Iran was less powerful and its weak relationship with Azerbaijan made it unable to function as a mediator (Askerov, 2020). Moreover, as the United States (US) got involved in the mediating process, Iran's position became even less influential. The US tried to prevent Iran from gaining any influence and ignored Iranian efforts in the peace-making process (Azizi and Hamidfar, 2021). In recent events, Iran only offered itself as a mediator to the conflict, but refrained from taking an active stance in the conflict (Iddon, 2020). It seems to demonstrate that Iran has given up its possible interests in the South Caucasus.

Demonstrating these different approach leads to one important conclusion about Turkey's position in the region. Noticeably, Turkey's approach during the Second Karabakh war was unexpected, considering Turkey's more passive stance in the past. Their military support by the provision of drones proved to be successful as it contributed to Azerbaijan winning the conflict. Nonetheless, the destructive impact of drones makes it hard to understand how Turkey went from a passive approach to the operationalisation of its drones. Especially since earlier considerations, such as

the relationship with Russia and Western allies, remain intact. Therefore, these relationships will be further analysed in relation to the Second Karabakh War in the final two chapters of this thesis.

2.3 The creation and development of Turkish drones.

As illustrated in the above section, the use of Turkish drones had a major impact on the course of the conflict. Consequently, Turkey became known as a rising drone power (Hofman, 2020; Jones, 2020; Rogers, 2021). Even countries as the United Kingdom started to invest in new armed drone programmes, after the success of Turkish drones in Nagorno-Karabakh (Sabbagh, 2020). Generally, this development is not unusual. The use of Turkish drones during the Second Karabakh War seems to illustrate a new future for warfare, in which countries are relying more on drones (Rogers, 2021). The drones Turkey used are considered low cost, which makes them easier to purchase in larger masses (Davis, 2020). The situation in Nagorno-Karabakh displayed how the purchase of low-cost drones by a state with less military capacity could wreck armoured vehicles and air-defence systems produced by Russia, which is considered a state with high military capacity (Marson and Forrest, 2021). It illustrated how drones can become an asset for less influential countries in the future.

In reference to Turkish drones, their development only started little over a decade ago. For a long time, Turkey relied on US-made and Israeli drones, only using them against the PKK in their own country (Hofman, 2020). However, diplomatic relations between Israel and Turkey deteriorated in 2010, due to Israel's policy in Gaza (Efron, 2018). Consequently, both Israel and the US refused to sell their drones to Turkey (Milan and Bassiri Tabrizi, 2020). Due to these developments, Ankara decided to fully invest in drone production to manufacture its own drones. It also realised that drones offered an opportunity for Turkey to foster export capabilities in military technologies (Kırdemir and Kasapoğlu, 2018). It's current most used drone is the so called *Bayraktar TB2*. This drone has been operated since 2015 and was used by Turkey during various military operations abroad, including the Second Karabakh War. As this drone reduces the operational tempo between identifying a target and executing the strike, it is seen as one of Turkey's substantive strategic assets in military operations (Milan and Bassiri Tabrizi, 2020). Concluding, the use of drones marked a change in Turkey's military capacities, as its became less reliant on the technologies of other states while it was able to rise as a drone power itself.

2.4 Turkish foreign policy in Nagorno-Karabakh

The violation of the ceasefire was partly expected. Tensions between the two states were never solved and clashes happened occasionally. However, the military support that Turkey provided to Azerbaijan in the form of its own drones, was less expected. As was displayed in this section, Turkey has been a supportive ally of Azerbaijan, but never supported this state with military means. This choice was made due to several reasons, including the Russian influence in the area and Turkey's relationship

with Western States. Additionally, various scholars argued over the past years that it would be unlikely for Turkey to intervene in the conflict. These findings make less sense in understanding the change in Turkey's policy regarding the South Caucasus. Therefore, this research will explain this change by analysing Turkey's earlier cases of drone warfare and its relationship with various parties, to identify the motivations that led to this change in policy.

3. Analytical framework and method of implementation

The motivations behind the use of drone warfare will be analysed through a combination of two specific analytical models: The multiple hierarchy model and the regional security complexes theory. These two models provide a better understanding of regional power dynamics and explain how regional security issues are connected to a state's foreign policy. By the use of these two models, this research will try to identify Turkey's motivations for their use of drones in Nagorno-Karabakh from a political perspective. The section will also briefly discuss other relevant concepts and the chosen methodology for this research.

3.1 Analytical framework

This research will combine the multiple hierarchy model (hereafter, MHM) and regional security complexes theory (RSCT) to create one analytical framework that is used to analyse this empirical case. These two theories are both very similar, as they share a common understanding of the global system, but slightly differ in what they are specifically analysing. The MHM is more interested in understanding the reasons for war by looking at regional power relations, while RSCT is more concerned about explaining a state's foreign policy in terms of security dynamics. A combination of these two models makes it possible to focus both on motivations and behavioural changes in Turkish foreign policy regarding its policy during the Second Karabakh War.

The MHM is a modification of the well-known Power Transition Theory (PTT). This theory states that power is shaping the way in which the international order functions. The concept of power can be best understood as a relationship between actors, in which their resources, such as opportunities or objects, decide whether an actor can affect the behaviour of another (Dahl, 1957). In relation to PTT, power is "The ability of one nation to advance policy goals by altering the policies of other nations" (Tammen et al., 2017: p. 3). In that regard, PTT focuses on power from a political, economic and military perspective and illustrate these dynamics among states by its formulation of the international order.

The power dynamics in the international order are explained through a hierarchal system, often symbolized by a pyramid. One dominant power is at the top of the pyramid and controls the international status quo, which refers to the broadly accepted international rules and norms (Tammen et al., 2017). The greater powers are just below the dominant power, meaning that they are influential but not dominating the international order. However, these greater powers can become challengers in the future. This situation only occurs when greater powers are dissatisfied with the status quo and can match the power of the dominant state. At the bottom of the pyramid are the middle and small powers, where the majority of the international states are situated (Güneylioğlu, 2017). These states have little

to no influence on the international order and only become relevant when they are dissatisfied with the situation and are willing to support a challenger. When this eventually happens, it will increase the risk of war. On the contrary, peace is achieved when most greater powers are satisfied, and no challengers appear in the international order. This also means that even when most of the middle and small powers are dissatisfied, peace can still be maintained, as only dominant and greater powers are able to destabilize the international order (Kugler and Organski, 1989).

Power Transition Theory offers insights on peace and conflict in the global system but neglects regional systems of power. Therefore, Douglas Lemke (2002a) offered a revision of this theory called the multiple hierarchy model. This model suggests that the international order exists out of multiple smaller orders, so called local hierarchies. These local hierarchies function in a similar way as the international order with a local status quo, a local dominant state and local greater, middle and smaller powers (Sakuwa 2009). An important aspect of this model is that international greater powers can intervene in local hierarchies. This situation will only occur when a great power's interests are threatened. Nevertheless, their intervention can cause regional wars and destabilize the regional order (Lemke, 2002b). As within power transition theory, war occurs when a local greater power gains more influence and challenges the local dominant power. War in this case will only lead to a regional conflict and does not destabilize the international order.

The regional perspective of the MHM offers an understanding of conflict in relation to power, which makes this model suitable for this empirical case. Moreover, based on military power, Güneylüoğlu (2017) identifies the South Caucasus as a regional hierarchy. Russia is seen as the dominant power, while Iran and Turkey are identified as the greater powers and Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia function as the middle or small powers. By applying this model, this research tries to understand the role of power in the latest revival of violence and examine whether becoming a dominant power can be a plausible reason for the Turkish involvement in the conflict by the use of drones.

The MHM offers a more specific analysis of conflict compared to the power transition theory. However, according to various scholars, the theory still lacks a clear definition on regional hierarchies and their function in the regional system (R. E. Kelly 2007; Frazier and Stewart-Ingersoll 2010). Moreover, the model neglects certain issues that remain important in this research, including regional security dynamics. Consequently, this research will use regional security complexes theory (RSCT) to fill up that gap and focus on other themes in a state's foreign policy. Generally, RSCT offers a more nuanced view of developments in a region compared to the MHM (Buzan and Wæver, 2009). It demonstrates whether regional powers are supporting or revising the regional status quo, while MHM focuses on understanding how the regional status quo relates to war and peace.

Similar to the division of local hierarchies, RSCT states that the world is divided in multiple *regional security complexes* (Kazan 2005). These complexes are defined as “A set of units whose major processes of securitisation, desecuritisation, or both are so interlinked that their security problems cannot reasonably be analysed or resolved apart from one another” (Buzan and Wæver, 2009: p. 44). Another explanation of regional security complexes defines it as “a group of states whose primary security concerns link together sufficiently closely that their national securities cannot reasonably be considered apart from one another” (Buzan and Wæver, 2009). Thus, security complexes consists out of a regional groups of states, where the actions of one state will impact the security of others in the complex (Frazier and Stewart-Ingersoll, 2010). This creates a system in which member states decide how to confront any security issue in their area, making their actions or policies regional and interdependent. As chapter 5 and 6 will discuss Turkey’s relationship with Western organisations and Russia, this concept of interdependence between members of a regional security complex becomes important. This concept will help to analyse whether certain actions, such as the use of drones, lead to implications in the relationship with its allies.

Another important aspect of this theory is the notion of an *insulator*. An insulator is identified as a country that is in the middle of multiple regional security complexes, but does not belong to either one of them (Buzan and Wæver, 2009). In RSCT, Turkey is identified as an insulator. Scholar Andre Barrinha (2014) argues Turkey can be seen as an insulator within the European, Middle Eastern and Ex-Soviet security complexes. However, Turkey’s role as an insulator is quite different from what is expected from an insulator. Barrinha (2014) states that an insulator is normally passive, as it is isolated from any regional security complex. Turkey, on the other hand, demonstrated in the past decades that it is an active insulator state, intervening in each of these three complexes. However, Buzan and Wæver claim that it does this from an outsider position, as it acts without considering the security concerns of the region. The use of the concept of an insulator will help in analysing Turkey’s foreign policy, in connection with each of these three complexes.

As the multiple hierarchy model offers more insights on power being a motivation for conflict, regional security complex theory does not exactly explain conflict but rather discusses how a country will act according to its security complex. These different frameworks do not tend to focus on or analyse drone warfare, as drone warfare is just an option for a state to conduct itself in relation to other states. This research aims at understanding what this tells about Turkey’s motivations and changes in international relationship. The combination of these two models will help in understanding these underlying motivations.

3.2 Relevant concepts

Apart from the general framework, some other concepts need to be explained before this research will analyse the empirical case further. As this thesis will discuss Turkey’s foreign policy, its domestic

political situation cannot be ignored. Domestic politics refers to every event, situation or activity that is linked to one particular country. Jack Levy (1988) argues in his article on war and domestic politics, that domestic politics may help in understanding causes of war. He concludes by arguing that there is a substantial relationship between internal conflict and foreign conflict behaviour. Issues as upcoming political movements, public opinion, or economic structures can be examples of internal conflict that can change the behaviour of a country in foreign affairs, to an extent that they may risk war. Therefore, developments in Turkey's domestic politics will not be neglected when examining Turkey's motivations behind its use of drones in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Regarding the military side of the empirical case, the notion of project projection remain relevant to illustrate the military side of power. Apart from the Second Karabakh War, Turkey's earlier involvement with drones in Libya and Syria were defined as hard power projection interventions (Kardaş, 2020; McKernan, 2020; Pamuk and Coskun, 2021). Kardaş further argues that Turkey's power projection potential was uncertain in the aftermath of the coup attempt in 2016. However, the effectiveness of Turkey's drones illustrate Turkey's current power projection capabilities. Therefore, this concept will be analysed further in relation to Turkey's use of drone warfare in chapter 4.

The final two chapters will analyse Turkey's relation with Western organisations and Russia to see whether Turkey's use of drones in Nagorno-Karabakh was used in a way to change its relationship with either one of them. During this analysis, terms as 'Western Allies' or 'Western organisations' will be used. This characterisation of the 'West' is meant to indicate that these institutions or states act by certain principles or cultures that are common in Western civilisation. These principles are often recognised in things as rationality and political equality, a culture that highlights the freedom of human beings or ideals based on Christianity (Brooks, 2020; Huntington, 2011).

3.3 Research Method and Data Collection

Similar to the analytical framework, this research will combine various forms of analysis and different sources in order to answer the main question. The previous chapter was seen as an introductory section, in which mainly historical analysis was conducted. The two sub-questions, which focused on determining Turkey's role in the region since 1994 and the development of Turkey's drones, also illustrated that the main focus was on Turkey's history. In doing so, this chapter used mainly academic works, but also opinion papers and newspaper articles to demonstrate the current debates on Turkey's drone warfare and intervention in the region. Using historical analysis for understanding the foundations of a conflict is not uncommon in the field of International Relations, as it might explain underlying causes of a conflict. Kimberly Marten (2015) used a similar approach to explain Russian foreign policy and its intervention in Ukraine.

The next chapter will examine three different cases in which Turkey used drone warfare, which includes south-eastern Turkey, Syria and Libya. By the use of comparative analysis, this

chapter will draw conclusions on Turkey's use of drone warfare based on these earlier cases. This analysis will be conducted in a similar case as in the article provided by scholar Dani Belo (2020), in which he examines how Russia and China use grey zone tactics for strategic purposes. The author mainly focuses on the different techniques that both Russia and China execute and offers valuable insights on the variable that might lead to these differences. In executing this form of analysis, this chapter will analyse academic literature, but also focus on information provided by military journals and reports written by think tanks, such as the International Crisis Group.

The last two chapters will combine many of the research methods used earlier one and these are also the chapters where the analytical framework will be put into work. In structure, both these chapters are similar. Chapter 5 will investigate whether Turkey's relationship with Western organisations might have caused certain changes that led to Turkey's new foreign policy in the South Caucasus. Chapter 6 will use the same analysis, but focuses on Russia instead. The first part of each chapter consists out of a historical analysis, based on academic sources, to understand their relation with Turkey respectively prior to the event. The second part discusses the responses of both parties to Turkey's intervention by the use of drones. This analysis will be based on primary sources, such as press statements or governmental reports, in addition to opinion papers. Once again, comparative analysis will be used in the final part of the chapter, to see whether something has changed between these situations that would indicate that Turkey's use of drones pursuit a certain change.

Thus, after two more introductory chapters that created the foundations of this research, the last three chapters will focus more on providing a part of the answer to the main question. The fourth chapter will provide more information on Turkey's foreign policy and how the use of drone warfare relates to this. The last two chapters will reflect on this, by examining on how Turkey's relations with Russia and Western organisations relate to its foreign policy.

4. Three cases of Turkish Drone Warfare

The Turkish government is described as one of the rising drone powers in 2020 (Bakir, 2020; Hofman, 2020; Velazquez, 2021). While this description is partly caused by the success of Turkish drones in Nagorno-Karabakh, it also refers to earlier Turkish successes in other regions prior to this conflict. This section will elaborate on three of the earlier cases in which Turkish drones were successful, which are: Southeast Turkey, Syria, and Libya. By the use of comparative analysis, this section offers an understanding of Turkish foreign policy prior to the Second Karabakh War. Accordingly, the analysis will provide an answer to the following sub-question: What conclusions can be drawn on the use of drone warfare by the Turkish government based on earlier cases?

4.1 The use of Turkish drones in Southeast Turkey

Over the past years, self-defence became a common reason among states for using drone warfare. The most well-known example is the use of drone warfare against terrorism, as the American government did against al-Qaeda and the Islamic state (Boyle, 2015). Ankara used a similar narrative when it started to operate drones in the southeast part of Turkey, against the Kurdish party Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê (PKK) (The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2016). Tensions between Turkey and the PKK can be traced back to the establishment of the Kurdish party in 1978, with the aim of developing its own state by the use of guerrilla warfare (Criss, 1995). As a result, violence increased on both sides in the decades that followed. Despite the revision of the ideology of the PKK during the 1990s, as it demanded equal rights and more autonomy instead of an independent state, violence continued (Yegen, 2016). Another ceasefire between the two parties was violated in July 2015, leading to a new conflict that is still ongoing as of July 2021.

During the current conflict, Turkey started to operate its own manufactured drones. Ankara did not operate those drones right away. The first reports on the observation of Turkish drones in Kurdish areas appeared in August 2016 (Gurcan, 2017). Consequently, the first kill by a Bayraktar TB2 drone was reported in September 2016, in an attack carried out against the PKK (Lasconjarias and Maged, 2019). While Turkey's first deployment of drones was on its own soil, this operation soon expanded to areas in neighbouring countries where the PKK was also active. These areas included Northern Iraq and Northern Syria (Milan and Bassiri Tabrizi, 2020). In a similar way as the American use of drones, Ankara argued that its actions against the PKK and in the region were a response against terrorism in the area. Consequently, Ankara perceived terrorism as Turkey's main security threat, and the Bayraktar TB2 drones as its main asset against terrorism (The International Institute of Strategic Studies, 2018). Moreover, the execution of drone warfare was perceived similar as the usage of drones by the American government (Outzen, 2021). These attacks focused on precise locations and executed strike against single targets, including some PKK officials. These operations proved to be effective, as Ankara has been able to push the counter-PKK fight off its own territory.

Drone attacks against the PKK are still carried out in 2021, with most attacks being executed in Iraq. These attacks are tolerated by the dominant power in the region, the Kurdistan Democratic Party, as this party has strong economic ties with Turkey and regularly clashes with the PKK (McKernan, 2021). At the same time, attacks against the PKK are largely accepted by both Russia and Western allies. Both the US and EU characterise the PKK as a terrorist organisation. Thus, Turkey's operations are seen as a form of self-defence (Pamuk and Stewart, 2020). Furthermore, Russia has refrained from interfering as part of its relationship with Turkey, which was no difference this time around. The lack of international responses helped Turkey to execute these attacks against Kurdish groups. However, this use of drones would soon develop on large scale.

4.2 The use of Turkish drones in Syria

The first use of Turkish drone warfare targeted terrorist groups, a policy that continued in Syria.

Ankara launched military operations against ISIL in 2016 and Kurdish fighters in 2018. Despite the severity of these attacks, they were largely accepted by both Western allies and Russia due to terrorism threats. Turkey's third military operation against the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) brought some trouble to its relationship with its Western allies. The SDF has been a Western ally in the combat against ISIL, which was now threatened by Turkish drone warfare operations. This development caused severe responses of Western allies in 2019, including the suspension of EU accession talks (European Parliamentary Research Service, 2019). The regime of Assad also condemned each operation carried out by Turkey as an occupation of Northern regions in Syria (Al-Hilu, 2021). Nevertheless, these responses did not stop Turkish assertiveness in Syria.

By the 1st of March 2020, Turkey launched *Operation Spring Shield* (OSS), which was known for its use of drone warfare. Contrary to the earlier cases in Syria, Turkish drones did not target terrorist groups during this operation. Instead, this operation was seen as a counterattack against Syrian forces, after they struck a Turkish convoy, killing 34 Turkish soldiers (Outzen, 2021). This operation marked a change in Turkey relationship with Syria, and generally, in the Middle East. After the Arab Spring, Turkey tried to gain more influence in warring countries by taking a more cautious approach, following its zero problems with neighbours policy and encouraging negotiations. In many of these cases, including Syria, Turkey's efforts were not successful (Kösebalaban, 2020). As a result, Turkey started to take a different approach, which led to its involvement in the Syrian civil war, including its support for the Free Syrian army. Yet, the government of Turkey refrained from using its drones directly against Syrian forces until OSS (Crino and Dreby, 2020). Hence, OSS marked a change in Turkey's use of drone warfare.

Turkey launched the operation in the Syrian city of Idlib on the 1st of March 2020. The forces of president Assad already launched an operation to seize this city in 2019. Back then, Syrian forces

were able to push back the armed opposition for months, due to Russian airpower support and the contribution of Iranian militias. Nevertheless, Turkey's counterattack in March 2020 ended their success. The Turkish operation was characterised by the use of drones with integrated rocket systems and artillery batteries, which resulted in the execution of precision-strikes against targets. Both Iranian and Russian manufactures drones were mainly used for surveillance purposes and target acquisition, which illustrates how Turkey's use of drones was aggressive in its execution (Crino and Dreby, 2020). These aggressive drones were able to stabilise the Syrian opposition's defences and caused serious losses for the Syrian army. Not only did this include Russian military vehicles, weapons and air defence systems, but more than 2500 personnel were either killed or seriously wounded (Outzen, 2021). It eventually resulted in a ceasefire between both countries on the 5th of March 2021 (Khurshudyan and Dadouch, 2020).

Turkey's assertive use of drones in Syria aligns with the idea that Turkey wanted to project its hard power in the region. First and foremost, Turkey's win in Idlib discredited Russia's air defence technology, as it was not able to counter this attack (Bakir, 2020). At the same time, this was also an enormous risk of the counterattack, as Russia was able to intervene on behalf of Syria in this confrontation. The eventual ceasefire prevented this from happening, as both countries preferred their relationship over this conflict (Khurshudyan and Dadouch, 2020). Yet, the operation remained successful for Turkey's future in drone warfare. Putin had to accept a ceasefire and a delay in Assad's final victory in Idlib, while Turkey gained more confidence in its military power (Baev, 2021; Khurshudyan and Dadouch, 2020). Apart from that, Turkey was able to stop the refugee flow that was caused by Assad's offensive in Idlib and establish a containment zone for Syrian refugees (Crino and Dreby, 2020). The great achievement of Turkish drones in Syria would become the first strategic win of Turkey in 2020.

4.3 The use of Turkish drones in Libya.

While the cases of drone warfare in Turkey and Syria were generated by security threats, this has not been the issue in Libya. Instead, Ankara's economic and strategic interests caused their involvement. Prior to the Arab Spring that ousted former president Muammar Qadhafi, Ankara enjoyed good relations with Libya. Not only did both states share a similar cultural background, their relationship was also economically motivated. The availability of oil in Libya offers opportunities for Turkey's infrastructure and construction sectors, resulting in the presence of Turkish companies in Libya. (Kardaş, 2020). After the first Libyan war in 2011, Turkey continued its foreign policy that was characterised as Western oriented and cautious (Outzen, 2021). However, as the situation became worse in Turkey's neighbourhood, it was in the need of regional allies. Especially since Turkey's interests were jeopardised by the regional instability (Kardaş, 2020). Consequently, Turkey's regional foreign policy became more assertive. In Libya, Turkey started to support the Government of National Accord (GNA), which was the national recognised government established by the initiatives of the United Nations (UN) (The

International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2021). Turkey became involved in the conflict after Prime Minister Fayez al-Sarraj requested their help in the combat against forces of the Libyan National Army (LNA) at the end of 2019.

Not only did Turkey want to protect its own economic interests, it also offered an opportunity to increase its presence in the region (Kardaş, 2020). The LNA rapidly gained territory in Libya by launching an offensive to seize Western parts of Libya and Tripoli in 2019. As the LNA was supported by allies as Russia, Saudi Arabia and Egypt, it was able to enjoy their provision of military advisors, weapons and drones (Sabbagh et al., 2019). As the position of the GNA weakened, it requested Turkey's support. Accordingly, Turkey supplied weapons, drones, combat support forces and air defences to the GNA (Outzen 2021; International Crisis Group, 2020). Not only did this increase Turkey's military presence in the region, during that same period, a maritime agreement between Libya and Turkey was signed (International crisis group, 2020). This agreement advanced maritime claims in the Mediterranean sea, at the expense of Greece's and Cyprus' claims. Thus, Turkey was able to use its support as leverage to pursue its own interests in the region, while also gaining influence in Libya. Remarkably, their hard-power approach seemed to benefit Turkey's interest better than their earlier policy.

Yet, the fulfilment of a few interests did not stop Turkey, instead it supported the launch of a counteroffensive, Operation Peace Storm (OPS), against the LNA in April 2020. During this operation, Turkish forces used a similar strategy as in Syria, during OSS. With the combination of electronic warfare, drones and precision strike, the GNA was able to destroy military vehicles and regain territories it lost earlier in 2019 (Outzen, 2021). Not only did Turkey's use of drone warfare during military operations proved to be successful again, it further increased its influence by deploying combatants of the Syrian Free Army in Libya (The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2021). Remarkable, their presence was confirmed by president Erdoğan, contrary to the rumours in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Contrary to Turkey's military interventions in Syria, Ankara's allies justified this intervention. Arguably, Turkey's policy was executed brilliantly by following UN initiatives and complimenting Western interest. Generally, both EU and NATO were not in favour of Turkey's intervention, due to its severeness which will prolong the conflict. At the same time, both organisations had to acknowledge that Turkey accepted the UN arms embargo in Libya and supported UN initiatives (Joffé, 2020; Tocci, 2020). This situation was especially difficult for NATO, as other members, such as France, openly supported the LNA. Criticising Turkey would prompt responses from other members regarding France's position in Libya. Furthermore, Turkey's growing influence also decreased the power of Russia and China, which is also beneficial for Western powers. It was a reason for the US to accept Turkish intervention in Libya (Kardaş, 2020). Another ally that surprisingly accepted Turkey's intervention was Russia. Both states supported different sides, but when Turkey's operation was launched, Russia refrained from involving itself. Russia only indirectly supported the LNA, while also having a good relationship with GNA might have refrained them from responding. George Joffé

(2020) also argues that Erdoğan was probably aware of Russia's limits on the battlefield and adjusted its operation according to that. While a clear reason remains unknown, it becomes apparent that Turkish drone warfare was not only successful in reaching strategic interests, but Turkey's strategic approach also limited consequences for its international relations.

4.4 Drawing conclusions

When these three cases are compared with one another, a few conclusions can be drawn. First and foremost, Turkish regional foreign policy has changed. Ankara sought to live upon its zero problems with the neighbours policy for quite a while. Even before that, as seen in the example of the Caucasus, Turkey refrained from getting itself involved in conflicts where great powers as Russia are present. A different approach is seen in the three cases analysed in this chapter. Turkey started to become more assertive, in which it is eager to resort to military force. Especially in the cases of Syria and Libya, hard power projection becomes more visible. After earlier approaches did not work out, this is seen as the last solution for Turkey to maintain its own interests in these areas. Nevertheless, the strategic aspect should not be overlooked, as Turkey's successes in drone warfare turned the state into a regional player. It helped Turkey gain influence in an assertive way, which is new compared to earlier years.

Second, this new policy is also noticeable in the motivations behind these three cases of Turkish drone warfare. Where the cases in Turkey and Syria were induced by security risks, the more recent cases in Syria and Libya display how Turkey's behaviour is provoked by more strategic interests. The situation in Syria demonstrated this clearly, as earlier cases focused primarily on terrorist organisations while the latter one was an attack towards the Assad regime. Rapidly after this attack, one month to be precise, a similar thing in Libya. When this situation ended, first reports were made about drones sold to Azerbaijan and shared military operations. While it is hard to prove, it seems likely that the success of Turkish drones in Syria sparked the future of Turkish drone warfare in regional conflicts.

Finally, the government of Turkey faced Russia in both Libya and Syria. The Russian Federation already had to deal with setbacks in these situations, before involving itself in Nagorno-Karabakh. As Turkey's regional policy, it became more aggressive including against one of its allies. Challenging parties that enjoy Russian support is therefore a risk, as it could have damaged Turkey's relationship with Russia. This development is noteworthy, as this was seen of one of the reasons why Turkey refrained from getting itself involved in Nagorno-Karabakh. At the same time, Western allies openly condemned Turkey's aggressiveness, but this did not stop Turkey's forces. The following chapters will analyse Turkey's relations with its Western allies and Russia further.

5. Western Organisations and Turkish foreign policy

While Western organisations might have been less visible in Nagorno-Karabakh compared to Turkey and Russia, Western parties cannot be overlooked when analysing the change in Turkish foreign policy. As discussed in chapter 2, Turkey's relationship with the West was one of the main reasons that prevented Ankara from directly supporting Azerbaijan in the past. Yet, this reason did not seem valid anymore during the Second Karabakh War. By the use of the formulated analytical framework, this chapter seeks to understand whether Turkey could have deliberately pursued a change or whether Western organisations influenced the process of drone warfare in any sort of way. Therefore, this chapter provides an answer to the following sub-question: Did Turkey's relationship with Western organisations influence its new foreign policy in the Caucasus?

5.1 Defining Western organisations

This chapter will examine two Western organisations, which are: The European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Both organisations have been important to Turkey's foreign policy in the past. For a long time, Turkey tried to gain access to the EU, to which it adopted a domestic and foreign policy according to the requirements that the EU set (Vatankhah and Navazeni, 2021). NATO on the other hand, has a longstanding relationship with Turkey. As the alliance is concerned with the safety and security of its members, it has provided support to Turkey in the past. In the last years, NATO offered financial support to improve Turkey's military facilities, but it also provided defence systems that Turkey could use to prevent itself against terrorist attacks near its border with Syria (Theussen and Kunertova, 2020).

5.2 Western organisations and Turkey prior to the Second Karabakh war

As illustrated in the previous chapter, Turkey's foreign policy started to become more assertive. This marks a change from a foreign policy that was described as Western oriented and cautious at the beginning of the 2000s (Outzen, 2021). Nevertheless, this change already occurred a few years later, when Turkey's attention moved from the West to the Middle East according to its zero problems with neighbours policy. This situation already marked the deterioration between Turkey and the West, but it was not as critical as in 2021, since Turkey's foreign policy was characterised by soft power politics (Altunişik and Martin, 2011). Turkey's more assertive approach only started around 2016. As argued by various analysts, this is partly due to the coup attempt on July 15, 2016, targeted against Turkish president Erdoğan (Adar and Toygür, 2020; Süss and Satanakis, 2021; Yegin, 2019;). Western allies did not display any support for the situation, while Russia was one of the first countries to openly support Erdoğan. This feeling of distrust was further worsened in the aftermath of the coup, as Western allies argued that Turkey started to move away from its democratic values (Tocci, 2020). Antione Got (2020) also stated that Western allies were not giving enough credence to Turkey's security interests, such as protecting itself against Kurdish units and stabilizing domestic politics. It

seems likely that Turkey did not trust its Western allies anymore and started to secure its own domestic politics, by implementing a more assertive policy.

In relation to the EU and NATO, this marked an important shift their relationship with Turkey. Ankara has been a member of NATO since 1952, and while it never has been able to join the EU, it has been connected to the organisation since 1964 (European Commission, 2020; Yılmaz, 2012). At that time, a good relationship with the EU was necessary for sustaining Turkey's economic and political developments (Buzan and Diez, 1999). Consequently, joining the EU would benefits Turkey's economy and increase its stability. Turkey's NATO membership was arranged out of fear for the Soviet Union and it offered Turkey an opportunity to improve its relationship with fellow NATO member, the US. In more recent situations, NATO support has also been proven useful in Turkey's operations in the Middle East, as it offered air defences against missile attacks from Syria (NATO, 2020) .

While Turkey seemed to value its relationship with Western organisations more in the past, it does not disregard the interests of Western organisations in Turkey. Buzan and Diez (1999) argue that Turkey's position as an insulator might be more beneficial for the EU, instead of letting Turkey join the European security complex. As Turkey did not belong to any of the three surrounding security complexes, it could function as a buffer state that prevented conflicts from spilling over (Diez, 2005). Therefore, embracing Turkey into the European complex would risk entanglement of the EU in other security complexes (Buzan and Diez, 1999). Additionally, this situation was also beneficial for NATO. While NATO cannot be considered a regional security complex, as not all members do belong to one region, most of its members are part of the European complex. Eventually, Turkey became responsibly for maintaining the security in the south-eastern borders of the European complex.

Over the past years, Turkey's increased responsibility along the borders of the European regional security complex became even more visible. Back in 2015, the EU and Turkey reached an agreement on the Syrian refugee flow near Turkey's borders (European Commission, 2020). Turkey agreed to facilitating Syrian refugees within its border, as it received visa liberalisation and admission to EU-Turkey summits in return (Saatçioğlu, 2020). For both the EU and NATO, this situation was preferable as it prevented the conflict from spilling over and it kept potential terrorists outside European border.

Generally, NATO was satisfied with Turkey's membership in the organisation. Apart from the US, Turkey provided the most troops to the NATO, as Turkey supported many NATO missions over the past years. In the wake of that development, many NATO members prefer to have a good relationship with Turkey. The influence of Turkey is especially noticeable in Baltic state, were Turkey's support as a NATO member has made it part of their national security (Adar and Toygür, 2020). Moreover, as illustrated in chapter 4, Turkey's more assertive approach included

counterterrorism attacks against groups in Syria and Iraq, which also targeted ISIL. This development was also encouraged by NATO members, especially the US. Thus, Turkey's position and military willingness has been very beneficial for NATO.

However, since Turkey became more assertive and less Western oriented, these benefits quickly turned into weaknesses for these Western institutions. Back in February 2020, Turkey tested its relationship with the EU by opening its borders with Greece, which gave refugees the chance to enter European borders. According to various journalists, Ankara caused this situation as it wanted to enforce financial aid and international support for Turkey's intervention in Syria (Stavis-Gridneff and Gall, 2020; Psaropoulos, 2020; Smith and Busby, 2020). Eventually, as the EU did not concede, borders were closed a few weeks later as of the COVID situation. However, it should not be discarded that at that time, Turkey already reached a cease fire in Syria and did not need EU support anymore. In a similar way, Turkey challenged NATO back in 2017, when it bought the Russian air defence system S-400 instead of air-defence systems provided by its fellow members. This Russian system could possibly access information on NATO's air defence system, which posed an extra security risk for NATO (Süss and Satanakis, 2021).

The previous paragraph illustrate how Turkey started to challenge its relationship with Western allies. Nevertheless, a strong reaction from either NATO or the EU was never expressed (Tocci, 2020; Theussen and Kunertova, 2020). The NATO faced strategic divergences among its allies, which made it difficult to formulate one stance against Turkey, while the EU still holds on to its refugee agreement. Moreover, both parties also believe that a hard stance or sanctions might lead to further collaboration between Russia and Turkey, while Turkey is now limiting Russia's influence in the Middle East (Yegin, 2019). This is were the strategic benefits of the relationship with Turkey become weaknesses. As these examples show, Turkey does not refrain from using these benefits as leverage to get stuff done. Therefore, none of these developments imply that Turkey wants to leave NATO or end its relationship with the EU. Frankly, Turkey still needs the West as its national interests are best served in cooperation with its Western allies, on which it depends for security assistance and political support (Cagaptay, 2013). However, it does illustrate that Turkey wants to become less dependent of its Western allies and develop its own influence by aiming at becoming an individual middle power (Vatankhah and Navazeni, 2021).

5.3 Western organisations in Nagorno-Karabakh

Based on the analysis in this chapter and the previous chapter, a few conclusions in regards to the relationship with Western organisations can already been drawn. First, Turkey clearly illustrates a foreign policy change since 2016 that involves more military assertiveness in its direct region, thus near the European Security Complex. Second, Turkey's relationship with its Western allies started to face some difficulties, as these institutions did not support some of Turkey's international choices.

Third, the former uses of drone warfare illustrate a shift to hard power projection, in which it can win on a battlefield without the help of its allies. This section will analyse these findings further in the wake of the Second Karabakh War.

Generally, sanctions imposed by either the EU or NATO against Turkey over the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh were not expected. Western organisations have largely refrained from mediating in Nagorno-Karabakh in the past, which demonstrated the lack of interest in the region (de Waal, 2010). Moreover, both organisations generally refrain from sanctioning Turkey despite its assertive foreign policy. Turkey's gas drilling in Cypriot-claimed waters were also only met by a few sanctions imposed on Turkish officials (Wintour, 2020). What has been visible in other situations, continued during the Second Karabakh War. The EU is perceived to be more of an observer, instead of taking the lead (Popescu, 2020). Even in an official statement published by the EU on the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh, it refrained from mentioning Turkish name and rather referred to 'regional actors' (European Council, 2020). For NATO, the situation with Turkey was slightly different, as Turkey was a member state of the organisation. Therefore, NATO's Secretary-General did ask Turkey to defuse the situation (Grammer, 2020). However, as argued by Rachel Rizzo, an expert on trans-Atlantic security, in the same article, all Western allies know that Turkey is better as an ally. Therefore, no further stance by NATO is observed in the wake of this conflict.

As argued earlier, the main problem for these institutions is to reach a common reaction towards the situation. As all states follow their national interests, a common stance is hardly ever accomplished. However, individual member states do take a more direct stance. The Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2020) argued a statement on the 16th of October where it called Ankara's intervention "worrisome" and referred to Turkey as the "common denominator" after conflicts in Syria, Libya and the Eastern Mediterranean. French president Emmanuel Macron argued on the 30th of September that it was "extremely concerned by the warlike messages Turkey has in the last hours" (Rose, 2020). Moreover, even American President Joe Biden, at that moment candidate for presidency, tweeted on the 29th of September that Turkey should stay out of this conflict (Biden, 2020). However former president Donald Trump adopted a similar approach as the EU, in which it only referred to an 'external party' in this conflict (Kelly, 2020).

In relation to the analytical framework, the lack of responses by both the EU and NATO are expected through the two models. Neither NATO or the EU belonged to the ex-soviet complex, thus the conflict did not pose an immediate threat to the borders of the EU or NATO members. MHM works a bit differently, as a great power member can still intervene in the regional hierarchy of the South Caucasus, without being a part of this region. These powers are not able to challenge the dominant power, but it might influence the power relations in the area (Lemke, 2002). However, according to Lemke his model, this rarely happens and only occurs when the interests of a great power

are not met in a country. As neither NATO or the EU had direct interests in the region, they would refrain from taking a hard stance against their ally.

5.4 Drawing conclusions

It becomes evident that Turkey's foreign policy has shifted in the last decade, in which it became more assertive at the expense of its Western oriented foreign policy. This development also impacted Turkey's relationship with the two Western organisations that were discussed in this chapter. Generally, Turkey wanted to become less dependent on these Western organisations and deployed itself as a regional power in the areas surrounding its borders. It does not indicate that Turkey did not benefit from its relationship with these organisation, however, it demonstrates that dynamics in their relationship were changing. Turkey normally was dependent on its relationship with both NATO and the EU, in order to maintain economic ties and secure its own borders. Nonetheless, Turkey's latest military operations in the Middle East and the South Caucasus illustrate that its military power is able to protect its own borders.

Apart from that, Turkey also seemed to realise its position in the international system. In both situations with the EU and NATO, Ankara used its strategic location as leverage over its relations with these Western organisations. Opening its borders with Greece is just one example of how it implemented this tactic in its foreign policy. Generally, Turkey seemed to move away from its Western allies by seeking the limits of their relationship. Ankara's policy harmed their relationship, but as long as these organisations would not take a hard stance against Turkey, it probably could pursue its foreign policy while maintaining these relationships. Moreover, the case of Nagorno-Karabakh was not the only time that these organisations took a more observing stance, similar things happened in the past. Turkey's intervention in Syria in 2019 was condemned by its Western allies, but sanctions were only implemented by the US, a fellow NATO member. Thus, the lack of presence and reactions to earlier cases of drone warfare by the Western organisations demonstrate how Western partners gave the Turkish government the space to pursue their policy of drone warfare.

Naturally, this policy was in the self-interest of the Western organisations. First and foremost, these organisations had their own agreements with Turkey that they valued. Most importantly was the refugee agreement in Syria, but also Turkey's active stance against terrorism was beneficial for beneficial for most Western allies. Second, Turkey's intervention in Nagorno-Karabakh challenged the regional status quo that has been dominated by Russia since 1994. From the perspective of Western organisations, it would be beneficial if Russia would lose some of its influence. As both Russia and China sought influence and power in the South Caucasus, the Western organisations saw Turkey's growing power as the best possible outcome. At the same time, Turkey's assertive behaviour was not accepted by Western allies. It prolonged the conflict in Libya, targeted Western allies in Syria and

contributed to the revival of violence in Nagorno-Karabakh. Nonetheless, their own interests weighed out the costs of Turkey's expenditure.

Thus, Turkey's policy in Nagorno-Karabakh did not pursue a change in its relationship with Western organisation. However, Turkey did challenge this relationship in a way to pursue its own interests and demonstrate itself as a regional power. As Ankara knew that its Western allies were rather soft against its new foreign policy, it deliberately took the risk as it predicted no change in its relationship with the West. In general, Western organisations paved the way for Turkey to continue its foreign policy.

6. Russia and Turkish foreign policy

The involvement of Russia in the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh is undeniable, as it reached two ceasefires between the warring parties. Apart from that, Nagorno-Karabakh became the third military faceoff between the Russian Federation and the Turkish government. Similar to the Western organisations, Turkey used to refrain itself from getting involved in Nagorno-Karabakh due to Russia's powerful position in the region. However, the Second Karabakh War illustrated that Turkey was no longer backing down from a confrontation with Russia. As a result, this chapter will examine the relationship between the Russian Federation and the Turkish government to understand whether Turkey's use of drones was deliberately used to challenge Russia in the South Caucasus. Therefore, this section provides an answer to the following question: Did Turkey's relationship with the Russian Federation influence its foreign policy in the Caucasus?

6.1 The relationship between Russia and Turkey

“We know the history, often dramatic history of relations between Turkey and Russia over the Centuries” (Team of the Official Website of the President of Russia, 2020). This statement was part of the response expressed by current Russian president Vladimir Putin on the 17th of November 2020 in regards to Turkish role in the Caucasus. While scholars are more nuanced and characterise the relationship as one with shared economic interests and conflicting political agendas, the historical background between these states does display a level of drama (Flanagan, 2013; Özertem, 2017).

During the Cold War, Ankara supported its Western allies in their struggle against the East. The relationship with Russia was tensious at the time and did not immediately change after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Both states were active in former soviet areas including the Caucasus, where Russia tried to regain its influence and Turkey wanted to reconcile with Turkic Muslims in this region (Hill and Taspinar, 2006; Flanagan, 2013). Besides, Ankara was still seen as a proxy of the United States by the Kremlin, further deteriorating their relationship (Hill and Taspinar, 2006). Only after the instalment of Erdogan's Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AKP) in the Turkish government in 2002, the relationship between Turkey and Russia started to improve.

The instalment of the AKP included a new Turkish foreign policy which improved the relationship with Russia. This new foreign policy was focused on more cooperation instead of competition. The party program of the AKP even explicitly mentioned the achievement of cooperation with the Russian Federation (Özbay, 2011). Besides, conflicting stances made Ankara move away from its Western allies. One of them being the Iraq invasion executed by the American government, to which Russia also expressed some scepticism. Both states did not fully support America's War on Terror and rather focused on their own domestic issues (Hill and Taspinar, 2006). These changing political dynamics created space for improving the relationship between the two states, which started at an economic level. Russia became Turkey's main energy supplier, while Turkey functioned as a

transit state to areas in Europe (Cagaptay, 2013). Not only did this lead to economic benefits, it also paved the way for more cooperation on political and security issues in their region (Özertem, 2011; Flanagan, 2013; Özertem, 2017).

However, a common political agenda was still lacking between the two states (Hill and Taspinar, 2006; Flanagan, 2013). In the 1990s, this became apparent in the Balkan during the Kosovo and Bosnia war, in which both states supported different sides. In more recent years, the Middle East provided an example of their different political views. As the Arab Spring started in 2010, the Turkish government started to move towards its Western allies again. The wave of protests in various countries provided a threat to Turkey's security, and broadly, regional stability. Ankara prioritized NATO as a more valuable ally, as it would be able to defend Turkish grounds, and supported the call for political change in countries as Syria and Libya (Cagaptay, 2013). Russia, on the other hand, was against any form of political change and opposed efforts by the West (Flanagan, 2013). As a result, Turkey and Russia were once again facing each other on different battlegrounds.

The real drama between the two states only started in Syria. As both states were actively fighting in Syria, their relationship reached a boiling point when Turkey shot down a Russian Su-24 in November 2015 after this plane violated Turkey's airspace (Özertem, 2017). As a result, Russia closed the Syrian airspace and imposed various sanctions on Turkey. This caused damage to Turkey's economy, especially in the agriculture, tourism and transportation sectors (Hale, 2019). Moreover, the closure of the Syrian airspace made it hard for Turkey to fight against the upswing of ISIL. Therefore, Turkey also faced some new security risks near its borders. After six months, Turkey reconciled with Russia in June of 2016, after which relationships normalized again. The achievement of a ceasefire later in December even further stabilized their relationship, as it secured Turkey's border region while Russia saw its regional power grow. It demonstrated how this relationship between the two countries is still very vulnerable, with Turkey in the weaker position, as it has more to lose when ending up in a direct confrontation with Russia.

6.2 Russia and Turkey in the regional hierarchy of the South Caucasus

The former chapter focused more on the issue of security, by the implementation of regional security complex theory (RSCT). In the examination of the relationship between Turkey and Russia, power relations seem more important, as both states seek to gain more influence in the region ever since the first war started. Therefore, the multiple hierarchy model will be implemented in this case. Contrary to Western organisations, both Russia and Turkey are part of the same regional hierarchy, which is the South Caucasus (Güneylioğlu, 2017).

The South Caucasus regional hierarchy includes the following states: Russia, Turkey, Iran, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan (Güneylioğlu, 2017). The Russian Federation has been dominating and influencing the regional hierarchy since the ceasefire was reached in 1994. It was responsible for

the establishment of the regional status quo, that mainly served Russia's personal interests. Part of this status quo was Russia's military presence in the region. Ethnic instabilities in Georgia were a valid reason for Russia to increase its military presence here, after it already accomplished this in Armenia (Güneylioğlu, 2017). As Georgia became more independent on Russia and it enjoyed the support of Armenia and Iran, both Turkey and Azerbaijan were left in weaker positions. As Azerbaijan lost its territories in 1994 to Armenia, it also became more dependent on Russia to prevent further losses (Betts, 1999). Russia's policy eventually brought peace to the region as most states were dependent on Russia's power and due to this success, it prevented Western states from intervening in the region.

Consequently, Turkey became the dissatisfied state in this regional hierarchy. It sought to develop economic ties with Azerbaijan by transporting natural resources, for which Georgia's support was necessary, as Azerbaijan and Turkey did not share any border. Russia's increased military presence jeopardized these plans as it controlled the strategic transit routes (Güneylioğlu, 2017). Turkey did not fight against Russia's increased influence. Back in 1992, Turkey threatened with military intervention, only to hear that Russia would not back down for a Third World War if Turkey made that mistake (Seward, 1992). Strategically, this move by Russia has been important, as it limited the role of Turkey in the region. Ankara was aware it would not be able to match the power of Russia, thus direct threats succeeded in controlling Turkey, who has been the only country so far that threatened Russia's interests in the Caucasus. A similar conclusion can be drawn by the use of RSCT. The ex-soviet regional security complex has been dominated by Russia, in which Turkey could only take a passive stance, as it needed Russia's influence to secure its own interest (Kazan, 2005; Hale, 2019).

In the years that followed, Russia succeeded in securing its position in the Caucasus. It tried to keep Azerbaijan satisfied, by selling them weapons and making them able to trade their natural resources with Western states. The provision of natural resources was also in Western interests, keeping them satisfied and not risk any great power intervention (Güneylioğlu, 2017). Russia's military presence in most states also made it possible to identify any small clash immediately and respond to it that way. Any state that challenged Russia's position was met with a form of punishment tactics, such as the bans that were implemented against Turkey in 2015 (Anlar, 2017). It made it hard for outsiders to challenge the dominant power and thus, Russia's influence in the area.

6.3 The conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh in 2020

First and foremost, the intensity of the conflict in 2020 was influenced by both Russia and Turkey. On Azerbaijani side, the support of Turkey by the use of drones made their forces victorious. On the other side, Armenia's relationship with Russia offers them cheaper weapons that were used in this conflict. Thus, in terms of means, both Russia and Turkey were involved in this conflict. On the level of intervention, Turkey has been on another level compared to Russia. This differences in positions can

be argued through MHM. As Russia is the dominant power, it seeks to maintain and defend its established regional status quo. A ceasefire will fulfill that objective, which happened in this situation. As a result, it did not influence Russia's relationship with Azerbaijan and a ceasefire would prevent other great powers from intervening in the region. Moreover, Russia also refrained from actively supporting Armenia due to its Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, as he did not comply to Russians interests (Bechev, 2020). Also, Russia is generally not extremely active in conflicts, as the situation in Libya also illustrated that Russia provided weapons but was not military active. Therefore, Russia's less active approach can be argued by multiple reasons and does not indicate anything about Russia's power.

In the wake of the military operation in Syria and Libya, where Turkish drones proven to be more successful against Russian defense systems, it seems possible that Turkey tried to challenge Russia in Nagorno-Karabakh. At least on military level, earlier cases might have given Turkey the idea that it could match Russia's power. However, it remains hard to proof that Turkey wanted to challenge Russia as a dominant power. On the other hand, Turkey's strategic choice for drone warfare did challenge the regional status quo. The Azerbaijani government was able to regain some of its former territories and Turkey did project its hard power on the international stage, marking itself as a regional power. Apart from that, Russia increased its military presence in Nagorno-Karabakh, something that it wanted to achieve since the first Karabakh war (Güneylioğlu, 2017; Gabuev, 2020). It marked some switches in the regional status quo, but the regional hierarchy itself stayed in place.

Nevertheless, both states still sought to gain more influence during the Second Karabakh War. Press statements released by the Russian Federation and the Turkish government seem to demonstrate that Turkey wanted to take a more active stance in the mediating process. On the 28th of October 2020, Turkey's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2020) argued the following statement: "It is long overdue for the international community, particularly for the Minsk Group Co-chairs, to show the necessary reaction to Armenia". A few weeks earlier, on the 12th of October 2020, Russian foreign minister Sergey Lavror argued in favor of the Minsk Group and states that the co-chairs should guide the mediating process in Nagorno Karabakh (MFA Russia, 2020a). Generally, it seems as if Russia wanted to keep Turkey out of the mediating efforts in Nagorno-Karabakh. On the 12th of November, Sergey Lavror emphasized once more that no Turkish peacekeeping units will be deployed in Nagorno-Karabakh, as this was claimed by Ankara (MFA Russia, 2020b). As seen during the first ceasefire, this development benefits Russia, as it increases its military presence on the ground. At the same time, it hard stances against the criticism of Turkey on the OSCE Minsk group, has kept Turkey successfully away as a mediator.

Generally, it does seem as if Russia started to take Turkey's power more serious. Even during interviews, Russian Minister Sergey Lavror was asked whether Russia became too dependent on

Turkey. As a response, he argued that “Moscow and Ankara are close partners capable of taking a flexible and pragmatic approach guided by strategic vision in bilateral cooperation” (MFA Russia, 2020). It aligns with Russia’s earlier stances on Turkish drone warfare in the Middle East, where it also refrained from condemning its use of drones. In the case of the operation in Syria, Putin only expressed on the 5th of March 2020 that it does “not always agree with our Turkish partners when evaluating what is happening in Syria” but that it wants to “reach mutually acceptable solutions” (Team of the Official Website of the President of Russia, 2020). Russia seems to highlight in press statements the need for collaboration more than the risk of confrontation.

6.4 Drawing conclusions

This chapter aimed at providing an overview on the relationship between Russia and Turkey to see whether their relationship could be a motive for foreign policy change. Analysing their relationship starting from the Cold War, it is characterized by dramatic moments, as declared by president Putin. Noticeably, Turkey seemed more interested in having good bilateral relations with Russia. Tensions in 2015 and 2016 harmed Turkey’s economy, in which it became apparent that Turkey relies largely on its economic ties with Russia, especially in the case of natural resources. In that sense, a confrontation between the two parties would most possibly harm Turkey the most.

As Turkey’s foreign policy changed in the Middle East, it also transported to the South Caucasus. While Turkey already clashed with Russia in Libya and Syria, these situations never led to any serious tensions. Surprisingly, a similar thing happened in Nagorno-Karabakh. Russia refrained from taking a hard stance against Turkey’s assertiveness and did not punish Turkish government, as it has done in the past. At this point, it can only be suggested why Russia remained rather passive in this situation, but it seems as if its mediating position was in Russians own interests. Consequently, the passive reaction of Russia created space for President Erdogan to take risks and pursue its own interests. While there is no indication that Turkey aimed at challenging Russia’s dominant power, it clearly changed the regional status quo. The conflict eventually turned out beneficial for both sides. Turkey portrayed itself as a new regional power state, Russia’s position has not been harmed.

7. Conclusion

The recent revival of conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh in 2020 came as a surprise, as many experts did not expect the intensity and impact of the recent revival of violence in the Caucasus. The main reason for this shock was the unexpected involvement of Turkey in this conflict. After years of only diplomatic support, it turned to military means in order to defend its ally in this region, the republic of Azerbaijan. Most prominently, Turkey decided to provide Azerbaijan with Turkish manufactures drones. With the help of these drones, Azerbaijan was able to regain some of its territories that it has lost previously. Apart from that, it also marked the first case in which Turkey's drones were used in an interstate conflict, by a smaller power. These development raised questions about the change of Turkey's foreign policy and the reasons behind Turkey's more assertive stance during the Second Karabakh War. Therefore, this thesis focused on answering the following main question: *What are the motivations behind the use of drone warfare by the Turkish government in 2020 during the revival of conflict in the region Nagorno Karabakh?*

Turkey has been active in the South Caucasus since the beginning of the First Karabakh War in 1988. In the years that followed, it took a more passive stance. Military intervention would likely cause a confrontation with either Russia or Turkey's Western allies, which it did not want to risk. Consequently, Turkey refrained from intervening and only supported Azerbaijan by diplomatic means. Nevertheless, this situation changed in 2020 by Turkey's use of drones. As earlier cases of Turkish drone warfare illustrate, Turkey adopted a more assertive policy of hard power projection in foreign areas. The main goal of these intervention was to secure its own strategic interests and gain more influence. However, the case in Nagorno-Karabakh did seem different compared to these earlier cases. The use of drones in the South Caucasus were connected to an interstate conflict, instead of intrastate conflict, which marked a new dynamic in Turkey's foreign policy.

As it became evident that Turkey's foreign policy changed, this thesis sought to understand the motivations behind this foreign policy change. In doing so, this research examined Turkey's relationship with Western organisations and with the Russian Federation. By the use of regional security complexes theory, it can be argued that Western organisations benefitted from Turkey's position as an insulator. It prevented conflicts from spilling over and it kept the Syrian refugees outside European borders. These developments did not indicate that Turkey's use of drones deliberately wanted to change its relationship with the West. However, it does become apparent that Western reluctance in addressing Turkey's assertive policy has given the republic the space to project its hard power and develop itself as a regional power.

In relation to the Russian Federation, this research used the multiple hierarchy model to explain the power relation between the two states. According to this model, Russia is perceived as the dominant state that can only be challenged by another great power that matches its power. In the case

of Nagorno-Karabakh, it cannot be proven whether Turkey wanted to challenge Russia as a dominant power. Generally, there are no indications that suggest Turkey had ambitions of becoming a dominant state in the regional hierarchy. Rather, it has been emphasized that Turkey wanted to become a regional power and gain more influence. Therefore, it does seem likely that Turkey used its direct support to challenge the regional status quo and pursue its own interests in the region. Moreover, the hard power that Turkey projected in this case against Russia also illustrated Turkey's growing power in both the regional and global system. Therefore, Turkey's quest for influence in the Caucasus seems to be the main motivation for the use of drones in Nagorno-Karabakh.

As discussed in the beginning of this research, the case of drone warfare in Nagorno-Karabakh marked two new developments. First, smaller states were able to gain military capacity from greater powers in which they could act more powerfully on battlefields. Second, the low cost of these newly produced drones increases the risk of conflict between neighbouring states. Further research can be done on these two implications, to understand how these low cost drones are becoming the future of warfare and what this means for the international system. These findings will illustrate whether Turkey truly introduced the future of warfare.

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