

T.C
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LİSANSÜSTÜ EĞİTİM ENSTİTÜSÜ
SİYASET BİLİMİ VE ULUSLARARASI İLİŞKİLER ANABİLİM DALI
İNGİLİZCE TEZLİ YÜKSEK LİSANS PROGRAMI

**RECENT RAPPROCHEMENT OF TURKISH AND QATARI RELATIONS AND
THE COLLAPSE OF THE GCC**

YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ

HAZIRLAYAN

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LİSANSÜSTÜ EĞİTİM ENSTİTÜSÜ YÜKSEK LİSANS KABUL VE ONAY FORMU

LİSANSÜSTÜ EĞİTİM ENSTİTÜSÜ MÜDÜRLÜĞÜ'NE

Siyaset Bilimi ve Uluslararası İlişkiler Anabilim Dalı Siyaset Bilimi ve Uluslararası İlişkiler (İngilizce) Tezli Yüksek Lisans Programı öğrencisi Oktay Yalçın tarafından hazırlanan “RECENT RAPPROCHEMENT OF TURKISH AND QATARI RELATIONS AND THE COLLAPSE OF THE GCC” başlıklı tez,10 /01/2023 tarihinde yapılan savunma sınavı sonucu başarılı bulunarak jürimiz tarafından Yüksek Lisans Tezi olarak kabul edilmiştir.

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Bu tez Enstitü Yönetim Kurulunca belirlenen yukarıdaki jüri üyeleri tarafından uygun görülmüş ve Enstitü Yönetim Kurulu kararı ile onaylanmıştır.

Prof. Dr. M.Serhat YENİCE
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TEZ ETİK VE BİLDİRİM SAYFASI

Yüksek Lisans Tezi olarak sunduğum “**RECENT RAPPROCHEMENT OF TURKISH AND QATARI RELATIONS AND THE COLLAPSE OF THE GCC**” başlıklı çalışmanın tarafımca, bilimsel ahlak ve geleneklere aykırı düşecek bir yardıma başvurmaksızın yazıldığını ve yararlandığım eserlerin kaynakçada gösterilenlerden oluştuğunu ve bunlara atıf yapılarak yararlanmış olduğumu belirtir ve onurumla doğrularım.

Oktay YALÇIN

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Throughout the writing of this thesis, I have received a great deal of support and assistance.

First, I would like to thank my supervisor, Professor Ahmet KESER, whose expertise was invaluable in formulating the research. Your insightful feedback pushed me to sharpen my thinking and brought my work to a higher level.

I would also like to thank Mr. Jomah Alqasem, for his valuable guidance throughout my studies. He gave me the tools I needed to choose the right direction and I successfully completed my thesis.

In addition, I would like to thank my father and mother for bringing me up here and for the trust in me. You are always there for me. Finally, I could not have completed this thesis without the support of my wife, who provided happy distractions to rest my mind outside of my research.

ABSTRACT

Qatar, that is referred as a "small but effective state" in the literature, has differentiated itself from the others with its independent foreign policy from the neighboring countries in its region, competing with them and implementing an active foreign policy during the Arab Spring process in the region, and the investments it has made to develop alliances and has come to the fore more than the countries in the region. Qatar, which may face many external threats in its region for these reasons, has come under the influence of the United States of America (U.S), which cares primarily about its natural resources, in order to protect its national integrity and minimize security problems, and on the other hand, it has taken steps to create other allies by using its financially powerful instruments in its foreign policy.

Qatar has investments worth 335 billion dollars in the countries of the world from fashion to real estate, from finance to industry, and from tourism to retail. With an investment volume of 18 billion dollars, Turkey has become the seventh country that invests the most in Turkey and has been frequently featured in the press in this respect. Qatar has created the image of a rich country with its large volume of investments and has managed to become popular in the world agenda with this aspect. As of 2015, Qatar accelerated its company investments and made approximately 7 billion dollars of company purchases in Turkey. Economic and trade relations between the two countries have begun to develop with these investments. Along with the Gulf Crisis, the development of military and diplomatic relations makes Qatar an important actor for Turkey as well.

Keywords: Türkiye, Foreign Policy, Qatar Relations, Gulf Cooperation Council, Tamim, Erdoğan

ÖZ

Literatürde "küçük ama etkili bir devlet" olarak anılan Katar, Arap Baharı döneminde bölgesindeki komşu ülkelerden bağımsız dış politikası, onlarla rekabet etmesi ve aktif bir dış politika uygulamasıyla diğerlerinden farklılaşmıştır. Bölgedeki süreç ve ittifaklar geliştirmek için yaptığı yatırımlar ile bölge ülkelerinden daha fazla öne çıkmıştır. Bu nedenlerle bölgesinde birçok dış tehditle karşı karşıya kalabilen Katar'ın, ulusal bütünlüğünü korumak ve güvenlik sorunlarını en aza indirmek için öncelikle doğal kaynaklarını önemseyen Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'nin (ABD) etkisi altına girdiği, bir yandan da mali açıdan güçlü araçlarını dış politikasında kullanarak başka müttefikler yaratma yolunda adımlar atmıştır.

Katar'ın modadan gayrimenkule, finanstan sanayiye, turizmden perakendeye dünya ülkelerinde 335 milyar dolarlık yatırımı var. 18 milyar dolarlık yatırım hacmiyle Türkiye, Türkiye'ye en çok yatırım yapan yedinci ülke oldu ve bu konuda basında sıkça yer aldı. Katar, büyük hacimli yatırımlarıyla zengin bir ülke imajı oluşturmuş ve bu yönüyle dünya gündeminde yer almayı başarmıştır. 2015 yılı itibarıyla Katar, şirket yatırımlarına hız vererek Türkiye'de yaklaşık 7 milyar dolarlık şirket satın alımı gerçekleştirmiştir. Bu yatırımlar ile iki ülke arasındaki ekonomik ve ticari ilişkiler gelişmeye başlamıştır. Körfez Krizi ile birlikte askeri ve diplomatik ilişkilerin gelişmesi Katar'ı Türkiye için de önemli bir aktör haline getiriyor.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Türkiye, Dış Politika, Katar İlişkileri, Körfez İşbirliği Konseyi, Tamim, Erdoğan

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Acronyms List

AKP	Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (Justice and Development Party)
GCC	Gulf Countries Council
USSR	Union of Soviet States Republic
IR	International Relations
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
UAE	United Arab Emirates
GDP	Growth Domestic Product
SSC	Supreme Strategic Committee
NGO	Non-governmental organization
TL	Turkish Lira
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UN Refugee Agency)
UNOCHA	United Nations for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Unit
UAVs	Unmanned Armed Vehicles
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs

GEOGRAPHIC CLASSIFICATIONS

Governorate Highest form of governance below the national level (admin level 1) District Sub-division of a governorate in which government institutions operate (admin level 2) Sub-district Sub-division of a district in which government institutions operate (admin level 3) Community Bounded clustering of the population in the form of a city, town, or village (admin level 4) Neighborhood Lowest administrative unit within a city (admin level 5 or 6)

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CHAPTER I

1. INTRODUCTION

Türkiye is a country located in a sensitive geopolitical location between Asia and Europe, and its land hosted many civilizations and empires. Throughout history, Türkiye played roles in most international relations issues as a mediator and peacekeeper state. This mediator role of Türkiye was perceived in early 1990s during president Turgut Ozal's time and at the beginning of the 2000s, when the Justice and Development Party came into power. In both eras, Türkiye changed its vision on political performance level, from a normal country to a regional player in surrounding and international issues; with this motto, Türkiye began to develop good relations with the Middle East and the African continent. Thus, with this political vision of Türkiye the engagement politically, economically, and culturally increased in both continents.

Qatar gained its independence in 1971, and it is ruled by constitutional monarchy. Qatar was perceived as a small country in the Gulf until it gained bigger consideration after the Gulf war in 1990s. Qatar was not well known in the international relations arena, but after the natural gas discovery, Qatar began to involve in IR issues and developed relations with neighboring and regional states. Qatar and Türkiye have had ties since Ottoman times. Between 1871 and 1915, when Qatar was under Ottoman rule. The relations between both countries began to develop after the father, Prince Sheik Hamad bin Khalifa Althani came to power in 1995. The Emir of Qatar at the time, Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, made his first visit official to Türkiye in December 2001, before the AK Party era. The first visit from Türkiye to Qatar in the new period was in 2005 by Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. After that, the relations enhanced between both countries year by year, and in 2014 the yearly strategic meetings were established. After the 2017 GCC crisis (Gulf Cooperation Council), the links reached the highest level, and both countries allied on many IR issues. The international system has evolved from a bipolar order to a unipolar order in which the United States is the dominant power, after the dissolution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and the end of the Cold War. There were many significant changes occurring in the international arena during that time. From the beginning of the 21st century, the Middle East in general, the Gulf region in particular, has witnessed important developments.

In other words, both the end of the Cold War and the developments in the Middle East geography in the 2000s shook the balances in the region and led to new developments. In this

context, as a result of the developments following the attacks on the World Trade Center (Twin Towers) and the US Department of Defense (Pentagon) in New York by the terrorist organization al-Qaeda on September 11, 2001, the US intervention in Iraq in 2003 brought about change in the regional context. Therefore, the military involvement of the U.S in the region with the invasion of Iraq has had an impact on the foreign policy decisions of the countries in the region. Thus, the countries of the region have adopted softer policies rather than harsh ones in their foreign policy decisions (Erboğa, 2020: 156). This situation has paved the way for the countries in the region to improve their relations with each other. Meanwhile, the U.S has withdrawn its troops from Iraq, reducing its position on inclusion in regional issues. All of these have led to a reduction in the influence of important countries in the region, such as Saudi Arabia, while also creating a power gap in the regional context.

As a result of the power gap, the rise and increased impact of political actors such as Türkiye and Qatar have been witnessed in the region. In this context, the Ankara administration has started to develop its relations with the GCC member states in general and Qatar in particular, within the framework of the foreign policy discourses adopted by the AK Party, which came to power in 2002. In this context, it has been seen that Türkiye has improved its relations with the GCC member countries in various fields until the outbreak of the Arab Spring process at the end of 2010. In the developing relations between the two sides, on the one hand, the security concerns arising from the developments in the regional context were effective, and on the other hand, economic factors formed the driving decisive force (Telci, 2021: 238, Pala, 2014: 37). As a matter of fact, the high-level visits between the two sides during the period and the strategic cooperation agreement signed between Türkiye and the GCC in 2008 are important in terms of showing the extent to which the relations have developed. In addition, with the relevant memorandum, the relations between Türkiye and the GCC countries were placed in an institutional framework, while the GCC declared an outside country as a strategic partner for the first time (Oktav, 2013: 72). While relations between Türkiye and the GCC member countries in general were progressing within this framework by the end of 2010, close relations were also being established between the Ankara and Doha administrations. At this point, in addition to the foreign policy understanding that has been followed since the AK Party came to power in Türkiye, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, who came to power by overthrowing his father Khalifa bin Hamad in 1995 with a bloodless coup in Qatar, has adopted foreign policy discourses formed the basis for the two countries to establish close relations with each other.

1.1 Problem Statement

The problem of the research can be expressed as the role of the GCC in the course of Türkiye-Qatar relations and the current situation of Qatar in the collapse of the Gulf Cooperation Council. The problem that the thesis discusses is the sustainability of the strategic relations between Türkiye and Qatar regardless of the party in charge. What are the requirements for this relations sustainability? Then it tests how in the case of Qatar's embargo by the GCC, the Turkish role helped closely in better connection on population levels?

1.2 Research Questions

The main question of the research is **“What are the strategic actions for better Turkish-Qatari bilateral relations regardless of the political parties in place and what are the needs for these relations sustainability in the light of the current situation in GCC countries?** This scope of relations between Türkiye and Qatar is regarding:

- Did the Turkish-Qatari relations develop during the AK Party rule or before? What are the fields of cooperation between two states?
- Are the relations of these two states based on the interest of a particular political party or group? Or is it more strategic and at the populations level?
- Are Turkish-Qatari relations limited to internal cooperation or does it extend to other global and regional contexts?
- How might the role of Türkiye and Qatar in mediation, stabilization, efforts affect the crises and conflicts in the region? And how close is the cooperation over these topics is going between the two states?
- Is the Turkish intervention's role crucial for the GCC states to hold up against poor performance and disintegration?
- How the Turkish recent normalization with GCC countries help better rapprochement and alignment between GCC member states? Will this role help the current platform perform better?
- What are the needs for having an effective international relations pattern in MENA? What could be the reform steps for the GCC? What is the required diplomatic support? And what would be an effective roadmap for the future?

Over the last few years, billions of dollars were invested in the frame of the Turkish Qatari cooperation, many military deals, and much closer relations observed on political and

population level. Despite the relative geographical distance between the two countries, though other neighbors oppositely took different channel. The experiences of these states are often not encouraging to others who might consider this competition, while there are enormous obstacles in the way, but there is a good investment margin from other GCC states with Türkiye, regionally. Since there is a unique constructive connection between countries interests and international relations building, GCC vs. Türkiye relations are vital for both sides in the coming era.

1.3 Research Objectives

This research has many objectives, and mainly the role of Türkiye in Qatar's resilience towards the GCC embargo, the consideration of the GCC image for Qatar, the current reasons for Turkish-Qatari rapprochement and the future horizons for these relations to sustain and develop. The objectives are generally focused on:

- 1- Determining the main causes and factors that led to the rapprochement of the bilateral relations and the political parties in charge in both states.
- 2- Highlighting the main players in rebuilding existing close relations between both states during the recent fissure in the GCC after 2017.
- 3- Identifying the causes of weakness ideologically between both poles between GCC states, and the influence of external parties in this regard.
- 4- Recognizing the main players who have contributed to ending the embargo on Qatar system and public political transformation in the country's foreign policy.
- 5- Showing the role of future horizons of political relations between the two countries cooperating on regional and international cases.
- 6- Showing the role of Turkish power in the middle east and the Arab Peninsula enforcing a newer role in the Middle East.

1.4 Hypothesis

The hypothesis of the research can be expressed as "Without the Turkish role in protecting Qatar territorial autonomy, the functionality of Gulf Cooperation Council would be

lost. The main motif for Türkiye to intervene was political alliance, economic relations and further strategical roles in the Arab world countries." These assumptions boil down to:

- 1- The intra-gulf conditions between Qatar and U.A.E and Saudi Arabia negatively affected after the embargo due to contradiction in ideologies and political agendas.
- 2- The absence of a geopolitical support to Qatar from other neighboring Arab governments forced Qatar to ask for military help from Türkiye and Türkiye found it a genuine opportunity to invest more in the bilateral relations.
- 3- There are multiple motives for the Turkish state to step up for helping Qatar militarily, revolves around a bunch of economic, diplomatic and strategical wins between Arab countries.
- 4- The opponent GCC states could not stand against Qatar after Turkish solidarity and physical military existence thus in 2022 the normalization of the relations started to take place after five years of relation cut-off.
- 5- This military, economic and political cooperation between the two states pushed both countries to invest in it, on wider global issues like Libya, Afghanistan and Syrian profiles.
- 6- There is a good margin for improving the bilateral relations between two states, especially in the regional cooperation on Middle East region.

1.5 Significance of the Research

- 1- This research will provide an exploration on some sides of the bilateral relations between the two states, which have not been studied so far.
- 2- It will provide some recommendation on foreign policy agenda of both states towards the GCC countries relations.
- 3- It is important topic due to the real flourishing of the two states relations in the recent decades.
- 4- It draws the attention towards Middle East future in terms of the relations, alliances, and enmities map.

CHAPTER II

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This part of the thesis will tackle the academic studies of other researchers on this same topic and will set general definitions of basic understandings and terms related to the title of the study.

At the end of 2010, the popular movements that started in Tunisia in line with democratic demands spread to the countries of the Arab countries region by creating a domino effect called the Arab Spring affected both the regional dynamics and the course of relations between Türkiye and Qatar. As a result of the developments that took place with the Arab Spring process, which shook the authoritarian regimes in the region, a power vacuum has occurred in the Middle East geography. Türkiye and Qatar have developed close relations as active actors in this process, starting to be frequently mentioned in the regional system. In this context, while countries such as Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) did not support the popular movements and took a stance in favor of maintaining the status quo, Türkiye and Qatar stood by the people and offered their support and acted in political harmony in this process. It has been observed that Ankara and Doha administrations have adopted similar policies towards the events that have developed especially in Libya, Egypt and Syria, exhibited a common attitude, and acted in harmony. Therefore, as a result of the events that took place with the outbreak of the Arab Spring, while Türkiye was experiencing divisions with Gulf countries such as Saudi Arabia and the UAE, close relations began to be established with Qatar. In other words, Ankara and Doha administrations have started to be evaluated within a separate bloc against Saudi Arabia and the UAE in the regional context.

However, this blockade at the regional level was clearly seen in the Gulf crisis that broke out on June 5, 2017, with the diplomatic and economic embargo imposed on Qatar by Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Egypt, and Bahrain for various reasons (Gümüşlüoğlu, 2019: 198). As a result of the embargo, the Doha administration was blockaded by land, sea, and air, while Türkiye offered its support to Qatar both politically, economically, and militarily in this process. This situation has led to the deepening of the close relations between the two sides. As a matter of fact, in addition to the mentioned international and regional dynamics, the meeting of the interests of both countries in the region on the same denominator, their intellectual elements, and their leaders have also influenced the development of the relations of the two countries

towards each other. In parallel with the dynamic course of Turkish foreign policy in recent years, the number of academic studies has increased considerably. Especially in the process of the Arab Revolts, studies on Türkiye's Middle East policy have created a wide literature.

In the first section, where the effect of basic parameters on foreign policy is questioned, the relationship between economy and foreign policy and in this context, the role of the economic factor in the foreign policies of Türkiye, Qatar, and the UAE are mentioned. It should be noted that the impact of the economy on foreign policy is prioritized by liberal approaches, especially those that emphasize cooperation. Susan Strange advocates for more attention to this relationship by emphasizing that there is actually mutual negligence in the relationship between the discipline of international relations and international economic policies (Strange, 2018). Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye argue that it is possible to increase cooperation between states through mutual economic dependence (Keohane, 1980).

Kemal Kirişçi, mentions that the so-called merchant states and where the economy is an important determinant in their foreign policies take care to determine their foreign policy behaviors as economy-centered and consider the role of the economy in Turkish foreign policy in this context. While discussing the role of the economy in Türkiye's Qatar policy, there is a general acceptance that Ankara's Middle East and Gulf policy is determined on the axis of mutual dependence and cooperation as an economic priority.

F. Stephen Larrabee, states that the economic factor was one of the important parameters in the relations between Türkiye and the Gulf countries in the period when the Arab Revolts had not yet started (2002-2010) (Oktav, 2016). Siret Hürsoy emphasizes that the rise in economic relations between Türkiye and the Gulf Cooperation Council countries during the period in question has produced politically positive results (Kara, 2022). The debate on whether the economic factor is the cause or effect in bilateral relations developed during the Arab Revolts. Nader Habibi emphasizes that Türkiye's development of strategic cooperation with Qatar during the Arab Revolts has significantly increased the economic interaction between Ankara and Doha (Habibi, 2019).

It should be noted that there are quite extensive debates about the influence of ideology in Türkiye's Qatar policy. Especially during the AK Party period, it is often stated that Turkish foreign policy has an ideology-based agenda. Mark L. Haas argues that when we look at Turkish foreign policy behavior during the Arab Revolts, ideology (liberal democracy) is highly

decisive and that ideology and national interest are in harmony (Perceptions Journal Of International Affairs, 2014). However, when evaluating the ideological aspect of Turkish foreign policy, the general tendency in the literature is the use of concepts such as Political Islamism, Ikhvanism and Neo-Ottomanism, which are different from each other in terms of content. In addition, since there is no unilateral determination of bilateral relations, it is essential to look at the role of ideology in Qatar's foreign policy as well as Türkiye's. Christopher M. Davidson, while discussing the influence of Muslim Brotherhood ideology in Qatari foreign policy, notes that the tension between Qatar and other Gulf countries develops on a real politics rather than ideology (Davidson, 2021).

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of the topic of this study enrolls under constructivism theory in international relations. The bilateral relations between Türkiye and Qatar are constructed by ideational factors, socially and historically. Both political ideologies and interests are constructed based on the content of social structures. Alexander Wendt calls two increasingly accepted basic tenets of Constructivism "that the structures of human association are determined primarily by shared ideas rather than material forces, and that the identities and interests of purposive actors are constructed by these shared ideas rather than given by nature." (Onuf, 1989) This does not necessarily mean that constructivists believe that international politics is "ideas all the way down", but rather that international politics is characterized both by material factors and ideational factors

2.1.2 Previous Studies

This study is more differentiated than former others in the light that it projects the bilateral relations between the two states only from the GCC scope as Qatar is an important member, but after the boycott the GCC functionality is under question, especially after a non-Arab country like Türkiye stepped up to assist Qatar in its embargo.

2.2 TÜRKİYE QATAR RELATIONS

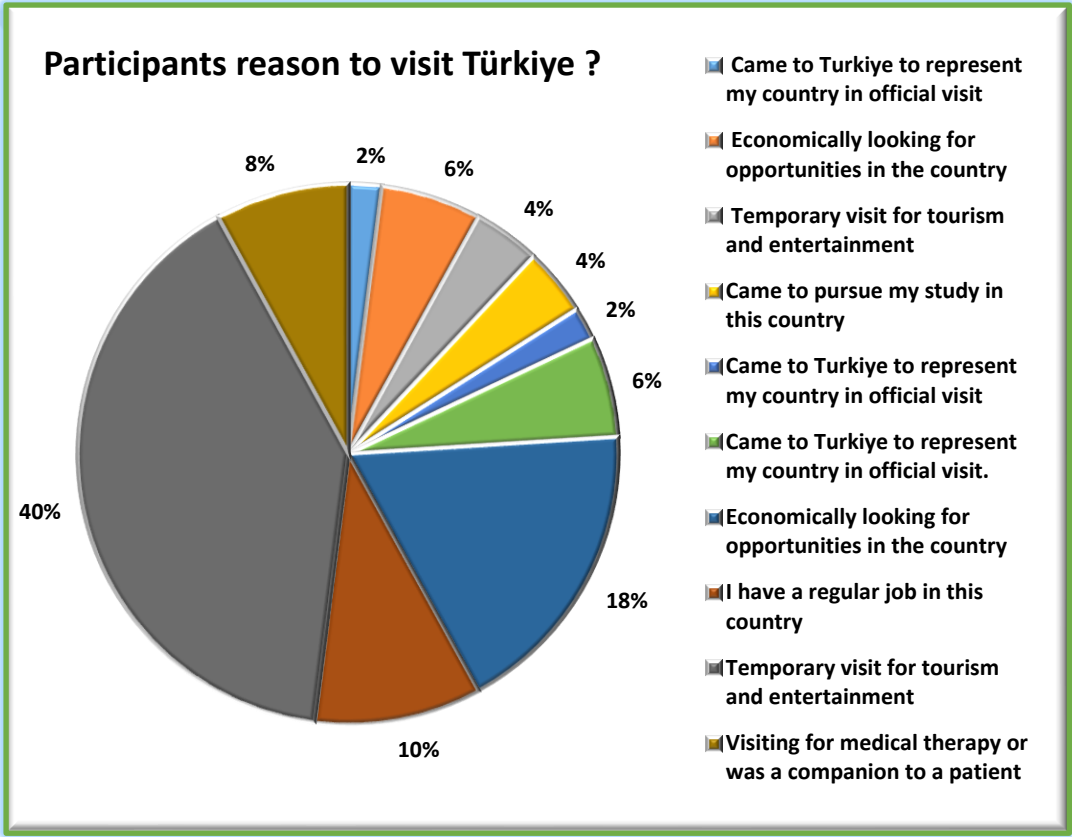
This chapter will highlight the relations in concept between two states in general and will be narrowed down to the level of the bilateral relations, and will tackle the historical construction of the relations between both states and development of the rapprochement between them, till it reached what it is on today. It will examine Qatar-Türkiye relations and

the recent rapprochement to analyze the fundamentals of the relations between both states in the political, economic, military, and cultural domains.

In this part of the study, Türkiye-Qatar relations will be examined. The relations between the two countries will be examined from economic, military, political, socio-cultural, and ideological perspectives, and the role of international actors in Türkiye-Qatar relations will be mentioned.

The chart below shows the percentage of interviewed Qatari people who are visiting Türkiye, on the purpose or the reason of their visits to the country.

Figure 1: Qataris Visitors to Türkiye by Reason - Source (Research Data)



2.2.1 Türkiye’s Economic Relations with Qatar

It is possible to say that the economy is one of the important determinants of Turkish foreign policy. Throughout the history of the Republic, almost every government that has come to power has had to struggle with economic problems or has made attempts to take advantage of economic opportunities. The fact that Türkiye is in the class of developing countries and wants to increase the level of economic development/development has caused the economic

factor to come to the fore in foreign policy. In the 19th and 20th centuries, major economic shocks had direct consequences on politics, causing governments to turn to economic and development-priority programs (Kazgan, 2009: 48; Shutter, 2014: 19). For this reason, the successes of the governments that have succeeded in maintaining their one-party power, especially in economic policies come to the forefront. From this point of view, it is no coincidence that the most striking common feature of the Menderes, Özal, and Erdoğan governments is the increase in the welfare level of the society and the economic policies that relieve the middle class. On the other hand, one of the biggest factors in the decline and loss of power of one-party governments is economic policies and macroeconomic problems. Therefore, the fact that the economy is so decisive on politics has led governments to look for various alternatives.

With the establishment of the Republic, Türkiye's modernization process has gained momentum. While aiming at Western-centered political, economic, and social transformation, a Western-oriented path was followed in foreign policy and foreign trade. In this regard, the governments that came to power were disturbed by the Islamic identity of the Arab world and even refrained from the development of trade relations by seeing this identity as a threat to the secular structure of the state (Hürsoy, 2013: 512). In this context, a certain group has been turned into the locomotive of the Turkish economy by the state itself and has become the guiding element of both foreign trade and socio-economic structure. Thus, the new economic elite, which has trade relations with the West and identifies its political/economic interests with the West, has remained distant from other geographies (Efegil, 2012: 191). From this point of view, it is not surprising that in the early 2000s, the share of European countries in Türkiye's exports had the highest rate with 56.1 percent. However, the AK Party government has largely turned to policies aimed at opening to other regions and finding new markets in exports rather than foreign trade dependent on the EU (Durakçay and Canveren, 2017: 256).

In the pre-1980 economic development process, Türkiye, which tried to industrialize with state-driven import-substitution economic policies, has changed its economic policy since then. At the turning point in history referred to as the 24 January 1980 Decisions, Türkiye switched to a market-oriented, open, and export-oriented model instead of import substitution policies in its economic structure. Adopting neoliberal economic policies that began to dominate on a global scale in this period, Türkiye focused on export-based growth while removing control over the market and prices on the one hand. Thus, both exports increased and the share of exports in the economy increased. However, the rapid transition of the state to the

free market order without taking the necessary measures and making preparations has brought about some structural economic problems and the ground has been prepared for imports to increase more than exports. As a result, both structural economic problems and political instabilities caused by coalition governments were the basic building blocks of the process leading to the 2001 economic crisis (Boratav, 2015: 149).

The wrong political and economic policies implemented by short-lived governments in Türkiye led to deep economic crises in the following periods. Following rapid liberalization policies on the way to integration into the global economy has adversely affected the market and economic structure that is not yet ready for this. As a result, the accumulated economic problems caused the Turkish economy to collapse and the social/political ground to be shaken. The 2001 economic crisis illustrated the chaos of both the coalition government and the political establishment and the economic infrastructure and was recorded as one of the most difficult periods in the country's history (Alpay and Alkin, 2017: 208). The punishment imposed on the political establishment by the people suffering from the crisis was quite severe and the parties in the Parliament could not even exceed the ten percent election threshold in the November 2002 elections. Thus, the 2001 economic crisis, one of the biggest economic crises in the country's history, revealed the need for urgent structural reforms.

In the recovery of the economy, a search for alternative sources has emerged. Within the framework of the regulations put into practice, while the institutions established ensured that the economy was placed on solid foundations, the change in parallel with the importance given to export policy has produced positive results.

The fact that Türkiye is one of the countries that benefited the most from the abundance of liquidity in the world markets after 2000 has also been one of the factors that made it possible to increase its exports. Benefiting from the abundance of liquidity in global markets during this period, Türkiye managed to attract foreign direct investments at the highest level in its history. Thanks to the economic policy put into practice, the improvements seen in macroeconomic problems have made the Turkish economy strong (Gür, 2018: 16). However, during the AK Party period, an inclusive growth policy reflecting economic development to the base was followed (Taşkın, 2014: 74). For example, while Türkiye's total foreign trade volume was 88 billion dollars in 2002, this figure increased to 391 billion dollars in 2017. While Türkiye's exports were 36 billion dollars in 2002, it was realized as 157 billion dollars in 2017. On the other hand, it is possible to say that the share of the Middle East in exports has increased and

the openings to the region have yielded positive results. The share of the Middle East, which was not even 10 percent of Türkiye's exports in 2002, increased every year and increased to 22.5 percent by 2017. One of the biggest centers in Türkiye's export move towards the Middle East has undoubtedly been the Gulf countries. It has been seen that the Gulf countries are a market that can be easily penetrated for Türkiye with its rich energy resources, the breadth of capital opportunities, and historical heritage it has (Oktav, 2015: 35).

On the one hand, the AK Party's new foreign economic policies have a share in the strengthening of relations with the Gulf countries, and on the other hand, the rising oil prices after the U.S intervention in Iraq in 2003 and the high oil revenues in the Gulf countries have an impact (Foley, 2010: 31). Thanks to the abundance of liquidity until 2009, it is possible to say that the import figures of the Gulf countries from Türkiye have increased.

Thus, the development and expansion of Türkiye's foreign trade with the Gulf countries have become possible (Habibi and Walker, 2011: 2). While these developments were taking place in Türkiye, Qatar, which was an active player in the world financial and investment circles thanks to its high hydrocarbon revenues based on oil and natural gas, especially after the 2000s, differentiated itself from other countries in the region by making structural adjustments in its economy in order to attract investment to its own country and succeeded in increasing its economic competitiveness (Saygın and Yamak, 2017: 43). Despite this, it is not possible to say that these two countries have completely got rid of the general economic policy problems in the Gulf. Türkiye's economic structure is diversified by the weight of different sectors such as industry, trade, agriculture, and services rather than depending on hydrocarbon resources such as Qatar. Türkiye's deprivation of hydrocarbon resources has led it to diversify and develop its economic structure in various fields, especially in industry and trade. In this way, Türkiye draws the profile of a country with the most diversified economic structure in the Middle East, which is highly integrated into the global economy, not condemned to a single source, and whose economic structure is fed by different sectors. Although the Turkish economy was partially affected by the 2008 global financial crisis, it showed rapid development with the successful economic policies it implemented after 2002 and its annual growth figures reached remarkable dimensions and showed a very successful growth/development performance.

2.2.1.1 Foreign Trade

After 2002, Türkiye's acceleration in foreign trade and its success in opening up to different markets in a short time has been a remarkable development. It should be stated that

the developments in foreign trade have contributed positively to the Turkish economy and helped its economic growth in some periods (Karahan, 2017: 64-65). The fact that the AK Party governments accelerated their economic diplomacy initiatives in foreign policy and had an economy-oriented agenda in every foreign visit allowed Türkiye to transfer its market diversification strategy to the field. Prior to the Arab Revolts, approximately 30 percent of the 393 official visits made abroad at the level of foreign minister, prime minister, and president between 2003 and 2011 were made to the EU, 27 percent to the Middle East, and 11 percent to Central Asian countries (Habibi and Walker, 2011: 5).

From this point of view, the increase in official contacts has also made it possible to develop economic relations. On the one hand, giving importance to the export-oriented economic development policy necessitated more economic and diplomatic contacts with new markets and countries, and on the other hand, it also paved the way for the establishment of security cooperation within the framework of the policy of mutual economic dependence with the countries contacted. When the statistics are examined, it is seen that Türkiye has started to get positive results in foreign trade with the Gulf countries since 2003. While Türkiye's performance in foreign policy during the AK Party period was appreciated, it should be noted that the countries in the region in general attracted the attention of the Gulf countries in particular in terms of economic cooperation. Due to the lack of a comprehensive foreign policy towards the Gulf countries before 2002 and the lack of serious contacts on the basis of strategic cooperation, mutual economic relations have been weak for a long time. However, after 2002, thanks to the difference in approaches towards the Gulf countries and the efforts to establish closer cooperation, significant progress has been made in bilateral relations. For example, while the trade volume between Türkiye and the Gulf countries was 1.97 billion dollars in 2001, it increased in 2017 in both proportional and numerical terms and increased to 21.98 billion dollars (Kaya and Kaya, 2019: 514).

While the share of Gulf countries in Türkiye's total exports was 5.4 percent in 2001, this rate increased to 13.2 percent by 2017. This indicator alone is important in terms of showing the stage Türkiye has reached in foreign trade with the Gulf countries. Undoubtedly, if it were not for the negative consequences of the tensions that started with the Arab Revolts from time to time, these figures and rates would have been much higher. After 2002, it is possible to see one of the most successful examples of economy-oriented diplomacy in foreign policy in relations with the Gulf countries. Even if economic relations lose momentum in times of political tension, the easy recovery shows that sustainable foreign trade has been established.

Of course, the mechanisms established and the agreements signed have a great share in sustainable foreign trade. It is possible to say that the "Framework Agreement on Economic Cooperation between the Republic of Türkiye and the Member States of the Cooperation Council of the Gulf Arab States Cooperation Countries" (2005) and the "Türkiye-GCC High-Level Strategic Dialogue" (2008) agreements are extremely important for the development of relations between the parties. Because the agreement signed with Türkiye in 2008 is important because it grants the status of a strategic partner to a country outside the Gulf for the first time (Al Hakeem, 2008: 42). In this respect, it is possible to say that the economic factor is effective in the development of Türkiye's relations with both the Gulf and Middle Eastern countries (Larrabee, 2011: 691).

Table 1: Türkiye's Foreign Trade Relations with Qatar (Million USD, 2000-2018)

	Export	Import	Volume	Odds (Percentage)	Equilibrium
2000	9.963	11.313	21.176		-1,350
2001	8.402	5.779	14.181	-33.35	2.623
2002	15.572	10.659	26.231	84.97	4.913
2003	15.688	8.310	23.998	-8.51	7.378
2004	35.026	17.727	52.753	119.82	17.299
2005	82.045	50.725	132.770	151.68	31.320
2006	342.147	66.411	408.558	207.72	275.736
2007	449.963	29.643	479.606	17.39	420.230
2008	1.074.013	159.353	1.233.366	157.16	914.660
2009	289.361	85.652	375.012	-69.59	203.709
2010	162.549	177.046	339.595	-9,44	-14.497
2011	188.138	481.018	669.156	97.05	-292.280
2012	287.329	466.499	723.828	8.17	-209.170
2013	244.077	373.923	618.000	-14,62	-129.846
2014	344.713	394.552	739.265	19.62	-49.839
2015	423.088	360.978	784.066	6.06	62.110
2016	439.142	271.083	710.225	-9.42	168.059
2017	648.915	264.126	913.041	28.56	384.789
2018	1.096.579	335.320	1.431.899	56.83	761.259
2019	1.161.809	262.663	1.424.472	61.24	899.146
2020	1.036.027	301.490	1.337.517	51.24	734.537

Source: TURKSTAT data

Türkiye's foreign trade with Qatar, just like other Gulf countries, gained momentum after 2002. While Türkiye's foreign trade with Qatar has very low figures, it is only after 2006 that the trade volume between the two countries can be considered serious. While Türkiye's foreign trade with Qatar increased by 144 percent between 2002 and 2007, there was a 35 percent decrease in the period of 2007-2012 and an increase of 17 percent between 2012 and

2017. Türkiye's exports to Qatar exceeded \$1 billion in 2008 and 2018 alone. It is seen that the "Türkiye-Gulf Cooperation Council Strategic Dialogue" mechanism established in 2008 is reflected in economic relations in a concrete way. 2008 is a period in which both Türkiye and the Gulf countries have the most positive mutual perspective. Therefore, it is possible to say that Türkiye has achieved a serious momentum in its foreign economic relations with each Gulf country this year.

The most important reason for reaching an export volume of over \$1 billion and a trade volume of nearly \$1.5 billion between Türkiye and Qatar in 2018 is undoubtedly the economic and political embargo imposed on Qatar. While Türkiye's exports to Qatar increased by 69 percent this year, its exports to the UAE decreased by 66 percent. Following the withdrawal of ambassadors from Doha by Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and its regional allies, as well as the economic blockade imposed on Qatar, Türkiye has become the fastest-moving country to break the blockade and offer political/economic support to Qatar. Transfers made by planes to meet all the economic needs of Qatar, especially food, have been very effective. Photos of Turkish products in the markets were frequently shared on social media to show that the blockade had failed. Therefore, thanks to the political and economic cooperation between Türkiye and Qatar in 2017, foreign trade increased rapidly in the following year (AA, 2018).

When the foreign trade figures are examined in general, Qatar is a country that does not have a serious weight in Türkiye's exports and Türkiye's position among Qatar's foreign trade partners is far behind. Türkiye, which is not even among the top ten countries in Qatar's imports, had the opportunity to increase its exports only after the 2017 Qatar crisis. While Qatar had a share of 0.04 percent in Türkiye's exports in 2002, this rate increased to 0.41 percent in 2017. A similar picture emerges in the import item. When we look at Qatar's share in Türkiye's imports, it is seen that there is a very low level. While the import rate was 0.02 percent in 2002, this rate was 0.11 percent in 2017. Qatar has a large trade volume in foreign trade with Asian countries such as China, Japan, and India, as well as Western countries such as the U.S, Germany, France, the U.K(United Kingdom), and Italy. One of the important factors that stand out in Qatar's imports is the preservation of the Asian and Western balance. For example, 44.11 percent of Qatar's imports in 2002 were from Asia, 44.09 percent from Europe, and 8.45 percent from North America. When we look at 2016, we see almost the same picture. 44.29 percent of imports originate from Asia, 35.44 percent from Europe, and 16.10 percent from North America. In intra-Gulf trade, it is seen that approximately \$ 4.3 billion (2016) was imported

from the UAE and Saudi Arabia before the 2017 blockade. However, it should be noted that in the period 2010-2017, the UAE was one of the five countries where Qatar imported the most.

According to 2020 data, Qatar's share in Türkiye's total exports is 0.6%. Again, Qatar ranked 38th in the ranking of countries to which Türkiye exports the most. Türkiye's share in Qatar's imports is 4.2%. Türkiye, on the other hand, ranks 7th among the countries where Qatar imports the most (Ministry of Trade, 2021: 39). When we look at the export products from Türkiye to Qatar, it buys all kinds of construction material tools, jewelry, home textile products, electrical components, poultry, eggs, and many agricultural products. Sugary and chocolate products, biscuits, dairy products, natural stones, jewelry and jewelry products, porcelain, ceramics, and glass products. According to 2020 data, Türkiye's share in Qatar's exports is 1.5%. Again, Türkiye ranks 15th among the countries where Qatar exports the most (Ministry of Trade, 2021: 40). When observers look at the products imported by Türkiye from Qatar, it is seen that LNG (Liquid Natural Gas), unprocessed aluminum, chemicals, petroleum products, plastic and plastic products are more. When we look at the figures of the last three years from imported products, it is not seen that there is a big change.

2.2.1.2. Direct Foreign Investment

Since the Turkish economy is located in developing countries and is based on growth-indexed political targets, capital inflow from abroad is critical. While Türkiye attracted \$23 billion in international direct investment between 1973 and 2002, the amount of international direct investment obtained between 2003 and 2017 was \$193 billion in total. Türkiye has earned more than eight times the international direct investment it has achieved in the first period of the thirty years mentioned above in a period of only fourteen years. The reasons for the increase in capital flows in this period can be shown as the fact that Türkiye, which has been struggling to gain the trust of investment circles with its fragile economic structure for many years, attracts the attention of market players with its reliable and sound economic structure, the positive atmosphere seen in the EU process and the effect of the abundance of international liquidity. During the period of AK Party governments, positive developments in the economy brought about more resources from investors from abroad. Until 2010, the Gulf countries were among the countries that transferred capital both because they entered into a strategic rapprochement as a result of their satisfaction with Ankara's regional policies and because they believed that they could seize profitable investment opportunities by trusting Türkiye's economic performance.

International direct investments have an extremely important place in terms of the Turkish economy. Türkiye has tried to be a "safe haven" for international capital and thus gain the trust of foreign investors. As President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said, "You look at Türkiye's area and population, and Qatar's. We don't have oil wells. Together with my friends, I travel the world to produce different resources. I wonder who can invest in our country and how we can attract global capital to our country" (Hürriyet, 2005). These statements are meaningful in terms of revealing this importance. Emphasizing the issue of economic diplomacy, Erdoğan has brought the business world with him to high-level visits and international organizations and has often emphasized that the government has a strong stance in terms of investing in Türkiye in the eyes of the interlocutor countries

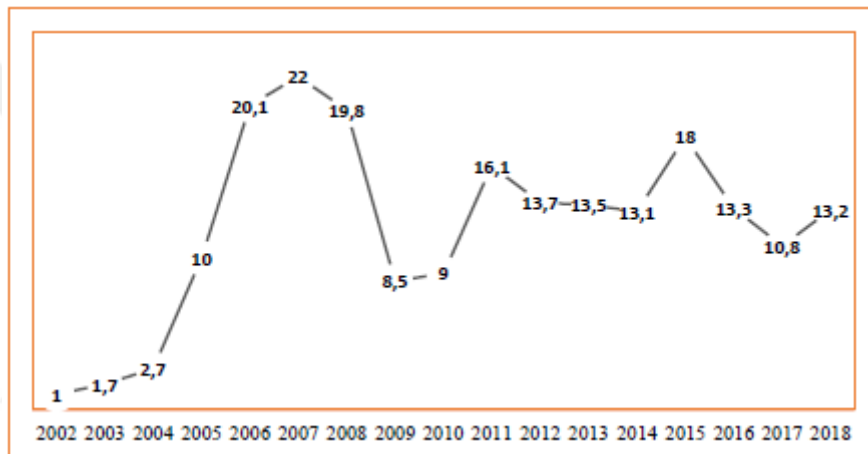


Figure 1: Annual International Direct Investments in Türkiye(In billions).

Source: World Bank data

As a result of the developing political relations between Türkiye and the Gulf countries, the Gulf capital has turned to Türkiye and increased its investments. However, Gulf capital does not have the content and size to dominate foreign investments in Türkiye. Considering the volume of wealth funds used by Gulf countries on a global scale, it can be said that the share allocated to Türkiye remains quite low. In this respect, it should be stated that the allegations that Gulf capital is flowing to Türkiye do not reflect the truth. However, when compared to the period before 2002, there is a significant positive change in investments in Türkiye. Ankara's new Middle East policy and progress in the EU process have been effective in increasing investments in Türkiye from the Gulf countries. For Gulf investors, in addition to being a Muslim country, it is important that Türkiye is integrated with the global economy and that many international companies operate in Türkiye. In this respect, many of the Gulf countries

increased their investments considerably in the said period and turned to close economic cooperation with Türkiye (Rehman, 2010: 183). Another factor in the increase in direct investments is that with the rapid rise in oil prices between 2002 and 2008, the GDP totals of the GCC members exceeded \$ 1 trillion and they turned to the search for alternative investment markets. While the price of a barrel of oil was 25 dollars in 2002, it peaked at 147 dollars in July 2008 but fell to 35 dollars again in December 2008.

There has been a capital surplus in the Gulf countries, which benefit from high oil prices to the maximum extent. The effects of the Dubai financial crisis that erupted in late 2008 and the US-based global financial crisis, combined with the fall in oil prices, reduced the total GDP of GCC member countries from \$1,073 trillion in 2008 to \$887 billion in 2009 (Hanieh, 2011: 169). However, oil prices, which have been on the rise again since 2010, traded at an average annual rate of \$ 91.9 between 2010 and 2014 and fell to \$ 30 in January 2016, entering a rapid downward trend after mid-2014. Therefore, the fact that oil prices follow a fluctuating course has directly determined the economic policies of the Gulf countries. For this reason, in 2016, almost all Gulf countries experienced difficulties in their budgets due to low oil prices. As can be understood from Table 2, when classified according to country groups, it is seen that the most investment in Türkiye comes from Europe. According to the data of the 2002-2017 period, approximately 74 percent of the foreign investments entering Türkiye were realized from European countries, while the rate of investments made from the Gulf countries in the said period was only around 7 percent. Although it is seen that there is quite a lot of capital flow from the Gulf countries to Türkiye in this period compared to the past, it should be reiterated that Türkiye's share of the trillion-dollar resource of the Gulf capital remains quite low. Therefore, it should be noted that compared to the EU countries, the share of Gulf capital in Türkiye remains quite weak.

Table 2. International Direct Investment in Türkiye by Country Groups

Region	2016	Percentage	2017	Percentage	2002-2017	Percentage
Europe	4.841	64	4.927	66,7	109.541	73,96
European Countries	3.783	50	4.809	64,98	100.012	67,53
Other European countries	1.067	14,18	118	1,59	9.529	6,43
American Countries	408	5	247	3,34	12.608	8,51
U.S	338	4	180	2,43	11.327	7,65
Other American Countries	70	1	67	0,91	1.281	0,86
Asia	2.246	30	1.701	22,98	24.811	16,75
GCC countries	540	7	252	3,40	9.998	6,75
Other neighboring countries in Middle East	814	11	1.007	13,61	7.465	5,04
Other Asian Countries	888	12	441	5,96	6.828	4,61
Others	30	0	526	7,11	1.149	0,87
Total	7.525	100	7.401	100	148.109	100

Source: CBRT Data

Qatar, which is extremely strong in terms of independent wealth funds, is seen to be evaluating these assets in various investments in its efforts to diversify its non-hydrocarbon economies. Qatar, which has lower economic diversification activities compared to other Gulf countries, is focused on sustainable development and transition to a knowledge economy under the Vision 2030 plan announced in 2008. Qatar has a total independent wealth fund of \$335 billion. Therefore, just as in foreign trade figures, Qatar's interest in Türkiye in direct capital investment has increased only since 2005 and high figures have started to be seen. When the investments made by the Gulf capital in Türkiye are examined, it is seen that the investments are distributed in a wide variety of sectors. Investments especially in the fields of banking and finance have been going on for many years. There are ten Arab-owned banks operating in Türkiye, most of which are owned by Gulf capital (Euronews, 2019).

After Kuwait stepped into the banking sector in Türkiye in 1977, Bahrain (1984) and Saudi Arabia (1985) followed. Currently, Kuwait (A&T Bank, Turkish Bank, Kuveyt Türk and Burgan Bank), Saudi Arabia (Türkiye Finans), Bahrain (Albaraka Türk) and Qatar (QNB Finansbank and ABANK) are the owners of Gulf capital banks in Türkiye, while the UAE has become the last Gulf country to start operating in Türkiye by acquiring Denizbank (Daily Sabah, 2018). Compared to other Gulf countries, it is possible to say that Qatar and the UAE stepped into the Turkish banking sector quite late. Qatar (CNN Turk, 2018), which entered the Turkish banking and finance sector with Commercial Bank of Qatar's acquisition of 70.84

percent of Alternatifbank (2013) and Qatar National Bank's acquisition of Finansbank (2016). It can be stated that it has increased its investments in Türkiye since the Arab Revolts process. As a result of the negotiations that started for the acquisition of Denizbank, which is part of the Russian Sberbank since the end of 2017, by Emirates NBD, the largest bank in the UAE, it was announced that Denizbank was purchased for \$ 3.2 billion (NTV, 2018). Thus, it can be said that all GCC members except Oman are involved in the Turkish banking sector.

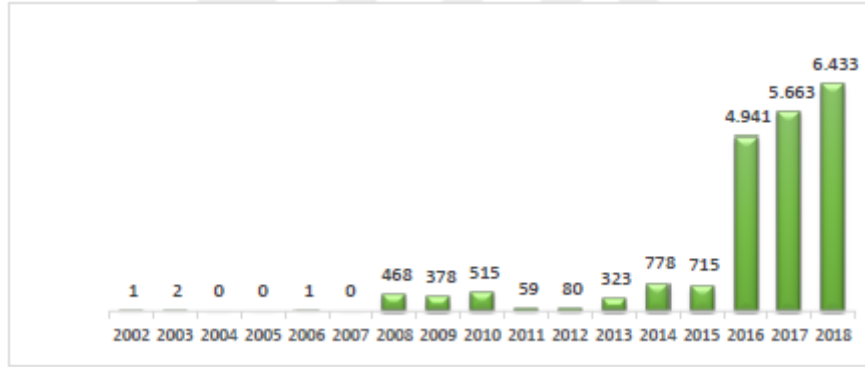


Figure 2. Direct Investments of Overseas Residents in Türkiye (Million USD) Qatar 2002-2018 (Stock)

Source: US- Qatar business Council

When we look at Qatar's annual investments in Türkiye, a total figure of 1.6 billion dollars (2002-2017) is revealed. It is known that the value of Qatar's investment in Finansbank, Digitürk, Boyner Holding, A Bank, Banvit, and BMC companies alone in Türkiye is over 6 billion dollars (Hürriyet, 2017). In addition, the vice president of the Qatar Chamber of Commerce states that the investments made in Türkiye are at the level of 20 billion dollars in total (The Peninsula, 2017). Qatar, which is preparing to host the 2022 FIFA World Cup, has started many projects, especially in the field of construction, and it is seen that Turkish construction companies have a high share in undertaking these projects. The fact that approximately 300 Turkish companies operate in Qatar is a clear indication of this (The Peninsula, 2017). It is stated that the volume of projects purchased by Turkish companies from Qatar is approximately 12 billion dollars.

2.2.1.3. Defense Industry

One aspect of the relations between Türkiye and the Gulf countries is the defense industry sector. Türkiye's cooperation with Qatar in the field of defense is remarkable. There is

a cooperation between Ankara and Doha that is constantly gaining momentum, especially in the field of the defense industry. It is known that the military agreements signed between Türkiye and Qatar in 2007, 2012, and 2015 include articles on cooperation in the field of the defense industry. Qatar's defense spending data has been unavailable since 2011. In light of the latest data, it is known that Qatar spends \$ 1.87 billion (2011) on defense. We can say that Türkiye and Qatar import weapons that can be considered serious for a country of their scale. In this context, it should be kept in mind that among the countries that imported the most weapons between 2013 and 2017, Türkiye ranked twelfth and Qatar ranked twentieth (SIPRI, 2018). It can be stated that significant distances have been made between Türkiye and Qatar in the defense industry in the recent period. In 2011, Türkiye exported 10 Mini UAVs for the Qatar Armed Forces, 342 Ejder Yalçın armored personnel carriers manufactured by Nurol Makina, 100 NMS 4X4 armored combat vehicles (2016), and 400 ARMA armored personnel carriers (2017) produced by Otokar (AA, 2017). Within the scope of the agreement reached in 2015, the establishment of a Turkish base in Qatar and the efforts of Türkiye and Qatar to act in coordination in the Gulf in the context of regional security policies have also increased cooperation in the field of defense. In recent years, following the distance, Türkiye has traveled in UAV and armed unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) technologies and the successes achieved by these strategic aircraft in extra-border operations, Qatar has decided to purchase 6 Bayraktar TB2 UAVs and 3 ground control stations from Türkiye. At the same time, it can be said that the agreement, which includes the training of military personnel of the Qatar Armed Forces, is one of the turning points in Türkiye's defense industry exports.

2.2.1.4. Other Economic Interaction Areas

It is possible to say that Türkiye, which is an energy-dependent country, is trying to use its geopolitical position both to meet its own needs and to get a share of the energy market. In order to contribute to its energy security and economic capacity, Türkiye has developed its strategy to become an energy hub. Accordingly, it is aimed to collect the energy resources in the nearby geography in Türkiye and transfer them from there to international markets, especially to Europe (Furuncu, 2018: 3).

In this context, the project of transporting Qatari natural gas to Türkiye via Iraq or Syria by pipelines was developed (Qatar-Türkiye Pipeline Project), but the regional structure, which became unstable due to the Arab Revolts, did not allow this. The fact that Türkiye is located very close to rich energy centers may give it the chance to achieve its goal of becoming an

energy hub, but it is seen that Türkiye wants to have a central role in the energy field much more than being a corridor/transit characteristic. The Western Line and Blue Stream projects that provide the existing natural gas shipment from Russia, the Eastern Anatolian Natural Gas Main Transmission Line that carries Iranian natural gas to Türkiye, the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum Natural Gas Pipeline that ships Azerbaijani natural gas, the Iraq-Türkiye Crude Oil Line, the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Oil Pipeline, the TurkStream project, which aims to deliver Russian gas under the Black Sea to Türkiye and then to Europe through pipelines, TANAP, the project to transport Azerbaijani gas to Europe, plus the Akkuyu Nuclear Power Plant, can be read as reflections of Türkiye's claim to be an energy hub.

As can be understood from the official data, Türkiye, which is highly dependent on Russia within the scope of natural gas supply, meets a very small amount of its natural gas needs from Qatar. In 2022, Türkiye consumed a total of 60 billion 860 million cubic meters of natural gas. It supplies some of its natural gas imports through pipelines and some of it as liquefied natural gas (LNG). Türkiye imported 28.7 billion cubic meters of natural gas from Russia, 9.3 billion cubic meters from Iran, and 6.5 billion cubic meters from Azerbaijan through pipelines, respectively. In LNG, Algeria ranks in the top two with 4.6 billion cubic meters and Nigeria with 1.3 billion cubic meters. The amount of LNG imports from Qatar through the spot market is around 1.5 billion cubic meters (EPDK, 2018).

Türkiye, which wants to increase its energy supply security after the aircraft crisis with Russia in 2015, signed a memorandum of understanding between Qatar National Oil Company and BOTAŞ during President Erdoğan's visit to Qatar to ensure long-term and regular LNG imports, and in 2017, a three-year LNG trade agreement was signed between the two countries (Türkiye-GCC Trade and Business Relations, 2017). The low LNG imports from Qatar, the lack of sufficient natural gas storage infrastructure of Türkiye, and the price issue are the determining factors. It is seen that Türkiye and Qatar are turning to joint efforts not only in the field of natural gas-centric but also in the field of renewable energy. It is also revealed that by cooperating between Qatar Solar Technologies Company and Turkish companies in the field of solar energy (2016), there is a tendency toward alternative energy investments (Yeni Şafak, 2016).

In April 2017, Qatar Petroleum Consortium and ExxonMobil won the 10th Summit with the right to explore and drill natural gas from the Greek Cypriot Administration. It started to operate in Parsel. However, despite the fact that Parsel is not located within the disputed zone

that Türkiye objected to, the cooperation between the Greek Cypriot side and Qatar in the field of energy has caused discomfort in Ankara. Türkiye plans to reach the European market both by protecting its rights over energy resources in the Eastern Mediterranean and protecting its economic interests by guaranteeing its rights there, as well as by making the Eastern Mediterranean energy potential one of the important parts of its strategy to become an energy hub. On the other hand, Israel, Egypt, Greece, and the Greek Cypriot Administration are looking for ways to put the natural gas and oil fields they have identified into operation by making agreements with energy companies, and on the other hand, they are trying to ensure that these energy resources reach Europe by creating an alternative route to Türkiye. In 2011, the Fatih and Barbaros Hayrettin Paşa seismic research vessels belonging to the Turkish Petroleum Corporation (TPAO), licensed by the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), started their activities in the south of the island of Cyprus accompanied by Turkish warships. Energy is one of the most important areas of cooperation between Türkiye and Qatar. Qatar is one of the countries with the richest natural gas resources in the world (Alrantisi, 2021: 235). Türkiye's energy needs are increasing in the same direction with the growth of its population and economy day by day. Due to Türkiye's limited fossil fuel resources, it provides its supply through imports. A significant part of the natural gas supply, which is one of the most important items in meeting Türkiye's energy needs, is carried out by pipelines and Oil Transportation Joint Stock Company (BOTAŞ) from Russia, Azerbaijan, and Iran (Karagöl and Kaya, 2015: 56).

Türkiye is trying to diversify its sources of supply in order to ensure its own energy supply security. In this direction, since the beginning of 1990, natural gas, which meets its important needs in terms of energy, has been transported by pipelines and has been supplied via LNG in order to increase the alternative. It started buying LNG from Algeria in 1994 and Nigeria in 1999 on long-term contracts. Although Türkiye brought the issue of LNG purchase from Qatar to its agenda at the end of 1990, it could not be realized due to insufficient storage capacity (Muriç, 2020: 5). As a result of the crisis that started between Ukraine and Russia in 2006, it caused a decrease in gas coming through Russia. In the same year, natural gas supplied from Iran was stopped in winter due to technical reasons. Due to the reasons that have emerged, there has been a shortage of supply in the natural gas supplied by Türkiye through the pipelines coming through Iran and Russia, which has led to the deterioration of the supply-demand balance (EPDK, 2019: 6). The most important condition for LNG importation is that the storage capacity must be in the same direction. For this reason, significant storage investments are needed to increase Türkiye's LNG imports. Türkiye has been able to import a limited amount

due to the inadequacy of LNG storage. Seeing that it is important to diversify the countries that provide resources with the emerging energy security problem, Türkiye has started to work to increase the purchase of LNG, which is cheaper and faster in addition to the supply provided by pipelines. Ege Gaz LNG Terminal, which started to be established in 2001 in order to increase storage facilities, started to operate in 2006. Thanks to the amendment of the relevant law made in 2008, private companies and BOTAŞ related to LNG imports were released and LNG purchases were made from different countries. With the developments in LNG supply, the share of LNG in the Turkish market has started to increase with the purchase of countries such as Nigeria and Algeria from the U.S and Qatar (Muriç, 2021: 6). In 2008, during the official visit of President Abdullah Gül to Qatar, cooperation between Türkiye and Qatar on energy was discussed. Then, the Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad, visited Türkiye in August 2009 and signed agreements and protocols that were important for the two countries. During this visit, it was agreed to establish an Energy Working Group in order to make the relations that started in the field of energy in 2008 concrete now. In this context, Türkiye's LNG importation from Qatar and the long-term construction of a natural gas pipeline between the two countries were discussed in the working group. Then, the Turkish Minister of Energy and Natural Resources Taner Yıldız went to Doha in October 2009 with the accompanying delegation and signed an agreement on the establishment of a working group (Koçgündüz, 2011: 78).

The planned pipeline project could not be carried out due to the fact that there are many countries on the route it will pass through and the civil war that took place in Syria in 2011 and continues today. In 2013, important initiatives were made between Türkiye and Qatar in the field of energy cooperation. In this context, the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources of the Republic of Türkiye, Taner Yıldız, met with the Minister of Energy and Industry of Qatar Dr. Mohammed Bin Saleh in Qatar. After the meeting, Minister Taner Yıldız said that Qatar is the largest LNG exporter in the world, but so far, they have not made a long-term contract between Türkiye and Qatar and said, "We are currently buying natural gas from 5 countries. We want to see Qatar as the 6th country from which we buy natural gas." Minister Mohammed Bin Saleh stated that they want to increase their cooperation with Türkiye and that negotiations are ongoing with Turkish companies for the establishment of an LNG terminal for investment in Türkiye and that they will announce it to the public in case of an agreement. The Qatari Minister stated that they would be pleased with the conclusion of a long-term contract and stated that they could sell spot natural gas to Türkiye if the necessary conditions and price were agreed upon (Sabah Newspaper, 2013). During his visit to Qatar, Minister Taner Yıldız said that 5

LNG ships worth 350 million dollars from Qatar would come to Aliğa Port in order to ensure that the winter months in Türkiye would be cold and that there would be no shortage of gas supply (Hürriyet Newspaper, 2013). However, the LNG terminal project planned to be established by Qatar in Türkiye has not been realized. The transformation of the energy issue into cooperation between the two countries was realized by taking concrete steps at the 1st meeting of the "High Strategic Cooperation Committee of Türkiye and Qatar" held in 2015. In the agreements made at the meeting, the preliminary memorandum of understanding on the long-term purchase of LNG from Türkiye and Qatar was signed by BOTAŞ and Qatar National Oil Company. The most important gain of the agreement is that it is long-term compared to the short-term agreements made between Türkiye and Qatar in previous periods. Another important issue in the meeting was that Qatar's project, which was not built in 2013, to build an LNG terminal in Türkiye would be put on the agenda again. The main reason for the energy agreements with Qatar is seen as the concern of cutting off Russian natural gas due to the strained relations with Russia after Türkiye shot down the Russian plane during the Syrian civil war. Since Russia is the country where Türkiye supplies the most gas, the agreement made it important to create an alternative even though it does not meet all its needs with the agreement made with Qatar. Again, with this agreement, Türkiye has established important cooperation in the field of energy as well as making agreements with Qatar on many issues and has found an important long-term supplier (Muriç, 2021: 5). When the data of 2019 is examined, Türkiye imported a total of 45,211.47 million sm³ of gas. 12,694.00 million of the imported gas consisted of LNG (spot and long term). This figure corresponds to 28.08% of total LNG natural gas imports. 40.49% share of LNG imports is taken from the spot market, and the remaining part is taken from Nigeria and Algeria through BOTAŞ in accordance with the long-term agreement. When we look at the data in table number 3, Qatar is one of the most important suppliers of Türkiye with a share of 47% among the 8 countries imported in the amount of natural gas purchased from the spot market in 2019 (EPDK, 2020: 18-19). When LNG and Pipe Gas are included, the amount of natural gas imported by Türkiye from Qatar is 5%, while this figure has reached 13% in 2020 with a significant increase.

They have cooperated with Turkish and Qatari companies in the field of renewable energy as well as fossil fuels. In this context, Qatar Solar Technologies Company made a statement, it announced that they will cooperate with Fernas Group and Bendis Energy from Türkiye in the field of R&D studies and solar equipment applications. Parties made their statement after the agreement, they stated that "it will be an important step towards diversifying

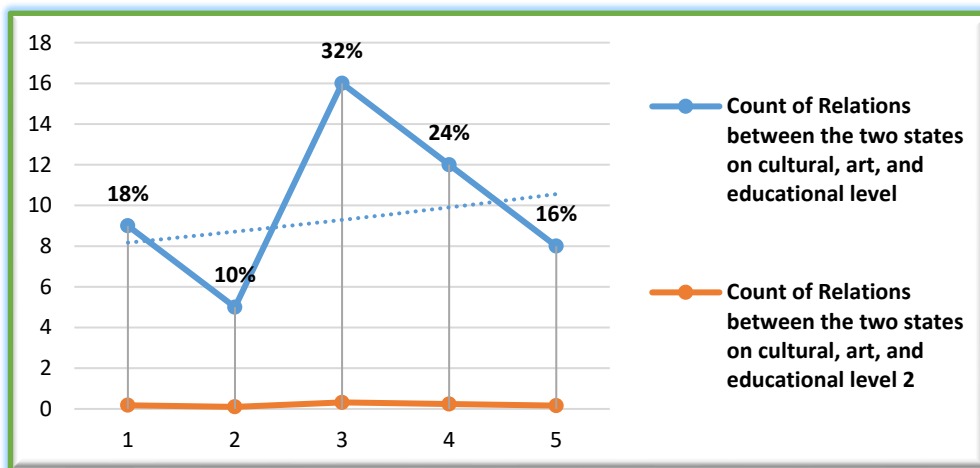
Türkiye's energy field and that they want to strengthen the solar energy industry" Qatar's Ambassador to Ankara Salim Mubarak, who attended the agreement ceremony, said In a statement, he said that "the agreement is an indication of the existing strong friendship and cooperation between the two countries" (Türkiye Newspaper). In 2019, Fusion Dynamics from Qatar and Metcap Energy from Türkiye amassed a total of \$ 5.2 billion in Türkiye. they signed an agreement for the construction of natural gas and petrochemical plants. Facilities in Karaman and It is foreseen that it will be built in Kırklareli and that the entire investment will be completed in 2023. It is indicated that the project will meet 5% of Türkiye's total electricity generation needs (Anadolu Agency, 2019).

2.3. Türkiye's Socio-Cultural Relations with Qatar

After 2002, one of the areas in which Türkiye has made the most progress in the eyes of the Gulf in particular, and the Middle East countries, in general, has been culture and tourism. Thanks to the activities that are very effective in the Arab geography in the cultural dimension, especially in Turkish TV series, a significant increase has been achieved in visits to Türkiye. Thus, there has been a positive change in the perception of Türkiye in the Middle East. For example, in 2008, Türkiye was invited as the guest of honor to the Jenadiye Festival, one of the most prestigious cultural events in Saudi Arabia (Riyadh Embassy, 2008). The fact that Saudi Arabia, which invited guest countries from abroad for the first time in the history of the festival, wanted to host Türkiye while using its preference from outside the Arab geography reflected the cultural dimension of the positive atmosphere in the perception of Türkiye. With the revival in the culture and tourism sectors, it has been possible to start mutual direct flights and increase them over time. For example, Qatar Airways launched Doha-Istanbul flights in 2004, followed by UAE national airline Etihad in 2009 to operate four weekly flights from Abu Dhabi to Istanbul (Habertürk, 2004). Considering that the Emir of Dubai, Maktoum, came to Antalya five times in 2009, it can be said that Türkiye's perception in the field of tourism among its interlocutors is quite strong (Hürriyet, 2009).

The interviewees of the research showed a moderate interest in the development of the Turkish VS. GCC relations unlike the political and military sector. This indicates the existing level of acceptance on normal citizens level, for each country's culture. This result has also several reasons like language difference, different habits, different traditions and yet there are many other common factors which Islamic religion comes on top of them.

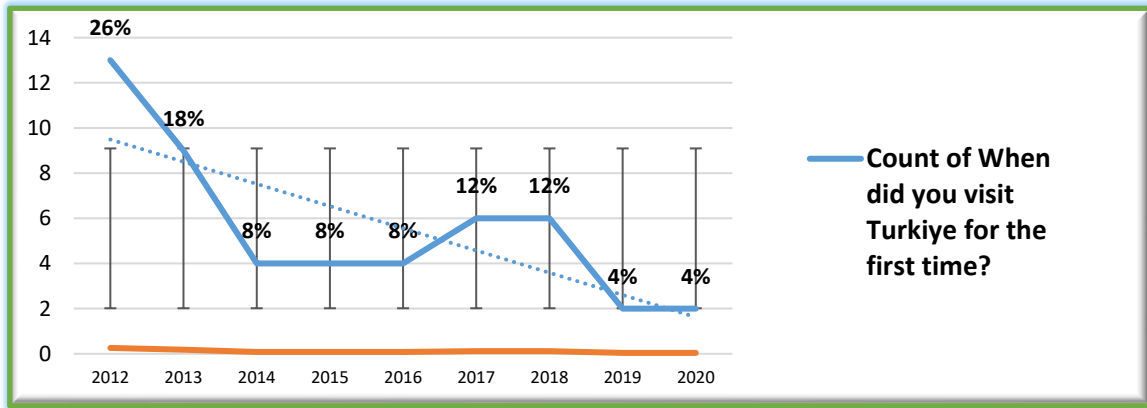
Figure 2 : Qatari and Turkish interviewees Opinion on Cultural Exchange and Relations - Source (Research Data)



Tourism revenues are an important source of income for Türkiye. Tourism revenue, which was 12.5 billion dollars in 2002, also corresponds to 34.4 percent of total exports. In 2017, tourism revenues of 26 billion dollars constitute 16.7 percent of total exports and 3.1 percent of GDP. Therefore, the tourism sector is one of the locomotives of the Turkish economy. The increase in the number of tourists from the Gulf countries is also important in terms of providing foreign exchange input. When we look at the number of tourists from Qatar, the number of tourists arriving in 2017 was fifty-six times higher than in 2002 and this rate increased to 97 times in 2018. The number of visitors from all Gulf countries exceeded the figure of 1 million for the first time in 2017 and the share in total visitors to Türkiye corresponded to approximately 4.5 percent. While 42 thousand people came from the Gulf countries among the approximately 12 million tourists who came to Türkiye in 2002, this figure constituted only 0.33 percent of the total number of tourists. However, in parallel with the developing Türkiye-Gulf relations after 2002, it is possible to say that the interaction in the fields of culture and tourism has increased considerably.

As we can see from the chart below, most of the Qatari nationals that were surveyed for this research, have visited Turkey since earlier years of the past decade. This indicates the time length of the both people's relations across the years, which also informs us, that these relations are not born by recent political closure but they have a history.

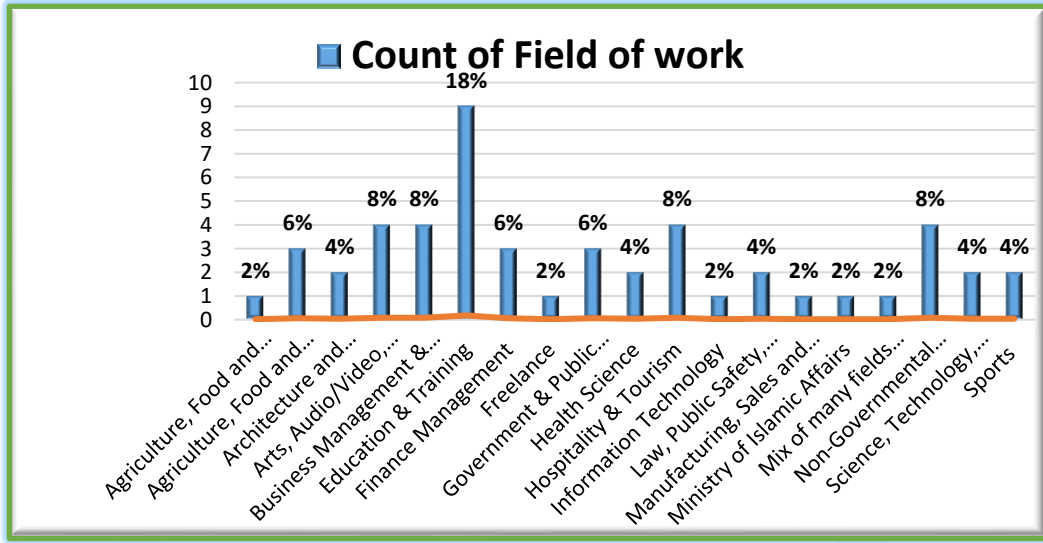
Figure 3: Qataris Visitors to Türkiye in Dates - Source (Research's Data)



In 2010, Doha became the cultural capital of Qatar, and important cultural activities were organized in the country. One of them, "Doha Book Fair and World Education Innovation Summit", has been one of these organizations. Türkiye has been the guest of honor at this fair in Doha. 3 authors, 7 publishers, and 3 agencies from Türkiye participated in this great organization. Participants from Türkiye met with Doha publishers. Again, panels on Turkish stories, novels, and poems were held. Another cultural activity was the Qatar National Theater in Doha where Turkish folk dances were performed (Muslu, 2011: 421). Within the organization, the World Educational Innovation Summit (WISE) awards projects that will be exemplary in the field of education. In this context, the Mother Child Foundation (AÇEV) was the winner of the award from Türkiye (Hürriyet Newspaper, 2010).

Also, in the education field there is a majority of Qatari nationals who visited Türkiye recently, are working in education or training, business, tourism, and media fields. This indicates the Qataris' people desire to visit Türkiye for the aforementioned purposes. At the same time, it gives the reader a glimpse about the preferences of the Qatari people on their visits to Türkiye.

Figure 4: Qataris Visitors to Türkiye by Field of Work - Source (Research Data)



On 14-15 September, President Tayyip Erdoğan declared the "Year of Culture of Türkiye Qatar" from the end of 2014 to the beginning of 2015 in order to establish cultural ties between the agreements made during his official visit to Qatar (Akdoğan, 2015: 239). In 2015, the "Türkiye-Qatar Year of Culture" gala was held in Doha, the capital of Qatar, together with the Minister of Culture and Tourism Ömer Çelik and his Qatari counterpart Abdulaziz El Kuwar at Katara Cultural Village. In his speech, Minister Çelik said that Qatar "attaches great importance to the organization of a cultural year with a state with a strong cultural aspect" like Türkiye. After the ceremony, the two ministers held talks and signed a "Declaration of Intent on Cultural Cooperation on the Year of Mutual Culture 2015" between the ministries of the two countries (KTB, 2014).

Within the scope of "2015 Turkish-Qatari Culture Year", Doha Yunus Emre Center Directorate was opened on 2 December 2015 during the visit of Minister of Culture and Tourism Mahir Ünal to Qatar. Yunus Emre Institute is one of the prestigious state institutions of Türkiye that carries out its activities with the aim of spreading the Turkish language and culture all over the world (YEE, 2015). Again, within the scope of the "Türkiye-Qatar Cultural Year" agreement, cultural activities between Türkiye and Qatar have increased. The programs and activities prepared within the scope of the Year of Culture included "Qatar Contemporary Art" in Ankara, "Pearl" and "Jewel in the Sea" at the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts in Istanbul, and "Hunting: Noble Endeavors in Muslim Lands" exhibitions at the Museum of Islamic Arts in Doha (Yetim, 2016: 316).

In 2018, the "Türkiye-Qatar Intercultural Art Dialogues" program organized by the Istanbul Intercultural Art Dialogues Association was held in Doha. Within the scope of the program, musicals, exhibitions, as well as modern and traditional arts, art workshops, conferences, and festivals were held in Doha with the support of Qatari institutions (Haberler.Com, 2018). Also in 2018, within the scope of the Doha Book Fair, "Türkiye and Qatar from Ottoman to Present Political, Social and Cultural Relations Panel" organized by Yunus Emre Institute was held. Turkish Ambassador to Doha Fikret Özer, Doha Yunus Emre Institute Cultural Center Director Kürşat Koca, and Historian Dummar Bingöl participated in the program (YEE, 2018).

In 2019, on the occasion of the March 18 Martyrs' Week in Doha, the capital of Qatar, and the year's patrol of the adoption of the National Anthem, the Doha Directorate of Yunus Emre Institute organized the program titled "A Character Monument from Çanakkale to the National Anthem: Mehmet Akif". Prof. Dr. Yılmaz Daşcıoğlu from Sakarya University attended the program as a speaker. In the conference, Daşcıoğlu touched upon the important sections in Mehmet Akif Ersoy's life and stated that "Mehmet Akif has a character that can be shown as an example in terms of the consistency between his thought and his life" (YEE, 2016). Also in 2019, a conference on "Turkish-Qatari Relations from History to Today" organized by the Doha Directorate of Yunus Emre Institute was held at the Ibn-i Haldun Research Center in Doha, the capital of Qatar. Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakıf University Faculty Member Prof. Dr. Zekeriya Kurşun participated as a speaker. The adventure of Türkiye and Qatar's relations since the Ottoman Empire was discussed and he stated that the historical ties between the two countries were deep and solid (YEE, 2019).

On October 22, 2014, an agreement was signed in Ankara with Education Above All, TİKA and the Turkish Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD), one of Qatar's most important non-governmental organizations, on cooperation on educational support for children of Syrian Refugees living in Türkiye. At the ceremony, the signatures were signed at the meeting attended by Sheikha Moza, the President of the Education AboveAll Foundation and the mother of the Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Temim, and Numan Kurtulmuş, Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Türkiye (TİKA, 2014). On the day before the agreement, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's wife Emine Erdoğan, Sheikha Moza, who is also the mother of Qatari Emir Sheikh Temim, and their delegation visited two camps hosting more than 16,000 Syrian refugees in the Nizip district of Gaziantep (Anadolu Agency, 2014). The opening of the Turkish School, which was started by the directive of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in Doha, the

capital of Qatar, and completed within two years, was made by Presidential Spokesperson İbrahim Kalın. The school, which cost 20 million Turkish Liras, has a 10,000 square meter field and has a closed area of 2,500 square meters. Primary and secondary school students with a capacity of 250 students are receiving education. The school employs 15 teachers and 2 administrators, with a total of 22 employees. Speaking at the opening ceremony, İbrahim Kalın said, "This project, which crowns Turkish-Qatari relations, will further strengthen our relations and serve the children of our citizens living in Qatar and citizens of other countries." 2017

The school, which has been in educational activity since October, operates according to the norms of the Ministries of National Education of Türkiye and Qatar (Anadolu Agency, 2017). A cooperation agreement has been signed between Yunus Emre Institute, which carries out educational and cultural activities abroad in Türkiye, and the Qatar Armed Forces in the field of teaching Turkish to soldiers. Commenting at the ceremony, Turkish Ambassador to Doha Dr. Mehmet Mustafa Göksu stated that "the relations between Türkiye and Qatar are not only a bilateral relationship and the cooperation between the two sides in the field of Turkish language education reflects the development of these relations at all levels." In his statement, Yunus Emre Institute Director Kürşat Koca stated that "Doha Yunus Emre Institute continues to work to further the bilateral relations between Türkiye and Qatar, two friendly and brotherly countries, in the field of education and culture." With this agreement, it is stated that it will help to learn Turkish culture and Turkish (Hürriyet Newspaper, 2021). Yunus Emre Institute Director Dr. Selçuk Kürşat Koca spoke as a panelist at the Doha Book Fair, he said; "many works from Turkish literature have been translated into Arabic, Turkish students are making an intense effort to learn Arabic and Qatari students are trying hard to learn Turkish, and the reputation of Turkish TV series in the region has positively affected these relations". Mentioning the activities of the Yunus Emre Institute in the country, Koca also stated that "we are trying to ensure that the relations that have been ongoing since the Ottoman Empire continue even more firmly". (YEE, 2018).

Another important development in the field of education is that Qatar University and Maarif Foundation have signed a cooperation agreement with Qatar University in order to provide full scholarships to students from Türkiye. The agreement was signed by Qatar University Rector Hassan Al-Derham and Türkiye Maarif Foundation President Birol Akgün. Within the scope of the cooperation, 150 students will be sent from Türkiye with full scholarships to study in Qatar within five years. Qatar University will accept 30 students each year and will study undergraduate studies in English, Arabic, and English. The process of

determining the students who will go to education will be carried out by the Maarif Foundation (TMV, 2021). Since its establishment in 2015, until 2021, 1600 Qatari citizens have learned Turkish through the trainings organized at the Yunus Emre Center in Doha, the Turkish school in Qatar, Qatar University, the Qatar National Library, and the Qatar Women's Center. During the Covid-19 pandemic, which affected the whole world, it was ensured that more people were taught Turkish by turning the transition to distance education into an opportunity (Yeni İstiklal, 2021). Yunus Emre Institute in Doha offers many courses that help to promote Turkish culture in Qatar. It organizes various activities and events in the fields of tile, marbling, calligraphy, wire breaking, oil painting, and archery (Sputnik News, 2021).

There are partnerships between the think tanks of Türkiye and Qatar. These organizations work on the publication of books, researches, analyses, and analyses on the foreign policies of the two countries. The Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research (SETA) and the Center for Middle Eastern Studies (ORSAM) from Türkiye, and the Al Jazeera Research Center and the Center for Arab Research and Policy Research from Qatar have contributed to the studies (Alrantisi, 2021: 239-240).

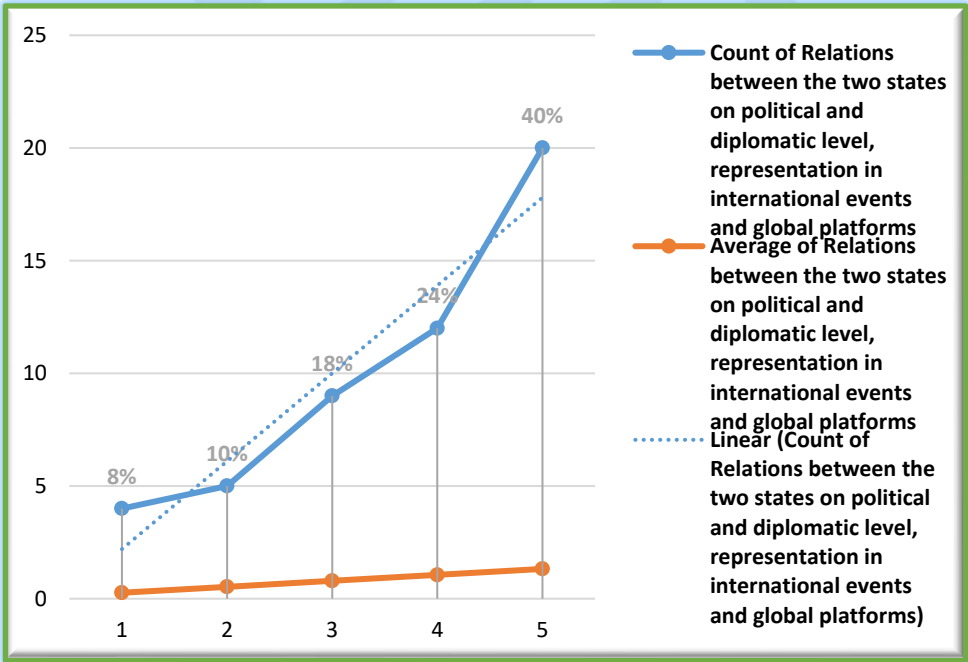
2.4. Türkiye's Political Relations with Qatar

The events that unfolded when 26-year-old Tunisian peddler Mohamed Bouazizi burned himself in the city of Buzid due to economic hardships turned into mass protests and quickly spread to many countries of the Middle East. This important event was known as the "Arab Spring", which will be considered a turning point in history. In the beginning, the reasons for the Arab Spring, were repressive governments, corrupt administrations, unemployment, poverty, and discontent brought about by economic reasons (Kibar Önder, 2021: 142). While the "Arab Spring" that started in the Middle East and North Africa spread all over the world, the important states in the region, especially Egypt and Arabia, were caught unprepared for the sudden crisis that emerged. Qatar, the small state of the region, has made attempts to turn the vacuum created due to the worrying situations of the two major states of the Middle East into its own advantage (Akkaya and Elrantisi, 2015: 15). Unlike the states in the Gulf and the Arab world, Qatar has significantly supported the libertarian and anti-regime movements despite the fact that its own form of state administration is a monarchy. Qatar stood by the demands for freedom from the peoples of the region and gave strong political support (Ermağan and Gümüş, 2014: 314). The Muslim Brotherhood, which led the opposition groups against Hosni Mubarak

in Egypt, provided economic, military, political, and media support to the Ennahda Movement in Tunisia, and the opposition elements in Syria and Libya (Arslan A., 2018: 81).

The research shows in a mutual survey between Qatari nationals living in Türkiye and Turkish national in Qatar, who both showed a wide space of investment in political sector. The majority of the interviewees saw in the political and diplomatic efforts the biggest space for enforcement of these efforts especially on the level of mediations in regional and international countries conflicts and disputes. These efforts were extensively cooperated in the recent U.S VS. Taliban peace talks that took place for years in Doha and later after the U.S forces withdrawal from Afghanistan when Türkiye and Qatar showed strong cooperation over operating the Kabul Airport and the hosting of the Taliban and U.S delegates till the peace negotiations were hold out.

Figure 5: Qatari and Turkish Interviewee Opinion with the Cooperation on Political Level - Source (Research Data)



Qatar-based Al Jazeera channel, one of the most important elements of the Arab Spring, played an important role in the demonstrations that started in the Middle East and North Africa reaching the whole geography and the world. Al Jazeera has a huge system with more than 60 countries, more than 400 journalists, and more than 3000 employees worldwide in its coverage area (Koçgündüz, 2012: 85). With this worldwide power, Al Jazeera has served the events that

took place from the first moment to the Arab geography and the whole world in a very comprehensive way and has also caused the course of the protests to accelerate (Özcan and Devran, 2018: 312). The channel has become the spokesperson of the people of the region during the Arab Spring demonstrations, so to speak. Due to the fact that the channel is based in Qatar and supported by the state, it has created significant problems and crises between the countries where the demonstrations took place and Qatar (Yetim, 2013: 377). However, another situation that caused Al Jazeera to be condemned and criticized during the Arab Spring process was that while he supported all the change movements in the Middle East and North Africa, he ignored the developments in neighboring Bahrain and Yemen (Küçükaşçı, 2019: 6). Qatar's new position in the Arab Spring can actually be seen as a complement to the policy it has been pursuing in its foreign policy since 1995, while from another point of view it shows that it has broken away from the main political axis (Yetim, 2013: 374). The country has assumed that the support it will provide to the new opposition forces developing in the Middle East geography close to and far from it will provide significant advantages to its presence in the region in the new political order that will be formed in the coming period. In addition, he predicted that the neighboring countries, which have been a risk for him for many years, would become ineffective. However, Qatar's decision to turn its position in the opposite direction by getting rid of the impartiality-oriented mediator stance it has maintained for many years has made its current position controversial, and will have to pay a price in the following period in return for the choices it has made due to its new policy (Akkaya and Elrantisi, 2015: 8).

Qatar, which displayed a pragmatist attitude in the Arab Spring, supported opposition groups in Egypt, Yemen, and Libya, causing it to diverge with the UAE and Saudi Arabia while taking a common stance with Türkiye. But Qatar has acted with the UAE and Saudi Arabia while standing up to Iran in the events in Yemen and Bahrain. On the Syrian issue, it again took a position with Türkiye and Saudi Arabia, but later disagreed with Saudi Arabia. It has a diametrically opposed attitude to Iran (Yıldırım, 2021: 3). Türkiye, on the other hand, established important relations with the states in the geography covering the hinterland of the Ottoman Empire, with which it had historical ties in the Middle East and North Africa before the Arab Spring, with the policy of "Zero Problems", made commercial agreements and made important initiatives in order to foster peace in the region. With the emergence of the Arab Spring, Türkiye initially tried to keep itself on the balancing side by wanting to keep its relations with the current administrations in the region good (Yıldırım F., 2021: 15). The new developments that emerged with the Arab Spring were not something Türkiye was prepared

for. Türkiye also had no basis and no historical experience against the emerging situations. Türkiye's view of the Arab Spring has gradually become evident in connection with the developments in the region (Gözen, 2011: 13). However, after a while, Türkiye could no longer remain indifferent to the calls for democracy, freedom, and reform coming from the Middle East geography and started to support the anti-regime popular movements in the region (Akcan and Yetim, 2020: 9). With the Arab Spring, it has caused the balances between Türkiye, Iran, the Gulf, and other Arab states to change completely. One of the most vital events for Türkiye was the spread of the Arab Spring to Syria, which is its longest border neighbor. The Syrian regime's violent intervention in the opposition protests that started in Syria after a while caused Türkiye to intervene as a party to the process (Oktav, 2013: 75). With the new conditions that emerged in the Arab Spring and Türkiye's new policy, its relations with the Gulf countries have changed in parallel. In this context, the perception of Türkiye in the Gulf countries has also changed significantly. With the UAE and Saudi Arabia bloc, which initially stood against the Arab Spring process, turning its view of Türkiye to a negative course, they supported and worked together with the groups that are against Türkiye in all regions where Türkiye has contact (Akcan and Yetim, 2020: 6). As Türkiye's involvement in the Arab Spring expanded, it was accused of "neo-Ottomanism" by the countries of the region and as a result caused new problems between it and many Arab states (Mehmed, 2020: 82). The biggest problem with the UAE and Saudi Arabia during this period was their support for the military coup against the Muslim Brotherhood regime in Egypt in 2013. Türkiye's view of the UAE and Saudi Arabia, which supported the military coup, has changed (Telci, 2021: 240).

Again, the negative change in the attitudes of these countries towards Türkiye has started to become more evident (Akcan and Yetim, 2020:7). Until 2010, although the relations between Türkiye and Qatar were shaped mostly on official visits, economy and low-level military issues, it was seen that the two states carried out a similar foreign policy regarding the important issues occurring in the Middle East geography. Until the beginning of the Arab Spring, the two countries similarly shaped their foreign policies according to soft power elements. In this context, public diplomacy-oriented studies, leading activities in the field of mediation, and developing relations with other states in the regions in economic fields show the similarities of Türkiye and Qatar's foreign policies in the regional processes (Kımk, 2022: 29).

As a result of the new conditions and balances brought about by the Arab Spring, it has led to the emergence of new parties in the Middle East. Together with the new dynamics in the Middle East geography of Türkiye and Qatar, the expectations and objectives of the foreign

policies of the two countries have caused a significant similarity. This similarity has led to the closer rapprochement of the two countries and the deepening of their relations (Merçan A., 2021: 50).

With the onset of the Arab Spring, Türkiye and Qatar supported the demands for reform demanded by the peoples of Libya, Egypt, and Syria in the Middle East and North Africa, and supported the anti-regime opposition groups in these countries. The two countries have supported the Ennahda Movement in Tunisia, the elected Muslim Brotherhood Movement in Egypt by sending Hosni Mubarak, opposition groups in Syria, and the legitimate Tripoli Government in Libya (Akcan and Yetim, 2020: 10). On the opposite side of Türkiye and Qatar, the UAE and Saudi Arabia have been at the forefront who want the current order before the Arab Spring to continue where it left off. In 2013, the two countries formed a counter-revolutionary movement and helped to remove Mohamed Morsi from power in Egypt through a coup. (Arslan A., 2018: 82). They supported the Tobruk government against the legitimate Tripoli government in Libya. In Syria, they supported different opposition groups from Türkiye and Qatar (Arslan A., 2018: 77). In the course of the process, the two countries stood by the peoples of the region and took a stance supporting their demands for democracy and freedom, and a new alliance consisting of Türkiye and Qatar emerged (Ataman and Akdoğan, 2014: 211). The emerging regional conditions have paved the way for the two countries to engage in an active policy in order to achieve similar goals. The new conditions that have emerged in the Middle East geography have prepared the ground for Türkiye and Qatar to strategically align their relations. The Arab Spring process has formed the basis of the partnerships and multidimensional collaborations that the two countries will establish in many fields in the future (Alrantisi, 2021: 175).

The Arab Spring that began in Tunisia in 2011 and could end the 30-year rule of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. Mohammed Morsi, who was from the Muslim Brotherhood Movement, became the first elected President of Egypt by receiving 51% of the votes in the elections (Kurt Sariaslan, 2019: 185). During the short period of Egyptian democracy experience, U.S, Türkiye, and Qatar, supported the democratic transit process in the country and the elected President Mohammed Morsi. Important countries such as Germany, France, and Russia have distanced themselves from an Islamic political formation such as the Muslim Brotherhood (Anadolu Agency, 2017). With the beginning of the demonstrations in Tahrir Square on January 25 in Egypt, Türkiye stood on the side of the Egyptian people. President Hosni Mubarak has been warned not to respond violently to peaceful demonstrations by the

people. Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan openly called on the Egyptian government to relinquish power at his party's parliamentary group meeting on February 1 (Kurt Sariaslan, 2019: 185). After Hosni Mubarak left power, Türkiye more clearly contributed to the democratization process in Egypt (Gözen, 2011:8). The first official visit to the administration of Mohammed Morsi was made at the highest level from Türkiye, when the president Erdoğan visited him. On March 3, 2011, a delegation headed by President Abdullah Gül and Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu visited Egypt and held many important meetings. Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan paid an official visit to Egypt on 12 September 2011. He held important meetings with the country's leading politicians, intellectuals, opinion leaders, and religious representatives. Prime Minister Erdoğan made his second visit after the revolution in Egypt on November 17, 2012. The second meeting of the Türkiye-Egypt High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council, chaired by the prime ministers of the two countries, was held in Cairo and 27 agreements were signed. It can be described as the golden period of Türkiye-Egypt relations in this process (Kurt Sariaslan, 2019: 183). Türkiye and Qatar, the two countries that stood by and supported Egypt during the Arab Spring process, promised economic and diplomatic assistance to Mohamed Morsi. Türkiye has announced that it will provide more than 2 billion in financial aid to Egypt. Of this, \$1 billion was deposited in the account of the Central Bank of Egypt, and the other \$1 billion was intended to be used for infrastructure investments. The trade volume between Türkiye and Egypt increased to 5 billion dollars in 2012 (President and Pala, 2020: 73). Qatar, on the other hand, gave Egypt the financial aid of \$ 3.7 billion it promised in 2012. Qatar also sent \$500 million of its \$2 billion financial aid pledge to Egypt on Aug. 23. On September 6, 2012, Qatar announced that the Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad, would invest a total of \$ 18 billion in five years in order to recover and develop the Egyptian economy in an agreement with Egypt (Yetim, 2013: 374).

The regional repercussions of the uprisings against the current administrations with the protests that started in the Arab countries in the Middle East actually stemmed from the effect of the demonstrations in Egypt. The change of power in Egypt, one of the dominant actors in the region, has created a situation that the states in the same administrative form will not be pleased with. (Benli Altunişik, 2013: 76). The UAE and Saudi Arabia, disturbed by the current situation emerging in Egypt, have stood against the popular revolution in Egypt. The two countries have developed opposing policies in order to wear down the Morsi government (Mehmed, 2020: 88). The UAE and Saudi Arabia supported the coup both financially and politically until the end because they were afraid that the influence of the Muslim Brotherhood

in Egypt would spread to their own countries (Telci, 2014: 193). Mohammed Morsi failed to fulfill the expectations of the people while trying to put the democracy in Egypt back on track. (Çelikcan and Cavlak, 2021: 602). As protests by opposition supporters who had gathered against the government of Mohamed Morsi continued in Egypt on June 30, 2013, the Egyptian army asked the regime of Mohamed Morsi and the demonstrators to reach an agreement. Otherwise, he declared that the army would intervene in the events. With the end of the period recognized by the Egyptian army, Abdulfattah Al-Sisi, who became the Chief of the General Staff, carried out the coup on July 3 and took over the power of Mohamed Morsi, the first elected President in Egyptian history. The military junta also detained Mohammed Morsi and brought him to the military barracks (Telci, 2014: 193). The date of July 3, 2013 was recorded in history as a milestone in the Middle East. The impact of the Arab Spring, which began in 2011 with the coup in Egypt, was broken and became the most important development that reversed all balances. After the coup in Egypt with support from the UAE and Saudi Arabia and other allied countries, Türkiye and Qatar emerged as counter alliance and have become clearer (Akcan and Yetim, 2020: 11). With the coup, Turkish-Egyptian relations have diverged in different tracks. Türkiye has shown the harshest attitude to the coup in the international arena. Türkiye refused to recognize the Abdulfattah Al-sisi government and the relationship between the two countries remained in crisis (Çelikcan and Cavlak, 2021: 602). Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has said that Al-sisi, the Chief of General Staff, has committed the crime of massacre in Egypt (Mehmed, 2020: 83). Due to Türkiye's stance against the coup, Egypt took a hostile attitude towards Türkiye and declared the Turkish ambassador as persona non grata. In response to this attitude of Egypt, it has reduced the level of relations in Türkiye based on the ability (Özkan, 2014: 20).

Sheikh Hamad, who has been in power in Qatar since 1996, handed over the administration to his son Sheikh Tamim on June 25, 2013. The reason for this sudden development is seen as the fact that the opposition against Mohammed Morsi in Egypt has reached a level that would end his power and that he wants to be affected in the least way by the crisis situation that would be experienced in the post-Mohammed Morsi period. The change of governance in Egypt is seen as the first phase of a period of differentiation in Qatar's foreign policy (Alrantisi, 2021:207). After Al-sisi's seizure of power in Egypt following the coup on July 3, the Chief of Staff conveyed a message of congratulations to Adel Mansour, the interim president who formed the government of the Emirate of Qatar. Qatar's Al Jazeera channel has softened its political tone against Al-sisi. However, Al Jazeera did not hesitate to continue its

publications in favor of the Muslim Brotherhood Movement and against Al-sisi (Akkaya and Elrantisi, 2015: 15). Qatar has not taken steps against Egypt because it is a small country and has not created a space for itself because it is a small country and the neighboring countries in the Gulf have put significant pressure on it. Contrary to Türkiye's harsh attitude, it seemed to have taken a softer position in its wool and strategically withdrawn due to the aggressive attitude of its neighbors (Alrantisi, 2021: 205). Qatar's mild approach to the new government in Egypt has not helped. The Egyptian government wanted to return the \$2 billion aid provided by Qatar and did not accept Qatar's initiative to increase the number of flights with Egypt. Egypt arrested the journalists of Al Jazeera in Cairo and this situation brought to the fore the problems in the relations between the two countries (Yetim, 2014: 341). The continuation of Qatar's connection with the Muslim Brotherhood has led to the continuation of problematic relations between the Al-sisi administration in Egypt and Qatar (Yıldırım F., 2021:15).

Qatar's loss of influence in the region as a result of the coup in Egypt and the problems it experienced with other Gulf countries have been effective factors in the process of entering into an important rapprochement with Türkiye. In Türkiye, with the removal of the Muslim Brotherhood Movement from the Egyptian administration after the coup like Qatar, it was aimed to be isolated by the states that wanted to maintain the order that continued before the Arab Spring in the Middle East. As a result of this situation that emerged in Türkiye, it caused it to pay more attention to its relations with Qatar (Üçağaç, 2016: 230). After Mohammed Morsi's removal from power with the coup, Türkiye and Qatar became a milestone in their relations, and the two countries entered a period in which they would make a destiny partnership as well as rapprochement. Before the Arab Spring, there was a close network of relations between Türkiye, Syria, and Qatar. On September 4, 2008, a meeting called "Dialogue for Stability" was held in Damascus, the capital of Syria, with the participation of Türkiye, Qatar, and France. The main topic of the meeting was how to ensure stability, peace, and tranquility in the Middle East geography. French President Nikolay Sarkozy, President of Syria attended the summit.

Bashar al-Assad, Emir of Qatar Sheikh Hamad, Prime Minister of Türkiye Recep Tayyip Erdoğan attended (Tan and., 2012: 70). At the summit, the conditions under which peace talks between Syria and Israel could be held with the mediation of Türkiye were to be held, nuclear studies and issues related to the newly formed government in Lebanon after sectarian conflicts (Voice of America, 2010). In 2010, Türkiye, Syria and Qatar met at the summit in Istanbul. The subject of the meeting was the unlawful settlement policies of Israel in Palestine

and the attacks on Palestine by 3 countries condemned in a joint statement (Alrantisi, 2021: 199). After the beginning of the Arab Spring, all the positive atmosphere in the region between Türkiye, Syria and Qatar have reversed. Following the events that started on March 17, 2011 in the city of Daraa in southern Syria, the Assad administration has been concerned with the transition to a multi-party political system in order not to lose their 40-year-old power in Syria.

It has made token reforms, including the enactment of the law, the granting of a general amnesty for political criminals, and the lifting of the 48-year-old state of emergency. However, on the other hand, his attempt to suppress the protests in the country with military force caused the death of many people. The fierce attitude of the Syrian army has also frustrated all the reform efforts carried out and the events have increased to unstoppable dimensions (Deniz, 2013: 326). After the events that started in Syria, Türkiye and Qatar told the Assad regime not to use violence against the people and that it should meet democratic demands. It was observed that Türkiye and Qatar did not take a stance against the regime until the Assad administration violently suppressed the protests (Alrantisi, 2021: 201). In the aftermath of the violence, Türkiye and Qatar have severed all diplomatic and political relations with the Syrian government. The two countries have been completely opposed to the Assad regime because they believe that the Assad regime will not carry out the reforms. As legitimate representatives of the Syrian people, they started to address the Syrian opposition (Aras and Pala, 2015: 290). There were two countries that defended the end of Bashar al-Assad regime, it should not be included in any plan for the future of the country, and that it has completely lost its legitimacy. Those states were: from Arab states, it was Qatar and the other was Türkiye (Akkaya and Elrantisi, 2015: 18).

Türkiye initially observed a cautious policy in the demonstrations that started with the Arab Spring in Syria and was content to monitor the developments (Dersan Orhan, 2013: 25). The reason for this situation was aware that the consequences of the Arab Spring in Syria would leave Türkiye in a difficult position in terms of both regional and international policies. At the beginning of the events, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan stated that Bashar al-Assad, with whom he had a close relationship, urgently needed reforms, and Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu held constant talks with Damascus and tried to end the events before they got out of control. He has held many meetings with Bashar al-Assad from the Turkish side in order to eliminate the problems (Miş, 2012: 273). The Syrian State's disregard for warnings, its excessive use of force in the protests, and the civil war that emerged after ignoring the demands of the opposition led to a situation that is not in Türkiye's foreign policy codes. There has been

a change in Türkiye's principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other states. Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said that despite all the diplomatic initiatives made regarding the Syrian issue, with the confusion and problems continuing, "Syria is our internal issue, we have to do what is necessary."

Türkiye has been an active player in Syrian politics. Türkiye has now made it clear that it would take an effective stance in determining the course of events in Syria (Oktav, 2013: 74). The Arab League meeting, which was held under the title of Syria, froze the relations between the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Qatar Sheikh Jassim and the Secretary General of the Arab League Nabil with the regime of Bashar al-Assad due to Syria's violation of the functioning of the Arab League. They announced that if the deaths and rights violations from the civilian population continue, the current situation would be taken to all international organizations such as the United Nations and economic and political sanctions would be applied to the Syrian regime. The Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad, called on all Arab states to sever all relations with Syria and to recall their ambassadors (Ataman, 2012: 25). Qatar was again the first state to close its embassy in Syria and ensured the establishment of a commission on the Syrian problem while the Arab League was holding its presidency (Görgülü, 2017: 8). In August 2011, Qatar tried to bring together Syrian dissidents abroad in an organized manner. In this context, under the leadership of Qatar, groups that are opposed to the Assad regime but have a dispersed structure have been brought together under the name of the "Syrian National Council". The Council wanted to organize and strengthen many groups living outside Syria, such as businessmen and religious representatives. Qatar has also contributed politically, economically, and logistically to the anti-Assad groups in Syria. Qatar has seen that the Syrian opposition, which it has organized abroad, has been insufficient. For this reason, as the current situation and balances inside Syria change, it has made efforts to establish contact with the groups on the ground. The reason for this is that the opposition outside Syria has seen that it has no effect on the ground (Akkaya and Elrantisi, 2015: 7). At the beginning of 2011, when the events in Syria turned into civil war, the Gulf countries divided labor between them in order to overthrow the regime of Bashar al-Assad. Saudi Arabia has supplied weapons to groups opposed to the regime of Bashar al-Assad, Kuwait has organized financial aid processes, and Qatar has provided political and economic support. UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt have experienced a split with Qatar after the coup d'état. This situation has been reflected in the Syrian field and since 2013 they have supported different opposition parties that are competing among themselves. In the actual situation that has arisen, Türkiye and Qatar has been on one

side, while the UAE and Saudi Arabia have supported different opposition groups on the other. Over time, the meetings organized to unite the opposition groups under a single roof brought about more separation due to the countries that support different groups (Görgülü, 2017: 8).

As we mentioned above, despite the joint efforts of Türkiye, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia on the Syrian issue, Saudi Arabia has pursued a different policy from Türkiye and Qatar on many issues since 2013. Qatar and Saudi Arabia oppose each other in their foreign policy towards Syria. At the meeting held in Istanbul in 2013, the Syrian National Council changed its administration with the election held. Ahmed Jarba, backed by Saudi Arabia, was the candidate supported by Qatar. He was elected as the head of the National Coalition (Şen, 2013: 66). He has tried to get people close to him to take over the leadership of the groups. Saudi Arabia achieved what it wanted here and took a leading position in the organization of the opposition in Syria. The reflection of the emerging situation was seen with the establishment of the "Islamic Front", which is disconnected from Türkiye and Qatar, under the leadership of Saudi Arabia, to fight the Bashar Assad regime. (Ataman and Akdoğan, 2014: 217). From 2011 to 2016, Türkiye and Qatar prioritized humanitarian concerns in the region. In 2015, Russia's involvement in the Syrian arena and its support of the regime of Bashar al-Assad turned the needle of the war towards Syria. This situation has led to a decrease in Qatar's influence on the Syrian arena. After 2016, Türkiye reflected its military power on the field as well as humanitarian aid. It intervened in the elements that threatened its national security with its own military elements on the ground. Accordingly, Türkiye, together with the armed opposition elements close to it in Syria, carried out Operation Euphrates Shield in 2017, Operation Olive Branch against the Afrin region in 2018, and Operation Peace Spring in 2019 (Kurt Sariaslan, 2019: 62). In 2016, Syria, Russia, and Iran besieged Aleppo, which is considered the most important stronghold of Syrian opposition groups, and hundreds of thousands of civilians remained in the death circle. Türkiye has taken initiatives with Russia and Iran regarding this situation within the scope of the evacuation of civilians. During his visit to Türkiye, the Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Tamim, discussed with President Tayyip Erdoğan the evacuation of the civilian population living in Aleppo and the developments that can be made in this regard. They stated that the two countries agreed on the evacuation of the civilian population in Aleppo and that their cooperation on the Syrian issue continued from the very beginning (Üçağaç and Akdoğan, 2017: 267). During Operation Peace Spring in 2019, Qatar was the only country in the Middle East to support Türkiye. Qatar's ambassador to Ankara stated that it "has become inevitable due to its failure to listen to its warnings against terrorist groups." Qatari Foreign

Minister Abdul-Rahman said that "Türkiye cannot be patient with threats until it reaches its territory" and added that "Türkiye warned against armed groups fighting it, but no one listened to it." Yousef Al-Khater, a member of the Qatari Shura Council, told Russia's Sputnik News Agency that "Syria's borders with Türkiye have become insecure because they are not protected from the infiltration of terrorists by Syria or prevent them from staying on its territory." For these reasons, he stated that Türkiye's operation was based on legitimate grounds. All Qatari authorities have shown their support for Türkiye's operation in Syria. In his statement, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu stated that "the Qatari government is the party that provided support for the establishment of the safe zone, and he thanked Qatar for the support it provided during the Peace Spring process" (Sağıncı and Aras, 2020: 49). Egypt invited the Arab League to a meeting in October 2019 with the agenda of Operation Peace Spring. At the meeting, which was attended by only 10 of the 22 Arab countries, the members of the Arab League described Türkiye's operation as a "hostile attitude" and decided to condemn it against Türkiye. Qatar, on the other hand, did not agree with this decision, becoming the only country that supported Türkiye (Anadolu Agency, 2019). The Arab Spring protests that started in Tunisia in December 2011 and deeply affected the entire Middle East spread to Libya (Kökyay, 2020: 2511). Libyan Leader Muammar Gaddafi resorted to strict measures to put an end to the demonstrations against him and the arrest of lawyer Fethi Terbil, who stood against the regime on February 15, led to the start of the civil war in Libya (Keskin, 2013: 131).

The conflict that began in Libya ended in October with the death of Muammar Gaddafi, Libya's ruler for 42 years. With the anti-regime protests that started in Libya, the neutrality policy pursued by Qatar since 1996 has changed in the opposite direction. Qatar has openly supported the coalition formed by NATO in Libya and has intervened militarily in the process. He played an active role in the establishment of a no-fly zone in Libya. Qatar's Special Forces Corps has supplied weapons to opposition parties and provided them with military training. The Arab state was the first to support the National Transitional Government established in Libya after Gaddafi (Ermağan and Gümüş, 2014: 312). When the opposition groups hung their victory flags on Gaddafi's palace after capturing Tripoli, they also hoisted Qatar's flag with them. After the capture of Tripoli by the opposition, many tribes and groups in Libya paid a thank-you visit to the Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad, in the capital Doha (President, 2012: 45).

Türkiye, on the other hand, opposed the intervention in Libya in the first place, and the concern was that Libya, like Iraq, could be divided. However, with the increasing support of the West to the opposition groups, the Provisional National Council in Türkiye has been

recognized. The main reason for Türkiye's move was its significant investments in Libya and commercial concerns (Oktav, 2013: 73). Türkiye has been involved in the military operation that started in Libya in the background and has been involved in the process in order to prevent harm to the civilian population and to ensure the control of the arms embargo applied. Türkiye has again remained in the process within the scope of providing assistance to civilians and has tried to stop the conflicts. During the struggle between the parties, Türkiye was the only country that could communicate. However, after Muammar Gaddafi was confirmed to leave power, he had to draw a new course for himself in Türkiye. Türkiye has provided \$300 million in support to the National Transitional Government, which it recognizes as Libya's representative, to overcome the problems experienced in Libya (Bölme, Uluştas, Özhan, and Küçükkeleş, 2011: 47). With the end of Muammar Gaddafi's rule in Libya, Türkiye and Qatar have tended to increase their influence in this region. Türkiye has been welcomed by the people because of its historical ties with Libya and its more careful behavior in the relations it has established (Turgut, 2015: 32). After the overthrow of Muammar Gaddafi in 2011, civil war began in Libya as a result of disagreements over the administration. In 2014, the country was divided into two separate regions. The UAE and Egypt have jointly supported the Tobruk-based regime of Khalifa Haftar. France, an influential power in Africa, and Arabia, which intervened more indirectly, again supported Khalifa Haftar. Türkiye, Qatar, and Italy stood in the opposite bloc of these forces and provided military and logistical assistance to the Tripoli-based Government of National Accord (GNA), which it recognizes at the United Nations (Kümeç, 2020: 255).

In April 2019, Tobruk-based Khalifa Haftar and his supporters launched a large-scale military operation against the Tripoli-based GNA for allegedly collaborating with "terrorist organizations" and providing them with shelter. While a small number of states, especially Türkiye and Qatar, supported a government recognized by the UN and international institutions, Khalifa Haftar was supported by Russia, France, Arabia, the UAE, and Egypt in political, economic and military matters despite the fact that he had no legitimacy (Turgut, 2015: 33). The Tobruk-based Khalifa Haftar administration has taken over the eastern part of the country, along with a large part of the country's territory, the majority of which is desert. The legitimate GNA is in conflict with DAESH, which is struggling with Khalifa Haftar on the one hand and trying to become effective by taking advantage of the lack of authority in the country on the other hand (Düzsöz, 2021: 312). However, despite the support that Khalifa Haftar received from so many major powers, he could not make much progress against the GNA supported by Türkiye and Qatar, and could not capture the capital Tripoli and its surroundings, which would

be considered only a small part of the country. The GNA supported by Türkiye and Qatar repelled all attacks, and the expectations of Khalifa Haftar and other supporting states have been dashed. It ensured its legitimacy with the GNA being able to protect the capital Tripoli. Thanks to the provision of military, training, and equipment to the GNA of Türkiye and Qatar, it has both protected the administration and thus enabled it to express its presence effectively in the international arena. (Cakir, 2021: 45) Due to Türkiye's support for the legitimate Tripoli Government in Libya and its efforts, Saudi Arabia and the UAE have caused the Arab League to issue a condemnation resolution against Türkiye (Karaduman and Ataman, 2020: 12).

On 18 August 2020, the GNA announced a trilateral military agreement with Qatar and Türkiye, the legitimate administration in Libya. The statement said that an agreement was made for the creation of a military institute for the purpose of military training. With the agreement, Türkiye and Qatar will take care of the training of officers in military schools in Libya, and military advisors will be sent to the Qatari army (Deutsche Welle, 2020). Türkiye, Qatar, and Libya signed a cooperation agreement in the fields of education, counter-terrorism, and anti-smuggling in October 2020. The important aspect of the model of Türkiye's military cooperation with Qatar in Libya has been the transfer of this cooperation to third countries. Türkiye and Qatar have succeeded in changing the status quo in Libya, which is a third country, in line with their strategic goals in line with their own interests (Çakır, 2021: 52).

The failed coup attempt in Türkiye on July 15, 2016, was one of the events that showed how fundamental and important the relations between Türkiye and Qatar were. In the face of the coup, Qatar has shown an uncompromising stance on Türkiye's side from the first moment (Üçağaç and Akdoğan, 2017: 268). Just at the beginning of the failed coup attempt, the Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Tamim, condemned the coup. Sheikh Temim was the first head of state to condemn the coup and declare that he stood by Türkiye. Sheikh Temim had a telephone conversation with President Tayyip Erdoğan to show his support for the Turkish state and people. He stated that he would stand by Türkiye regarding all the processes related to the July 15 coup. Emir Temim appreciated the courage shown by the Turkish nation on the night of the coup and said that all Qataris were together with Türkiye (Al-Turk, 2020: 70). Qatar was the only state in the Gulf region that initially supported Türkiye (Karataş, 2021: 239). On the night of the failed coup, Salim bin Mubarak Shafi, Qatar's Ambassador to Ankara, said that his country had established a center to monitor the developments in Türkiye and shared the developing situations in Istanbul and Ankara with the Qatari Ministry of Foreign Affairs for forty hours (Alrantisi, 2021: 189). In the statement made by Qatar's Ambassador to Ankara after

the coup, he said that he had strategic and strong relations with the Republic of Türkiye and said, "We were among the first countries to react after the coup attempt." The Minister also stated that "As Qatar, we do not see any political or economic risk to invest in Türkiye" (Üçağaç and Akdoğan, 2017: 267). The first official foreign official to Türkiye after the failed coup attempt was Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman al-Thani, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Qatar, who paid an official visit to Ankara on July 30 (Mercan A., 2021: 62).

Due to the important support given by Qatar, President Erdoğan stated the support and importance of Qatar by making a statement in a television program he participated in, "The Emir of Qatar did not call once, he called me repeatedly, he called me, he constantly called our Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, he said what is the situation of the developments and we are with you at all times, whatever falls on us, we are with you, and today he sent the Minister of Foreign Affairs, he came with some messages, we had a meeting with them" (TCCB, 2016). President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has again criticized the attitude of the world public opinion toward the July 15 coup attempt on many platforms, and he has always expressed his satisfaction, especially with the support shown to them by the Emirate of Qatar (BBC Turkish, 2016). In an interview with Qatar's Al-Arab newspaper, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said that the relations between Türkiye and Qatar are getting stronger every day and said, "We cannot forget the solidarity and support that Qatar displayed during and after the coup attempt. Qatar has shown that it is a friend of the black day" (Anadolu Agency, 2017).

On July 19, a meeting organized by the Turkish Community, Doha Diplomacy Club, Commercial Bank of Qatar, and the Qatari Ministry of Foreign Affairs was held in Doha, the capital of Qatar, with a large number of Qataris and people of different nationalities living in Qatar to protest the failed coup attempt of July 15 in Türkiye. At the meeting, the Turkish participants thanked the support that Qatar has given with all its institutions and people from the first moment and for the unity and solidarity they have shown. In the speeches made at the meeting, Türkiye was given full support against the failed coup attempt and thanked the Qatari authorities and the Qatari people (Akşam Newspaper, 2016).

Türkiye's Ambassador to Qatar Ahmet Demirok thanked the Qatari leadership and people in an interview with AFP news agency and said, "We have a very strong relationship with Qatar. There is no problem with Qatar in our history. There are cultural and political affinities. The people of the two countries are very close to each other and the relations between our leaders are excellent" (BBC Turkish, 2016). Looking at the reactions against the coup in

the Qatari media, the Al-Sharq newspaper operating in Qatar expressed the success of the Turkish people who took to the streets with the coup attempt in Türkiye in its July 17 edition by using the headline "And Türkiye Won" (BBC Turkish, 2016).

Another important statement in the context of Qatar's support for Türkiye was made by Nawaf Hemoud Maghamis, the leader of the Shammar tribe, one of the important tribes in the Middle East. "Our tribe has always been on the side of the Ottomans and the Turks since the 1700s, including the victory of Kut al-Amare, and will continue to be so until the end," he said in a statement. Türkiye is the leader not only of the Middle East but also of the Islamic world. I would like to express my gratitude to Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and our Emir Sheikh Temim for bringing these two countries and nations together again. Our prayers are for Türkiye and the Turkish people" and these statements show that the sincere relations established by the two states have come to life on strong ground and thus spread to the peoples (Üçağaç and Akdoğan, 2017: 268).

2.4.1. State-Institutions-Level Relations

Qatar has shown that it is on Türkiye's side without hesitation in every field from Sheikh Tamim to all state levels, institutions, media, and civil society organizations. The two countries have taken their relations to a higher level with the solidarity they have shown in this process.

2.4.2. The Supreme Strategic Committee



Figure 3 Strategic committee meeting

Source: Turkish Embassy in Doha

The Supreme Strategic Committee mechanism established in 2014, represents the highest institutional mechanism between strategic partners and brotherly countries Türkiye and

Qatar. The committee is co-chaired by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan President of the Republic of Türkiye and Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, Amir of the State of Qatar, where all aspects of the bilateral relations are discussed. Within the framework of the Supreme Strategic Committee mechanism, 83 documents were signed in various fields. The meeting is conducted yearly in Qatar and Türkiye. (Doha Embassy). The aim of the committee is to advance the partnership in the areas of security, political, military, economic, investment, development, cultural, and other fields, achieving the common interests of the two countries and peoples.

In 2014, the Supreme Strategic Committee between Qatar and Türkiye was created. Its inaugural meeting was held in Doha in December 2015. It has convened seven sessions since it was founded. The Qatari-Turkish Strategic Committee is a forum for discussion of ways to advance bilateral relations at many levels of collaboration, particularly in the domains of the economy, investment, industry, defense, and security. Between 2016 and 2020, the volume of trade exchange between Qatar and Türkiye increased by more than 100% as a result of the agreements reached by the Supreme Strategic Committee. In this regard, the two countries continue to cooperate to strengthen local, regional, and international efforts to uphold world peace and security, fight terrorism, and mediate disputes peacefully. Additionally, they collaborate within the framework of the Asia Cooperation Dialogue, call for cooperation through the hosting of the third summit by the State of Qatar, and enhance their cooperation, solidarity, and coordination within international and regional organizations such as the United Nations (UN) and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). The two leaders have continued their efforts to improve coordination and collaboration in combating terrorism in a way that represents their shared principles drawn from international law. The two leaders are determined and united in their fight against all forms and manifestations of terrorism. .(The Peninsula).

2.4.3. Ideologies in the Middle East and GCC Countries

It is possible to say that political ideologies in the Middle East have a dynamic adventure in terms of their effects on the domestic and foreign policies of states. In addition to the currents that emerged with the reaction against colonialism, it is seen that there are new searches in the post-colonial period and alternative intellectual movements have occurred. It is clear that the ideologies of Arab nationalism and Islamism in the Middle East after the Second World War had a great impact on the entire region (Browsers, 2009: 2). It should also be noted that these two ideological approaches, which are also competing with each other, each have different

wings (Browsers, 2009: 21). Ideologies such as Arab nationalism and socialism, in which secular tendencies are also associated, dominated the political sphere in the Arab world throughout the 1950-60s (Edwards, 2011: 69). In the face of the changing regional structure after the First World War and the ideological base of the newly established nation states on a secular, authoritarian and nationalist basis, a process emerged in which Islamist movements gained momentum after 1960 (Dağ, 2019: 17). The ideologies of Arab nationalism, Islamism, Wahhabism and the Islamic Revolution in Iran, which include the prominent ideology of Baathism and Pan-Arabism in the Middle East, have naturally caused other actors to exhibit protectionist behaviors due to their aggressive and expansionist claims about the regional order. Ideologies used by elites as an important tool in targeting rival states' regime legitimacy were naturally seen by states as a threat to national security. In this context, the Gulf countries also saw revolutionary ideological movements (Nasserism, Ikhwan, Communism, Baathism and Islamic Revolution/Shia expansionism in Iran) as a threat to their national security (Wehrey, 2014: 16). One of the most important parameters of regime security for Gulf monarchies is not to problematize regime legitimacy. Ideologies that produce alternative answers to the question "What is the source of the regime's legitimacy?" have therefore been described as a high-level security problem by the Gulf countries. Therefore, the reason why the Gulf countries are disturbed by the revolutionary ideologies effective in the region mentioned above stems from the fact that they pose a direct threat to the regime's legitimacy and internal political stability (Legrenzi and Gause, 2016: 312).

In this regard, it is essential to look at the reflections of Nasser's ideology of Arab nationalism, the Islamic Revolution in Iran, and the Muslim Brotherhood in the Gulf region, which are among the ideologies that directly challenged the Gulf countries governed by the authoritarian monarchy in the historical process. Under the charismatic leadership of Gamal Abdel Nasser, Arab nationalism, which rose in the 1950s and 1960s, developed in response to Israel and Western colonialism (Edwards and Hinchcliffe, 2008: 14). However, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries considered Nasser's ideology of Arab nationalism and his attempt to become a regional hegemon by leaning on this ideology as a threat (Lee, 2014: 223). In the following years, as can be seen in the case of Ayatollah Khomeini, Nasser developed a policy that directly targeted the stability of the Riyadh administration. The heavy defeat against Israel in 1967 brought with it the decline of Nasser and Arab nationalism, while Saudi Arabia and the Gulf were relieved of their hand in regional competition (Davidson, 2013: 93).

The Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979 emerged as one of the most serious challenges faced by the Gulf countries on the ideological plane. The goals of the Khomeini-led revolution and its actions on the ground have posed far-reaching threats to the Gulf states with Shia minorities. Especially since Bahrain, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia have a significant Shia population, demonstrations have taken place in these countries with the wave of revolution. Because the Velayet-i Fakhri institution enabled Khomeini as a religious authority to establish influence beyond the national borders of Iran. Iran's regional policy based on the strategy of exporting revolution has aimed to spread Iranian influence, starting from nearby geographies, and has produced concrete results, especially in the Gulf countries. The effects of the Islamic revolution have been seen in the coup attempt in Bahrain, the bomb attack in Kuwait, and the internal turmoil in the eastern provinces of Saudi Arabia, especially the direct targeting of the legitimacy of the Saudi regime (Ulrichsen, 2015: 40).

The sectarian tension that escalated in the region with the Islamic Revolution in Iran, the fluctuation in the political and social structure in Iraq after the US intervention (2003), the Israel-Hezbollah conflict (2006), and the ongoing civil war in Syria (2011-) revealed the problem of polarization in the Middle East over sectarianism (Wehrey, 2017: 3-5). Thus, sectarianism has become one of the important parameters of regional politics and regional struggle. The Shia-Sunni divide has become a source of tension in the Middle East with the recent emergence of the different interpretations of religion that have been going on for centuries as a bond to the political sphere and political ideology. The fact that sectarian polarization constitutes one of the centers of gravity of the competition between Saudi Arabia and Iran and the regional power struggle has led to the prominence of theo-politics in the Middle East in the recent period (Duran and Yilmaz, 2012: 25). The Gulf countries, with the exception of Oman (Abadi), appear as monarchies affiliated to the Sunni sect, while Kuwait (25 percent), Bahrain (70 percent) and Saudi Arabia (20 percent) have a significant Shia population (Louer, 2008: 61). and Iran's foreign policy focused on the export of revolution has increased the threat perception of the Gulf countries. Therefore, the presence of serious Shia populations both in the Gulf countries (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain) and in many countries in the region has caused the Iran-centered discourse to have the potential to spread throughout the Middle East on the one hand, and the instability in countries with Shia minorities on the other hand (Guzansky, 2015: 44). However, some Gulf countries have used the politics and discourse of sectarianism as a political tool to deprive the Shia minority in the country of political, social and economic rights (Wehrey, 2014: 19).

Another ideology that is influential in the domestic and foreign policies of the Gulf countries is the ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood. The ideological doctrine of the Brotherhood movement, centering on religion, has found a wide space in Middle East politics. The reason for this is that the Brotherhood, a social movement that seeks a recipe for both political and social, and economic salvation, sees the removal of religion from all spheres of life along with modernity as the main source of all problems (Al-Anani, 2016: 18). It cannot be said that the Brotherhood has encountered a similar attitude in every Gulf country. While some countries have developed good relations with the Brotherhood movement since the very beginning, others have parted ways and distanced themselves over time, and some of them have not opened much space for the Brotherhood from the very beginning and added it to the list of terrorist organizations during the Arab Revolts (Freer, 2018: 118). In their political struggles, the leaders of Arab countries have repeatedly collaborated strategically with "Islamist" movements against their rivals, whom they perceived as internal and external threats. From King Hussein of Jordan to Anwar Sadat, from Algerian President Shadli bin Jadid to Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh, most leaders have tried to benefit from this cooperation (Browsers, 2009: 3). Likewise, the Riyadh administration supported the Muslim Brotherhood against Nasser's threat of Arab nationalism.

With the Arab Revolts, the debate on Islamism has also been on the rise. The main axis of opposition to authoritarian regimes in the Middle East is overwhelmingly Islamist movements. The fact that the Muslim Brotherhood came to power in Egypt and gained a political position in the region increased the thesis that the Middle East would pass to the control of the Brotherhood. In this process in which the literature of post-Islamism is expanding, on the one hand, Islamism has been tried to be characterized as an idea that has been abandoned by identifying with radicalism, and on the other hand, the conditions for how Islamists can integrate into the current global political order with post-Islamism have been given (Mahdavi, 2020: 52). However, with the coup d'état in Egypt, the political rise of the Brotherhood came to an end and since then, a very tough struggle has been displayed by the UAE and Saudi Arabia against the Brotherhood in the region. While the Muslim Brotherhood movement was recognized as a terrorist organization by these countries in 2014, the same countries raised the allegations that Türkiye and Qatar acted on the basis of Brotherhood ideology (Roberts, 2019: 6).

Türkiye and Qatar have found themselves in similar processes in the Middle East geography where they acted together due to their political suitability for mediation from the

beginning of the 2000s until the Arab Spring that started in 2011 changed all the balances. The reason for this common attitude is that the Middle East has not been able to be on one side in the two countries in the division of many states and parties and that it has relations with all parties. Türkiye and Qatar have been on the same side in the Middle East geography regarding mediation in Lebanon, Syria, and Palestine (Alrantisi, 2021: 225).

Türkiye has not been able to act with the awareness of its real potential for many years, especially in the Middle East. It is more and more seen that the Middle East geography is the main area where Türkiye, which strives to become an important power, can create this power. Mediation, which is one of the elements of proactive foreign policy, is an important example of diplomacy. In this direction, Türkiye has made important diplomatic initiatives in the Middle East region. It has carried out mediation activities by taking precautions between the states or parties that have problems between them. In this context, Türkiye has made important attempts to mediate between Hezbollah and other parties in Syria and Israel in 2008, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2009, and Lebanon in 2008 and 2011 (Mercan and Güder, 2012: 65). In Qatar, when Sheikh Hamad came to power in 1995, he actively centered on a foreign policy that attaches importance to mediation, conflict, and crisis resolution in the Middle East geography. In countries where problems such as Palestine, Somalia, Yemen, Eritrea, Lebanon, and Sudan are frequently experienced, the Doha administration has actively used mediation (Al Jazeera Türk, 2014).

After the clashes between Hezbollah and Sunni groups in Lebanon in 2006, there was a split between the Lebanese government and Hezbollah. Türkiye and Qatar have effectively helped Lebanon to get out of the political impasse it is in (Benli Altunışık, 2010: 15). With the Doha agreement signed between the parties in 2008, the government could be established 36 months later in the process in which Türkiye and Qatar assumed an important role. Thanks to the agreement made, Türkiye and Qatar have created a positive attitude in the eyes of the Lebanese people and the state. Türkiye's fair stance between the Sunni factions and the Shiite Hezbollah at the point of resolving the issue has been the reason for this positive attitude (Kurt Sariaslan, 2017: 35). Lebanon's presidential election, which was postponed 19 times, was postponed 19 times and Michel Suleiman, who was also the Chief of the General Staff, was elected President of the Republic with 118 of the 128 votes in the parliament in the election held on 25 May 2008 after the agreement made in Doha. One of the 2 countries invited to the presidential swearing-in ceremony was Qatar and the other was Türkiye; Prime Minister Erdoğan was present at the ceremony (Vatan Newspaper, 2008).

At the beginning of 2011, Türkiye and Qatar again took the lead in mediation in the situation that emerged with the fall of Saad Hariri's government after the resignation of ministers who were in favor of Hezbollah in Lebanon (Demir and Ataman, 2012: 299). With the current government crisis, Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri visited Türkiye. He held meetings with Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu in order to solve the problem that arose. After the visit, Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu went to Beirut, where he and Qatari Prime Minister Sheikh Casim made mediation attempts. However, the proposals made by Türkiye and Qatar were not accepted by the parties and the mediation attempts of the two countries remained inconclusive (Cüneyt and Üçağaç, 2012: 135). After the inconclusive negotiations in Lebanon, the uncertainty of his election as Prime Minister increased. However, on 26 January, Najib Mikati, who was supported by Hezbollah, took the Prime Minister's seat and the uncertainty disappeared (Yetim, 2011: 443).

Regarding Palestine, the two countries acted in a similar way after Hamas won the elections in 2006 and made efforts to ensure that the Hamas administration was not excluded and integrated into the political system. The two countries have provided significant humanitarian assistance to Palestine. Qatar provided \$13 million in aid, while Türkiye sent \$1 million in emergency food aid to Palestinian refugees in the summer of 2006 with the help of the UN relief agency. Again, 10 thousand tons of flour and various foodstuffs were sent from Türkiye by land and sea through the Red Crescent (Çetinoğlu, 2009: 159). In 2010, a trilateral meeting was held at the Dolmabahçe Palace in Istanbul with the leaders of Türkiye, Qatar, and Syria. They called on Türkiye, which is a mediator between Syria and Israel, to mediate in reaching reconciliation in Palestine. At the end of the meeting, the three countries made a joint statement; It was said that the need to maintain coordination and cooperation between us in order to contribute to regional peace and stability was pointed out (İnat and Telci, 2011: 80).

The armed struggles of Fatah and Hamas, two sides in Palestinian politics, which started in 2006, have created a big problem for the country (Özşahin, 2013: 108). In 2011, under the leadership of Egypt, with the significant support of Türkiye and Qatar, a Cairo Agreement was made between the two sides on the formation of a government that would lead to elections in Palestine, but the debate on which side the prime minister would be on blocked the way to a solution. Due to the Cairo Agreement, which did not reach an agreement, Türkiye, Qatar, and Egypt warned both sides to comply with the terms of the Cairo Agreement. In 2012, first Palestinian Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh, then Hamas Leader Khalid Meshaal and finally President Mahmoud Abbas were hosted in Ankara, and efforts were made to establish an

agreement between the two sides by making high-level visits (Ulutaş, 2013: 219). Talks were held in 2012 despite warnings that Israel would not make peace with Fatah and Hamas. On 6 February 2012, the Doha Agreement was signed in Doha, the capital of Qatar, together with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, Hamas Leader Khalid Meshaal and Qatari Emir Sheikh Hamad (Özşahin, 2013: 105). On the basis of the reconciliation formed in 2012, Türkiye's contribution has been great, like the agreement in 2011. After the agreement, the two sides came together again in Egypt after having problems with reconciliation, but the process was suspended after repeated problems (Ulutaş, 2013: 221). An important element of trust in laying the solid foundations of the relations between Türkiye and Qatar was mediation, which the two countries used as an active foreign policy element until 2012.

2.4.4. Neo Ottomanism

The concept of Neo-Ottomanism is at the center of multiple discussions. On the one hand, within the framework of identity discussions, Kemalist foreign policy is evaluated as the ideological basis of Turkish foreign policy on the other hand, Özal and the AK Party period. This concept is used in many senses from civilization-centered cultural definition to the ideal of an Islamic empire and multicultural social structure (Wastnidge, 2019: 37). Therefore, the concept of Neo-Ottomanism is interpreted in different ways both in terms of content and usage. The concept of Neo-Ottomanism is referred to as the continuation of the Ottomanism movement, one of the 19th-century Ottoman political ideas. However, it is impossible to use the idea of Ottomanism that emerged in the 19th century and the term Neo-Ottomanism as predecessors or successors of each other (Özcan, 2007: 4).

There is no harmony and similarity between the two concepts in terms of both content and accumulation of thought. It should be kept in mind that the idea of Ottomanism, which was based on redesigning the political and social order of the empire in the last period of the Ottoman Empire, was basically an effort to keep the nations that make up the Ottoman Empire together under the ideal of homeland and to prevent the wave of nationalism and to develop the goal of saving the empire (Uçar, 2018: 84). However, it should be noted that there is no similarity with the demands on the political and social structure of the state (especially the Republic and the Constitution) influenced by the French revolutions in the 19th century and the Neo-Ottomans who developed as an opposition movement (Mardin, 2004: 189). Therefore, it should be known that Ottomanism and the New Ottomans movement, one of the 19th-century

thought movements, and Neo-Ottomanism, which is shown as one of the Turkish foreign policy ideologies today, are completely separate concepts.

How, then, did the concept of neo-Ottomanism develop? The term neo-Ottomanism was first used by a Greek academic in his article to describe Türkiye's intervention in Cyprus (1974) (Wastnidge, 2019: 7). At a time when the geopolitical vacuum that occurred in Türkiye's surrounding geography with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War was discussed, this concept was widely circulated (Torbakov, 2017: 136). The concept was put forward in a broad way to describe the foreign policy of the Turgut Özal period and in fact to direct this foreign policy (Fuller, 1992: 28).

In the post-Cold War period, the U.S, which wanted to use Türkiye's historical and geographical capacity, tried to fill the areas vacated by the Soviets through Türkiye and to ensure the control of the new global order. In this respect, it is quite remarkable that in the Turkish foreign policy of the Özal period, which is presented as neo-Ottomanist, Central Asia, which was never within the borders of the Ottoman state, has found a very wide place (Danforth, 2015: 44). In this respect, it is not a coincidence that the number of American writers among the pens that led to the spread of this concept at that time was quite high (Bayraklı, 2015: 47). Therefore, it is clear that even the emergence of the concept of Neo-Ottomanism is a reflection of an imported idea with political goals.

However, it is seen that the concept of Neo-Ottomanism was internalized by the Turkish academy and press during that period and was frequently used by attaching different contents / meanings. The wide acceptance of the nomenclature of Neo-Ottomanism also facilitated the establishment of the concept in the literature. However, in terms of naming, content, and usage areas, it cannot be said that the concept contains integrity. For example, neo-Ottomanism, which is handled within the framework of the socio-economic transformation in the social structure of Türkiye after 1980 and the bonding of this transformation to politics, is defined as a new identity blending Turkish nationalism and Islamism and the redefinition of Türkiye's national interests and foreign policy of this identity (Yavuz, 1998: 21).

Another period in which the concept of Neo-Ottomanism came to the agenda very often was the AK Party period. Accordingly, although the soft power-centered foreign policy based on the historical heritage of the Ottoman Empire was carried out during the Turgut Özal period, its implementation in a wide and comprehensive manner took place during the AK Party period

(Murinson, 2006: 951). Especially with the Davos Crisis and the Arab Revolts that followed, the concept was used very widely in the foreign press and academic world. These articles, which tried to read Türkiye's foreign policy through neo-Ottomanism, basically argued that Türkiye had imperial goals and tried to revive Ottoman power in the region, but based these goals on a strategy of expanding the economic, cultural, and political sphere of influence centered on soft power rather than territorial expansion (Taşpınar, 2008: 15). However, it has also been claimed that Türkiye's social, cultural and economic activism with the concept of neo-Ottomanism, Türkiye's increasing diplomatic contact with the geographies it is integrated with, has imperial aims and directly threatens the nation-state form (Oran, 2012: 6).

First of all, it is necessary to make the following determination that it is clear that the concept of neo-Ottomanism and the active foreign policy pursued by Türkiye in the region are trying to put pressure on Ankara by creating an image that it has a hidden agenda. It is possible to say that the concept is used with an approach that tries to condemn Turkish foreign policy both in itself and in the eyes of the countries of the region by reviving the Ottoman sensitivity and historical memory that already exists in the countries of the region. Although the widespread use of the concept of Neo-Ottomanism during the AK Party period was largely based on external factors, it should be noted that internal dynamics were also effective in this. The fact that Turkish decision-makers are interested in the problems / conflicts of the countries in the region and strive for a solution while simultaneously placing too much emphasis on the historical past has revealed the possibility of the countries of the region being worried (Altunışık, 2011: 174).

While the process of Arab Revolts continued, the frequent emphasis on historical and cultural ties in Turkish foreign policy, especially at the level of discourse, risked causing discomfort in the countries of the region with historical teachings based on anti-Ottoman sentiment. In fact, although there is no equivalent in reality, it is presented as the AK Party elites assuming that the peoples living in the Ottoman remnant geographies want Turkish administration again (Yetkin, 2017). For this reason, the foreign press/academic circles based on the discourses of the decision-makers obtained appropriate data to support their arguments and thus the concept of Neo-Ottomanism became one of the most frequently used arguments when explaining Turkish foreign policy, especially during the Arab Revolts. The concept of neo-Ottomanism also appears as one of the main references of the opposition in domestic politics. In domestic policy discussions, Neo-Ottomanism is a concept that is positioned directly opposite to the isolationist Kemalist foreign policy centered on the principle of "Peace at Home,

Peace in Cihanda" and is portrayed as an updated version of the expansionism of the Ottoman period (Tanaskovic, 2012: 54). For this reason, the AK Party's foreign policy has been frequently criticized by the opposition parties for allegedly pursuing neo-Ottomanist policies and being described as pursuing adventure and far from the truth.

The opposition's use of the term neo-Ottomanism has led to consequences that weaken Türkiye's hand in foreign policy. Because this definition, which is frequently used by regional actors competing with Türkiye, is also expressed by the opposition at home, which has opened up space for the concept to gain legitimacy. Thus, it was aimed to create the dilemma of state decision-government decision and it was aimed to perceive the foreign policy exhibited in this period in the international arena as a reflection of the ideological attitudes of the AK Party elites rather than being Türkiye's decisions. The concept of neo-Ottomanism, which is often referred to in the Western-centered press, has also been brought up by the rulers of countries in the region that have tense relations with Türkiye (Ibish, 2016).

As a matter of fact, as soon as the Arab Revolts process began, the actors who tried to maintain the regional status quo criticized Türkiye's foreign policy activism through Neo-Ottomanism (Cafiero, 2019). At the same time, emphasizing that Türkiye is acting on ideological grounds has enabled Ankara to generate the fear that it has a hidden agenda. Thus, by reviving the historical memory through this fear, it was aimed that Türkiye would be seen as a common threat by other Arab countries in the region. It can be clearly seen that Qatar does not consider the past of the Ottoman period in the context of a rigid otherness and does not prefer to determine its foreign policy towards Türkiye from the perspective of history. Thanks to the contribution of the strategic relations, it has established with Türkiye, it can be easily said that Qatar does not reflect a pejorative Ottoman narrative in its foreign policy. It is seen that Qatar, which was one of the last political wills that cut off its contact with the Ottoman state (1916), did not look at Ottoman history from the imperial window like other countries in the region and did not need to evaluate its approach to Türkiye through this perspective. In this sense, it is useful to consider that a sermon was read in the name of Abdulhamid II in Qatar until the 1960s (Bingöl, 2019: 98).

Therefore, it would not be wrong to say that the concept of neo-Ottomanism did not find much response in the Doha administration. In addition, it is already unthinkable for Qatar to evaluate Türkiye, which is the country with which it cooperates the most at the regional level, within the framework of a concept known as imperial ambitions. Qatar's almost diametrically

opposed approaches around the concept of neo-Ottomanism are important in terms of showing Türkiye's current level of conflict and cooperation with these countries. The neo-Ottomanism conceptualization certainly has many problematic aspects (Danforth, 2020).

It can be said that a concept imposed at a time when Türkiye is seeking to redefine its international position after the Cold War has been internalized in the process and evaluated as an ideology. However, it is extremely problematic to read the political and sociological transformation in Türkiye, especially Turkish foreign policy, centered on the concept of Neo-Ottomanism. First of all, the comparison of the vision of the Ottoman state as an empire with the Turkish foreign policy of the Özal or AK Party period brings about the disregard for the character of the international system. Of course, it is not clear which period of the six-century-old Ottoman history is discussed here and what kind of historical reference to Neo-Ottomanism is mentioned. However, it is seen that the conquestist foreign policy pursued by the Ottoman Empire during its rise was identified with the period when it was a continuity and did not give up this method until the 17th century. The main argument in this analogy is naturally shown as expansionism. However, no matter which phase of Ottoman history is looked at during the period of its rise, it has nothing in common that is similar to the Turkish foreign policy of the AK Party period in terms of goals, methods, and means. If the imperial policy meant by neo-Ottomanism and the similarity in the comparisons put forward is based on hegemony, it can be said that the Turkish foreign policy during the AK Party period during the Arab Revolts was diplomatically hyperactive but very weak in terms of achievement. It can be said that the Turkish foreign policy of the AK Party period neither had a political goal aimed at territorial expansion nor adopted the aggressive political and military method that could achieve this goal. In this respect, it is impossible to claim that Türkiye has an imperial agenda (Majalla, 2009).

For example, US President Obama's offer to intervene directly in Syria was rejected by Ankara (Kurt, 2019: 81). Again, even the gathering of the Syrian opposition under a single roof has been left to their own initiative for a long time and the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of the opposition has been adopted. In the face of terrorist threats to its national security emanating from Iraq and Syria, Ankara has sought to provide defense cooperation from its allies, especially NATO. Therefore, when we look at the Arab Revolts process, it is not realistic to claim that Türkiye has a hidden expansionist agenda at the regional level other than to protect its national borders and security.

However, the concept of neo-Ottomanism has been tried to be used as a means of pressure to limit Türkiye's regional policies rather than explaining Turkish foreign policy (Yılmaz and Üstün, 2011: 87). The convulsion experienced in the Middle East international system with the wave of Arab Revolts has revealed the possibility of Türkiye becoming a hegemon in the medium term with its current power capacity. In the face of this power projection, it is clear that regional and global actors are worried about Türkiye being a country that increases its influence and is difficult to control. The discourse of neo-Ottomanism actually had a convenient function to weaken Türkiye's contact with the Middle East and to attract its attention to other areas by arguing that it has a claim beyond the nation-state. The frequent expression of the claims of "axis shift" that develops around the discourse of "Türkiye is moving away from the West" and the suggestion that this is due to the ideology of Neo-Ottomanism can be expressed here as an example. The Ottoman heritage has an important place in Türkiye's international position, strategic preferences, and identity identification. The Republican elites did not hesitate to use realpolitik advantages while rejecting this heritage on the ideological plane. But the isolationist Kemalist foreign policy is coded as isolating itself from regional developments. However, when we look at the foreign policy of the Atatürk period, there seems to be an approach that tries to be exempt from this in cases where regional conditions, especially the Hatay issue, are favorable (Bein, 2017: 53; Şener, 2018: 140).

Similarly, it is clear that Özal's export-oriented foreign policy, whose main goal is to find new markets, does not have the intention and possibility to reach the Ottoman ideal or the Ottoman political borders again. It cannot be claimed that the government led by the social democrat Bülent Ecevit, who also carried out the intervention in Cyprus, was ideologically trying to revive the spirit of the Ottoman Empire. In this respect, it is extremely inappropriate to consider the reinterpretation of Turkish foreign policy according to the conditions of the period and its updating while defining its national interest as a deviation from the ideals of the Republic. The expansion of the sphere of autonomy by the foreign policy led by Erdoğan before and after the Arab Revolts has undoubtedly caused discomfort at the regional and international levels. However, in this process, similar activism is seen no matter which actor in the region has sufficient capacity. The fact that even the small Gulf countries, which had no influence on the Middle East political system until the Arab Revolts, put forward policies on a regional scale is a concrete indicator of this.

2.4.5. Political Islam and Brotherhood

The claim that Türkiye and Qatar prioritize ideological factors while determining their foreign policies and whether the ideology of the Brotherhood is the main determining factor in the strategic cooperation between Ankara and Doha is debated. This claim is widely reported in the literature and is based on the premise that Türkiye and Qatar have organic ties with the Muslim Brotherhood movement. In order to bring this to fruition, it is necessary to first consider the extent of Türkiye's and Qatar's relations with the Brotherhood and then to examine whether the factor that brings Ankara and Doha closer is Political Islam and the Brotherhood.

It constitutes the basis of the above-mentioned claim that the current AK Party government in Türkiye has a political Islamist identity and that it has a Brotherhood influence in foreign policy due to the political tradition from which it comes from (Düzgit, 2014). Similarly, it is stated that Qatar, as the country that gives the most support to the Brotherhood movement at the state level in the Middle East, follows the Brotherhood agenda on the ideological plane (Khatib, 2014: 4). As a reflection of this, the Brotherhood-centered regional perspective is shown as the ideological fulcrum of the foreign policy of Türkiye and Qatar, especially the Arab Revolts (Tür, 2019: 594). In order to evaluate all these claims and to question the claim that ideological similarity forms the basis of the strategic alliance between the two countries, it is first necessary to examine the approaches of these two actors to the Muslim Brotherhood within the framework of historical context and institutional interaction. Then, the political objectives of Türkiye and Qatar's relations with the Brotherhood and the Brotherhood's perspectives in the process of Arab Revolts should be examined. It should be clearly demonstrated that the nomenclature and conceptualization of "Political Islam" were used to categorize the political movements that emerged in the Islamic world by first discrediting them and then producing fear of their existence. In this context, it is necessary to reveal the adventure of Türkiye-centered thought movements not in the context of Political Islam, but on the contrary, in the axis of Islamism (Kara, 2013). It is necessary to look carefully at how the Islamism current in Türkiye has followed a course since the 19th century, how it has interacted with the developing currents in the Middle East geography and whether there is any agenda that can be considered common to the Muslim Brotherhood movement under the title of Islamism today.

First of all, in terms of historical context and institutional interaction, it should be stated that the idea of Islamism in Türkiye and the link between Islamist movements and the Muslim

Brotherhood is quite weak. Islamism, as one of the most important intellectual movements of the 19th century, has a very central place in the political and intellectual world of Ottoman and later Republican period Türkiye (Duran, 2010: 7). For this reason, when the historical serendipitous nature of Islamism as a modern political ideology is examined, it should be taken into consideration that the current that emerged in Türkiye both pioneered the intellectual debates in the world and had a unique course.³⁴³ However, while the modern state, which was built on the strict interpretation of secularism with the proclamation of the Republic, tried to minimize its historical and regional ties, the accumulation of the late Ottoman thought world in the context of Islamism also had its share (Aktay, 2014: 55).

On the intellectual level, interaction with developments in the world was almost cut off and Türkiye's connection with new ideas and movements in Islamic geography remained very weak until the beginning of translation activities in the 1960s.³⁴⁵ For this reason, especially the military's control of the political institution as the protector of the regime and secularism in Turkish political life is quite different from the Islamist movements in the Arab geography on the intellectual and political plane of Islamism in Türkiye. (Choueiri, 2010: 81).

However, Islamism, which has extensive experience in the structure of the secular political system in Türkiye (as can be seen in the example of Erbakan), has a character that always struggles by staying within the system and takes care to act according to the rules of the political system (Bekaroğlu, 2016: 5). Of course, there have been Islamist movements that have resorted to the use of violence and alternative methods, but they have not found a space for themselves in Türkiye as very limited and ineffective movements (Choueiri, 2010: 82). Therefore, mainstream Islamism in Türkiye, having many experiences over a long century, including the last coup process of February 28 (1997), has tried to both confront the system in each critical political process and to transform itself by preserving its essence (Bulut, 2013: 62). The AK Party emerged as a political movement that relied on such an accumulation but tried to reconcile conservatism with democracy and liberal economic values under a conservative democratic identity (Kösebalaban, 2011).

The AK Party did not come to power by propagating Islamist ideology. While the party tried to accommodate different ideological segments in its foundation work, it entered the political scene with the promise that it took off its Islamist shirt/identity and tried to become a center party (Hale and Özbudun, 2010: 24). The AK Party, which was born out of the Welfare Party, which is accepted as its predecessor, but tried to use a political language different from

the political programs, discourses and goals of this party, frequently faced the debates about its Islamist identity at the national level during its establishment phase and finally succeeded in the elections. In this way, it has managed to reach different social segments and vote shares that the Welfare Party has never been able to reach. From this point of view, it is essential to state that there is a serious difference in political experience between Islamist movements in the Middle East and movements with Islamic sensitivities in Türkiye. It is also possible to summarize this as a lack of state/political experience (Kösebalaban, 2011).

Especially when compared to the Islamist movements originating from the Middle East, it is clear that the Islamist movements/schools in Türkiye come from very different political traditions. In this sense, it should be noted that their areas of similarity are quite limited in terms of their experiences. A striking example that shows this difference in the most concrete way is the statements made by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan during his visit to Egypt (September 2011). In an interview in Egypt, Erdoğan said, "The constitution in Türkiye defines secularism as the equal distance of the state to all religions. Secularism is definitely not atheism. I am a Muslim as Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, but I am not a secularist". But he added that he is the prime minister of a secular country. In a secular regime, people have the freedom to be religious or not to be religious. He recommended that Egypt also have a secular constitution, as secularism is not hostility to religion. He hoped that the new regime in Egypt will be secular, and that after these statements, the Egyptian people's view of secularism will change. (Habertürk, 2011).

Erdoğan's statements emphasizing secularism in Egypt and the reactions that followed have revealed that Türkiye has a different experience. These statements resonated widely in Egypt and the Arab world but were also criticized. For example, Issam al-Eryan, vice president of the Freedom and Justice Party, said, "We welcome Türkiye and Erdoğan as respected leaders, but we don't think he or his country alone can lead the region and shape the future. Arab states do not need external projects. Change must take place democratically from within after revolutions" (Hürriyet, 2011) is one of these reactions. As can be understood from this case, there is neither a common point of view between Türkiye and the Brotherhood nor similar political goals on the political level. Erdoğan, who displayed a similar approach when the issue of secularism was raised in domestic politics, maintained the same position. In 2016, during the days of constitutional amendment debates in Türkiye, Parliament Speaker İsmail Kahraman said, "Secularism should not be in the new constitution" (AA, 2016). were rejected by Erdoğan. Erdoğan's warnings are a manifestation of the political tradition in which he grew up making gains in Turkish politics over many years. In this respect, in the context of Islamism, the

experience of democracy has an important place in the deep differentiation of Turkish politics from other countries in the region (Duran, 2010: 14).

It should be noted that at the intellectual and action level of the Islamism movement in Türkiye, the interaction with the Muslim Brotherhood movement in the historical context is at low levels. The emergence of this result can be shown to be that the Islamist tradition in Türkiye has a deep accumulation on the intellectual plane, that the secular state structure and the Turkish political character have a system very different from other countries in the region, and that the goals and methods specific to the conditions in which the Brotherhood finds itself, especially in Egypt, do not have a level of capacity to influence the Islamist movement in Türkiye.

On the other hand, it is noticeable that Qatar has a more intense relationship dynamic with the Muslim Brotherhood movement in terms of historical context and institutional interaction. Undoubtedly, the Brotherhood members who have settled in the Gulf since the 1950s have a great share in this. Qatar was one of the main addresses of the Brotherhood members who fled Egypt during the Nasser period and from Syria after the Hama massacre of 1982 (Ulrichsen, 2014: 102). In this respect, a similar situation applies to the Qatari bureaucracy as in other Gulf countries. In the first years of the establishment of the state, the Brotherhood had high-level representation in the bureaucracy, including the ministry, and maintained this feature for many years. As a trained human factor, the members of the Brotherhood, who played a functional role in the Qatari bureaucracy and institutions and were employed, also manifested as influential figures in socio-cultural life (Freer, 2018: 59).

The fact that many high-ranking figures such as Yusuf al-Qaradawi, one of the most important figures of the Brotherhood, have been residing in Qatar (since 1961) has had a very concrete impact on Doha's approach to the Brotherhood (Ulrichsen, 2014: 78). In fact, the importance of the Muslim Brotherhood movement for Qatar has been directly related to domestic politics and the bureaucracy of the state. The ruling dynasty of Qatar, like the Saudi dynasty, originated in the Nejd and adhered to the Wahhabi faith. However, with the acquisition of independence, the rulers of Qatar, who tried to establish their bureaucratic institutions in the form of a nation-state in the modern sense, opened a wide field of action to the Brotherhood in order to prevent Saudi Arabia from turning into a hegemonic power over itself, especially by using its religious position (Obaid, 2020: 114). Qatar tried to eliminate this deficiency through outside scholars due to the lack of formation of an ulema class within the country and the lack of training of powerful scholars (Jaffrelot and Louer, 2017: 42). Therefore, Qatar's close

relationship with the Brotherhood can be considered as a policy of pre-emption against the possibility of the emergence of any Islamist opposition within the country (Bank vd., 2014: 75).

On the one hand, Qatar developed positive relations with the Brotherhood members residing in the country, and on the other hand, it tried to use this relationship dynamic at the regional level (Ulrichsen, 2014: 101). In this context, unlike other Gulf countries, Qatar did not allow the Brotherhood to be a domestic political threat (Ulrichsen, 2014: 118). Thus, the doors of regional cooperation were opened with the rapprochement achieved at home. However, this cooperation was not based on an ideological overlap or the fact that the ideology of the Brotherhood formed the infrastructure of the Qatari state mentality, but rather in terms of mutual benefit. In addition, while Qatar cooperates with movements such as the Brotherhood, Arab nationalists, and anti-Israel, on the other hand, it is one of the rare countries in the Arab geography that has met with Israel since the 1990s (Jones and Guzansky, 2019: 62).

This attitude of Qatar, which was the first country among the Gulf countries to open communication channels with Israel, weakens the claim that it acts within the framework of Islamist Brotherhood ideology in foreign policy. Ultimately, it seems that Qatar has more deep-rooted relations with the Brotherhood movement in the historical context. On the other hand, there is no such intense physical contact between Türkiye and the Brotherhood. Given the dominant position of the military in Turkish politics in the second half of the 20th century, the Brotherhood's ability to find a space for itself in Türkiye and to engage in such ideological interaction with Islamists was quite limited. Therefore, it is evident that Qatar has closer ties than Türkiye regarding the historical course and institutional interaction of relations with the Brotherhood and that there is a significant difference between Ankara and Doha in this respect.

Secondly, the issue that needs to be looked at is the political approaches of Türkiye and Qatar towards the Brotherhood. Did Türkiye and Qatar really engage with the Muslim Brotherhood movement for a political ideology that aims at an Islam-centered political order? Or is its relations with the Brotherhood a pragmatic choice centered on interests as a tool appropriate to its political goals around regional developments? Based on these questions, it is possible to evaluate the positions of Türkiye and Qatar either as not only interest-oriented but also as the reflection of their own ideological perspectives on their foreign policies or to argue that these two actors support the Brotherhood as one of the foreign policy tools in line with their national interests. Here it is argued that the second option is a more correct argument.

From Türkiye's point of view, the first point that needs to be noted is that the period in which the most intense relations with the Muslim Brotherhood developed was the process of the Arab Revolts. The importance of this development is that the possibility of the Brotherhood coming to power has emerged. The fact that the Muslim Brotherhood movement has the most experienced and organized opposition organization in the region, especially in Egypt, has brought about the great actor of the power struggle (Ulrichsen, 2014: 9). Türkiye's stance in favor of the demands for a change in the political system during the Arab Revolts has also revealed the result of working with the Brotherhood. In every country where the wave of rebellion has reached, the Muslim Brotherhood has become a much more effective force than other opposition groups (Roberts, 2012: 238). In this sense, it should be emphasized that it is inevitable for Türkiye to strengthen its contact with the Muslim Brotherhood, which has the capacity to fill the power vacuum in countries experiencing internal turmoil. However, in every country where the Arab Revolts have spread, the AK Party and the experience of Türkiye have been seen as a very serious example by almost all opposition movements that have come to the fore to fulfill the political, economic, and social demands of the people (Ryan, 2014: 117). Because the AK Party has achieved a very positive image in the eyes of the Islamist movements in the region by showing that Islam and democracy can coexist within the liberal world order (Kösebalaban, 2011: 96). Not only for the Arab geography but also for the West, Türkiye has been shown at the beginning of the addresses to be consulted in the democratization process (Shukri and Hossain, 2017: 12). The AK Party's new style of politics, which does not compromise on democratic methods, increase the level of economic development and, of course, do not allow the exclusion of the values of Islam from any sphere of life, has been seen as an example/model by the Muslim Brotherhood (Marfleet, 2016: 134-135). Therefore, contrary to what is claimed, the current AK Party government was not guided by the ideology of the Brotherhood, but rather the party that was the subject, that is, the party that was seen as a model and whose experiences were consulted, was the AK Party and Türkiye. For example, in Türkiye, where security and foreign policy were under the tutelage of the army after the 1980 coup, it is noteworthy that contact was established with the Syrian Brotherhood. At that time, Türkiye did not hesitate to establish relations with the Syrian Brotherhood despite the support of the PKK terrorist organization by the Hafez al-Assad administration in Syria (Özkan, 2019: 9). Considering the ideological stance of the TSK, despite diametrically opposed ideological views, a rapprochement with the Muslim Brotherhood took place due to realpolitik reasons. Therefore, the fact that the Brotherhood was contacted when necessary in the 1980s also reveals how this issue was used as a foreign policy tool. For this reason, it is extremely misleading to

read Türkiye's cooperation with the Brotherhood both in the 1980s and during the Arab Revolts through ideological affinity. In this respect, it is possible to evaluate Türkiye's relationship with the Brotherhood as a tool used in foreign policy rather than ideological overlap.

Again, it can be said that it is more accurate to read Qatar's relationship with the Brotherhood through pragmatism rather than ideological interest and closeness (Roberts, 2019: 8). As a small power, it is possible to argue that Doha, which is trying to carry out an ambitious foreign policy in regional politics, is trying to use the regional opportunities of the Muslim Brotherhood. It is only natural that a country on the scale of Qatar would want to seize the opportunity to expand its foreign policy space with Brotherhood connections that have transnational capabilities. The Doha administration, which had the opportunity to mobilize its long-standing capital through the members of the Brotherhood who lived in exile in Qatar and returned to their own countries, thus used the contact it established with the Brotherhood organization at the regional level within the framework of its national interests (Ulrichsen, 2014:103). Because the possibility of actors close to it coming to the fore and seizing power in the country where the power struggle is taking place has also revealed the possibility of increasing Qatar's regional influence (Hauslohner, 2014). In this respect, it is possible to say that Qatar, which has been in contact with the Brotherhood for years, acts around pragmatic interests rather than ideological goals.

The main factor proving that Qatar has instrumentalized its relations with the Muslim Brotherhood movement is that it reveals a clear distinction in domestic and foreign policy in the relationship with the Brotherhood. While the Doha administration draws a strict border for the Muslim Brotherhood in domestic politics, it acts in large-scale cooperation in the region (Hedges and Cafiero, 2017: 147). For example, Yusuf al-Qaradawi's programs on Al-Jazeera channel had a very serious impact on the Middle East geography and Arab societies (Filiu, 2011: 99-100). In this way, Qatar increased its soft power capacity and continued to use this advantage despite the tension between it and the countries in the region. Qatar's hosting of ideologues of the Brotherhood and other Islamist movements and the opportunity to express its own views certainly contributes to its soft power capacity.

Finally, in the context of relations with the Brotherhood, the approaches of Türkiye and Qatar in the Arab Revolts process are also important. The citing ideological affinity as the justification for the support given to the Brotherhood, especially to Egypt, is a reductionist approach. While the demands for political system transformation emerged in the countries

where Arab Revolts took place, the Brotherhood emerged as the most effective actor in this process. King Abdullah of Jordan, one of the actors most worried about the deterioration of the status quo in the Middle East, warned the international community against the danger of Political Islam in 2013 by claiming that there was a threat of the Brotherhood Crescent – just as he warned of the danger of the Shiite Crescent in 2004 (Goldberg, 2013: 25). Therefore, starting from 2013, the "threat of the Brotherhood" has been in vogue in the region, attempts have been made to change the direction of the Arab Revolts with the counter-revolution, and Türkiye and Qatar have been tried to be put under pressure as actors supporting the Brotherhood.

Türkiye and Qatar have developed close cooperation with the actors of the transformation process by taking a stand on the side of the people's demands. However, this support was read as Türkiye, Qatar, and the Brotherhood trying to build a regional order by establishing an alliance around political Islamist ideals rather than realpolitik reasons (Edwards, 2016: 193). Türkiye, in particular, has often been the target of criticism on the grounds that it has a political Islam-centered agenda with its power and active foreign policy in the region (Schanzer and Tahiroğlu, 2016: 2). The fact that the Brotherhood policy of Türkiye and Qatar, which is one of the supporters of the Mohammed Morsi government, which came to power as a result of democratic processes after the overthrow of Hosni Mubarak in Egypt, wants to be squeezed into narrow patterns within the framework of Political Islam, radicalism and extremism, is actually aimed at bringing the field of competition in the regional power struggle to the ground of ideology and enabling global actors to intervene.

Because Political Islam and the Brotherhood have not lost their validity as a threat used to persuade Western actors (Monier and Ranko, 2013: 112). In fact, it has become a habit for all authoritarian governments in the region to use this method. Throughout his rule, Hosni Mubarak used the Muslim Brotherhood as leverage in both domestic and foreign policy. While using the Brotherhood as a means of pressure on opposition movements at home, it has propagated to Western countries in foreign policy that political Islamists have an extremist character.

Similarly, when the opposition demonstrations began in Syria in 2011, the Assad regime brought the threat of the Brotherhood to the forefront, despite the fact that many members of the Muslim Brotherhood movement were in exile outside the country, and did not have any guiding influence on the demonstrations, and was very poorly represented in opposition

formations in the early stages of the revolutionary process. The Assad regime, which from the beginning described the opposition demonstrations as a mobilization under the control of the Brotherhood, thus targeted the Brotherhood, which it identified with violence, and argued that the civilian opposition was in fact the radical elements that the regime had been fighting for years (Lefevre, 2013: 182). Therefore, the actors who desire a change in the Brotherhood policy of Türkiye and Qatar have tried to put pressure on Ankara and Doha in the eyes of the international community by emphasizing that the current competition in the region is actually taking place at the level of extremists and moderates by drawing the struggle to the ideological dimension.

However, it should be noted that there is a difference in the nature of Qatar and Türkiye's policies in support of the rebellions in the Middle East geography. As is often mentioned in this process, Qatar's role as an apostolate / sponsor of democracy has been the subject of criticism. Türkiye is indeed an actor who has experienced democracy in the region in the last century and this experience has contributed greatly to the evolution of Turkish politics. In light of their own experiences, the view is that regional transformation in the Middle East is only possible through the transition to a political order in which coups do not take place and where the preferences of the people and the administrations' change constitute the backbone of Ankara's regional politics. Therefore, Türkiye's main focus in the process of Arab Revolts is the democratization of the region and the people's ability to have a say in politics. Ankara has argued that the political order in the Middle East can only be achieved through a more structured solution. On the ideological basis of this, as claimed, it did not act with a political Islamist perspective, but with the aim of establishing order on the basis of liberal democracy. Just like the EU, it has carried the belief that democracy should be passed in order for a region where regional stability is ensured to be formed in the Middle East.

On the other hand, Qatar's support for the Arab Revolts is not aimed at ensuring the spread of democracy. On the contrary, in order to expand its influence in the region, the Doha administration has acted with the aim of reaping the fruits of the long-standing relations it has established with the Muslim Brotherhood, the most organized opposition elements in the revolutionary processes, and thus the emergence of new elites with which it has close relations instead of one-man regimes. In this context, Qatar's main focus in the process of Arab Revolts is not an ideological agenda but the transformation of the political elite itself. In this respect, in the relations established with the Brotherhood, Türkiye has shown close cooperation for structural and principled reasons, and Qatar for tactical reasons.

Another argument, however, is over which actor encouraged the other to get closer to the Brotherhood. that Türkiye is acting ideologically in foreign policy with the Brotherhood agenda and that Qatar is acting ideologically because it is following Türkiye; therefore, there is a debate that he has lost his pragmatism in foreign policy. In other words, it is claimed that Türkiye is the actor that drags Qatar, which is actually pragmatic in foreign policy, to act ideologically (Maziad, 2019: 114). However, (as mentioned above), the relationship established by both actors with the Brotherhood is purely instrumental and contact has been developed because it is compatible with their national interests. Therefore, there is no such thing as Türkiye and Qatar influencing each other ideologically. As a result, although Türkiye's historical context and institutional interaction level with the Muslim Brotherhood movement is weak, Qatar's is quite strong. However, both actors evaluated their relationship with the Brotherhood within the framework of a foreign policy tool and there was no ideological affinity here. Moreover, the UAE's minister in charge of foreign affairs himself described Qatar's Brotherhood policy as "opportunism, not ideological" in an interview with Cumhuriyet newspaper (Güvenç, 2017).

The process of Arab Revolts, on the other hand, naturally brought the Brotherhood movement to the center of politics because it was the most organized opposition movement and brought the Brotherhood to the forefront in the regional politics of Türkiye and Qatar. It is a forced approach to make a wholesale approach without revealing the data on how the geopolitical priorities and national interests of Türkiye and Qatar diverge/overlap with the Brotherhood and talk about ideological similarity under the roof of Political Islam. Moreover, at this point, it is clear that the transformations experienced by the Muslim Brotherhood movement in the historical process of nearly a century or the different methods of struggle and political/social experiences of the Brotherhood formations in different countries, as can be seen in the example of the Syrian Brotherhood, have been ignored (Lefevre, 2013).

CHAPTER III

3 METHODOLOGY

The research is qualitative research conducted by examining books, articles, and other academic resources in the literature on Türkiye-Qatar relations and the Gulf Cooperation Council. This came because the study topic is vast and has many years' time, occurring concurrently.

3.1 Scope of the Study

Research should aim to cover:

- General description of the Turkish Qatari relations profile and its strengths:
 - A. Cooperation fields situation and impact on both states' positions.
 - B. How these relations can improve, with fundamental dynamics change and political leadership vision.
- A roadmap for the GCC functionality between member states and regional actors for the future through a scan of experts.

3.2 Study Limitations

Since the topic is a vast landscape for our research, the study set some restrictions or limitations like:

- 1- **Geography:** the study will explain the norms of relations between two states within the geographies of them only, and specifically in main cities (Istanbul, Ankara, Doha) where most of the interviewees are based.
- 2- **Time:** the study will focus on the time-space of the last five recent years only, i.e., after the embargo on Qatar and the Turkish military step-up there, and up till 2022. It sparked the first military strategic cooperation.
- 3- **Targeted audience:** Due to the research enablers and the researcher's existence in Turkey, there will be a focus only on diplomats in Turkey, who are reasonably selected, where the study tests the relations maturity movement. Similarly, it will target few key informants from Qatar state and certain personnel in the ministry of foreign affairs.

3.3 Research Design

This research analyses the relations situation in Qatar and Türkiye focusing specifically on the problem for the GCC dilemma. The reference period is 2017 towards the end of 2022. Some additional information was added during the finalization of this thesis in response to feedback received during the quality control process until the mid of 2022.

The data collection will be through key informants' interviews and surveys:

- 1- The first survey will be designed to collect info, data, and feedback from Qataris in Doha who has connections with Turkish community there. 50 surveys were recorded which is the exact wanted number.
- 2- The second survey will assess the desire of Turkish people for their state to build such ties with Qatar, understanding the hindrances and motives from their point of view. 50 surveys were recorded as three extra were there before closing the link of the online survey.

Key informants' interviews:

- 1- Interviews with Arab Gulf 3 experts from Turkish think tank centers.
- 2- Interviews with the two Turkish MFA personnel responsible for gulf area, from local diplomats to senior levels (in Ankara and Istanbul).
- 3- On the Qatari counterpart, interviews with three coordinators of the areas relations in the Qatari MFA in Doha.

3.4 Sampling Methodology

To achieve the aim of this study, the researcher used two stages, simple random sampling SRS, by dividing the beneficiaries into two categories:

- The Qatari population according to the state - till the times of writing – is about 300,000 people and the sample was calculated with a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error. Therefore, the researcher will interview (3) persons in Doha.
- The Turkish population is estimated according to the state, with 82M people, and the sample was calculated with a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error, therefore the researcher will interview (5) persons in different cities that are mainly in Ankara and Istanbul areas.

According to the Raosoft website, there is a need to have 385 samples from a population of 4 million, and it has a 5% error margin with a 50 % response distribution.¹

Table 2: Demographics of the sample of the research data²

Sample	Type	Gender			Age			Education				Social Status			Total		
		M	F	T	Y	O	I	S	U	H	S	M	V	D			
Surveys	Qatari Citizens	72	28	7.7	18.5%	2	350	16%	1	64	7	11%			50		
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%						
Surveys	Turkish Citizens	81	19	2.9	6%	-	1	620%	2	70	1.	1.5%			50		
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%						
Key Informant Interviews	Turkish MFA	10	-	-	0	-	-	10	-	-	10	-	-			3	
		0	-	-	0%	-	-	0	-	-	0	-					
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%						
Key Informant Interviews	Qatari MFA	10	-	-	0	-	-	6	3	-	-	90	1	-			3
		0	-	-	0%	-	-	5	5	-	-	0	1				
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%				
Key Informant Interviews	IR Experts and Think Tank Researchers	66	33	-	8	16%	-	-	1	84%	1	68	1	-			2
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%				
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%				

¹ Raosoft: In terms of the numbers you selected above, the sample size n and margin of error E are given by

$$x = Z(c/100)2r(100-r)$$

$$n = N x / ((N-1)E^2 + x)$$

$$E = \text{Sqrt}[(N - n)x/n(N-1)]$$

where N is the population size, r is the fraction of responses that you are interested in, and Z(c/100) is the critical value for the confidence level c.

²Letters refers to the demographic categories in gender, age, education level, and social status. (M: Male, F: Female – T: Teenager, Y: Young, O: Old – I: Illiterate, S: School, U: University, H: Higher studies – S: Single, M: Married, W: Widow, D: Divorced).

CHAPTER IV

4 FINDINGS and DISCUSSION

In this chapter of the study, there will be specific direction towards the bilateral relations between Qatar and Türkiye about international cooperation and the mutual political vision both states share in their political performance towards several cases in the middle east.

4.1. Türkiye's Qatar Relations and International Actors

4.1.1. The Post-Cold War International System

With the end of the Cold War, the United States has a dominant position in the distribution of power in the international system. The fact that no actor in the international system in terms of economic, military/technological, and political capacity is capable of competing with itself has revealed the international system dominated by the United States as a superpower. Thus, while the U.S. has shown that it will not hesitate to fulfill its systemic responsibilities by undertaking all global costs, on the other hand, it has started to display its show of force that will reinforce its international leadership all over the world. In fact, the uncertainty about the role of the United States, which remained the only superpower with the collapse of the Soviet Union, would play in international politics was eliminated with the response to Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait, and President George Bush revealed the American grand strategy in the new period with the declaration of a "new world order" (Brooks, 2016: 21).

It is possible to say that Türkiye, which had a strategic value for the United States due to its geopolitical position vis-à-vis the Soviet Bloc during the Cold War, had difficulty adapting to the post-Cold War period. As a NATO member, Türkiye coordinated with U.S. security policies in the Cold War struggle and shaped its defense and foreign policies with the protection provided by the NATO/U.S. security umbrella. The alliances that Türkiye has established with Britain, Germany, and the United States, respectively, in the last two centuries, are basically an effort to balance against the Russian/Soviet threat to protect its national security (Aktürk, 2017: 89). With the elimination of this threat, Türkiye, which is trying to maintain its strategic importance in the transformation of the international system after the Cold War, has been in various quests to bring its geopolitical position to the fore in foreign policy. The "Turkic world" approach is one of these pursuits, and as can be understood from the discourse used, Türkiye's main goal in foreign policy is actually to adapt to the global system led by the United States.

However, the fact that Türkiye sided with the United States in the First Gulf War by pursuing an active foreign policy shows that Ankara, which is trying to integrate into the conditions of the international system, is trying to determine its foreign policy according to the conditions of the international system (Balcı and Gülener, 2018: 81).

The relationship of Turkish foreign policy with the countries in the Middle East region has remained distant for a long time. The fact that Türkiye is trying to move away from the Middle East geography with the choices it has made on the way to modernization with the republic and that it has turned to deep cooperation with Western countries due to the necessities brought about by geopolitical reasons has led to discontent in Arab countries. Türkiye, which has been trying to get closer to the Arab geography since the mid-1960s due to the Cyprus problem and economic reasons, has nevertheless taken care not to interfere in the conflicts between the Arab states and to be restrained in the Israeli-Palestinian tension. After the Cold War, Turkish foreign policy was directly affected by the problems experienced in the surrounding geography as a result of geopolitical tensions and tried to take advantage of the geopolitical power gaps that emerged in neighboring regions. On the other hand, the problems he experienced in terms of internal security due to terrorism in this period limited him. Before preparing for the post-Cold War period, the escalation of PKK terrorism and the experience of domestic political instability due to the negativities of the instability in Nagorno-Karabakh, Chechnya, Bosnia, and Iraq reflected on Türkiye brought about Ankara's short-term and reactive policies in foreign policy (Sander, 2013: 231).

The fact that the General Staff had a dominant power over the coalition governments caused it to determine the direction of Turkish foreign policy in this period. Türkiye, which could not put forward a comprehensive foreign policy strategy under the management of unstable coalition governments, came to the fore with Israel at the regional level. While cross-border problems in the fight against PKK terrorism increase tensions with neighboring countries on the southeastern border, Türkiye's turn to strategic cooperation with Israel at a time when the Palestinian issue is at its most heated has caused a reaction in the Arab geography. Necmettin Erbakan, who came to power in 1996, has been caught in the barrier of the TSK in exceptional efforts to establish good relations with Middle Eastern countries. Therefore, in the post-Cold War period, Türkiye tried to balance its problems with the Iranian, Iraqi, and Syrian administrations by getting closer to Israel in order to ensure its national security, while maintaining its strategic cooperation with NATO and the United States and trying to be in harmony with Washington's Middle East policy (Al Atiqi, 2015: 8).

When we look at the reflections of the transformation in the international system after the Cold War in the Gulf region, it is seen that there are exceptional relations between the US and the Gulf countries. The geopolitical importance of the Persian Gulf has been a priority in the strategic calculations of every actor who wants to keep the region under control. The Ottoman Empire, tried to keep the territorial integrity of the Middle East geography in its hands, the British Kingdom, tried to dominate the Indian maritime trade route, and the United States tried to control hydrocarbon resources and regional security during the Cold War period, acted with the awareness of this geopolitical power. The size of the hydrocarbon resources of the Gulf region, which is one of the most strategic sub-areas in the Middle East due to its geopolitical and geoeconomic importance, and the cooperation in the defense/security fields have also been valuable elements for the Washington administration. Strategic relations, which began in 1945 after the meeting between King Abdulaziz and U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt on the battleship USS Quincy, continued to gain momentum with the First Gulf War. Gulf security constitutes one of the important pillars of the US strategy in the Middle East. The Twin Pillar strategy developed within the framework of the Nixon doctrine (July 1969) was based on the joint geopolitical barrier of Iran and Saudi Arabia under the Shah in order to prevent the Soviets from moving south (Yetiv, 2008: 31). This strategy, which survived until the 1979 Revolution, was abolished with the regime change in Iran (Guzansky, 2015: 11).

The Gulf countries, which supported Saddam Hussein in the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988) with the idea that he would eliminate the Iranian threat after the Islamic Revolution, were dragged into a security crisis when Iraq attacked Kuwait in 1990. The invasion of Kuwait has emerged as a serious challenge for Gulf security and in fact, it has been understood that the security structure of the Gulf countries is in a very bad state. Saddam Hussein's army invaded Kuwait in twenty-four hours, and the Gulf states failed to react militarily to this attack. It would not be wrong to say that the invasion of Kuwait was a turning point for the Gulf countries in terms of national security. The fact that the United States, which has the sole great power position in global politics after the Cold War, increased its military presence in the region with the First Gulf War played a decisive role in meeting the security needs of the Gulf countries. The United States, which deployed its troops in the Gulf countries, especially Saudi Arabia, before the operation launched against Iraq, also made defense and security agreements with the Gulf countries (except Saudi Arabia). In this context, Oman (1991), Kuwait (19 September 1991), Bahrain (28 October 1991), Qatar (23 June 1992), and UAE (25 July 1994) signed Defense Cooperation Agreements with the U.S (Yetiv and Oskarsson, 2018: 42).

Surrounded by powerful and aggressive neighbors in a vortex of regional instability, Qatar has chosen to engage in security engagement with the United States, which emerged from the Cold War as the only superpower in terms of its struggle for survival. These two Gulf countries, which first faced the Iranian threat, which was the goal of regional expansionism with the revolution, and then Saddam Hussein's aggressive Gulf move, increased their engagement with Saudi Arabia in the face of these threats on the one hand and took care not to fall under Riyadh's hegemony on the other. Because Saudi Arabia is a much bigger actor than other Gulf countries, it causes hegemonic tendencies in the Gulf region. In the period before the establishment of the GCC (May 1981), as a result of the expansionist and aggressive attitude of the Riyadh administration towards other Gulf countries, tensions were experienced in bilateral relations and problems such as border disputes emerged (Miller and Verhoeven, 2020: 8).

The U.S.'s arrival in the region with the First Gulf War and its provision of a security umbrella to the Gulf countries were seen by Qatar as a national security guarantee in the face of regional threats. While military cooperation with the United States has provided security against conventional threats from Iran, Iraq, and even Saudi Arabia, Qatar has allowed them to move to areas where they will play a greater role in foreign policy. Therefore, Qatar has undergone a transformation in domestic and foreign policy thanks to the fact that the actors they consider as a threat to their national security will not be able to act in spite of the United States. Thus, Qatar, which could not exist in the international system as a small state in the bipolar structure of the Cold War, had the opportunity to play a role in regional developments. In this period, these countries, which continued to seek autonomy in foreign policy, on the one hand, tried to increase their military capacities and on the other hand engaged in foreign policy behaviors that could be effective at the regional level outside the Gulf region. For example, Qatar became the country that opened the door to Tel Aviv's engagement with the Gulf region by allowing Israel to open a trade office in Doha in 1996 (closed in 2008) (Beck, 2010: 143).

Qatar, which pursues a policy of "going after the Washington administration, the great power of the international system", has had to bear the cost of the emergence of a Washington-centered perspective in foreign policy, although it mainly uses its preferences in favor of the United States in terms of arms supply and carries its defense capabilities to an advanced point. As a result of the increase in military capabilities and capabilities, both countries have spent more on defense and have achieved structural transformations in their military capacities. For example, in the early 1990s, when Qatar's air force capacity was still very weak (11 M-2000ED

Mirages, 1 M-2000D Mirages, and 6 Alpha Jets), it built the Al Udeid Base in 1996 with a large budget of \$ 1 billion. Later, as can be seen from the placement of American forces in this base, it was seen that the preferences of the Washington administration were prioritized in security and defense policies (Soubrier, 2017: 126).

Like all actors trying to reposition themselves within the US-led international system after the Cold War, Türkiye and Qatar have updated their foreign policy behaviors in proportion to their own power capacities and scales. While Türkiye's active foreign policy, which tries to benefit from systemic transformation, remains current with the problems of terrorism and domestic instability, a security-oriented and Kemalist foreign policy perspective has emerged in its Middle East policy by remaining in the shadow of the TSK and a distant approach with Arab countries. In this period, while Türkiye's engagement with Israel prevents it from developing relations with Arab countries, it should be said that Ankara does not have a strategy in this direction. Therefore, it cannot be said that Türkiye has experienced a concrete development with Qatar in this period. It can be stated that mutual diplomatic, military and economic interaction is quite limited, but all three countries are trying to adapt to the new regional conditions and the international system.

4.1.2. U.S Intervention in Iraq (2003)

After the Cold War, there were no other state/states that could establish superiority over the United States in the international distribution of power. It was out of the question for other actors to balance the United States because they did not have enough power capacity. In this period of "hegemonic stability" in the international system led by the US after the Cold War, states exhibited the behavior of chasing after the superpower because they could not balance it. Some actors who do not want to go after the US have turned to the "soft balancing" option because they do not dare to produce an openly opposing position. However, the most serious challenge to the irresistible power of the United States was realized with the September 11 attacks. The September 11 attacks, a historic break in American foreign policy, traumatized the national security of this country on the one hand and brought Washington's aggressive use of force on the other hand (Pape, 2005: 10).

It is possible to read the prominent preferences in American foreign policy through four traditions of strategy. "Superiority", "liberal institutionalism", "selective engagement" and "isolationism" strategies emerge as tendencies that reveal the approaches of the US to its foreign

policy goals in global politics. The United States, which has undertaken all international obligations, has not hesitated to intervene as the actor that ensures the stable maintenance of the system and benefits the most from the functioning of the system. The United States, which is the only superpower of the post-Cold War international system and which also sees the opportunity of not having any power that can balance itself, has pursued a unilateral and interventionist foreign policy by acting with President George W. Bush's foreign policy strategy based on superiority and selective engagement against the international terrorist threat against it. In this context, the Washington administration, which based its national security strategy on aggressive methods, has not refrained from turning to the use of military force within the scope of preventive intervention in various geographies of the world to combat international terrorism (Lieber and Lieber, 2002: 111).

The fact that the aggressive and interventionist foreign policy of the United States took place in the very center of the Middle East after the earthquake caused by the September 11 attacks in global politics has undoubtedly affected the foreign policy behavior of all Middle Eastern countries. The period of fighting international terrorism, which began with the Bush administration warning the countries of the world to choose their sides, has directly affected the international system, especially in the Middle East. The US military interventions in Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003) have caused all the fault lines in the region to be displaced. On the one hand, regional actors have evaluated the threats that this intervention will pose to their national security, and on the other hand, they have tried to foresee what kind of a shift in the regional order will occur. The fact that the United States, the great power of the international system, dominates global politics with its own agenda and uses military force has led all other actors to determine their own strategies accordingly. Even global actors such as Germany, China, Russia, and France, which oppose the US intervention in Iraq, have been aware of their military capacity limits and have only had to do soft balancing against the Washington administration. Because it is not possible to balance the U.S. within the power capacities of these actors. Therefore, all actors have tried to adjust their foreign policies according to the strategic preferences of the superpower. When we look at the actors in the Middle East region, it is seen that the Gulf countries continue their policy of following the United States. The Gulf countries, which were subjected to intense criticism and pressure from the United States due to the fact that Gulf citizens were among the perpetrators of the September 11 attacks, on the one hand, followed Washington's policy of adapting to the new process, on the other hand, exhibited efforts to reform domestic politics (Jesse et al., 2012: 12).

After September 11, the U.S. intervention in Iraq and the use of military force on Türkiye's southern borders have been an important test for Turkish foreign policy. Considering the problems caused by the economic and political costs of the first Gulf War, Ankara acted more cautiously this time and stated that it could be involved in the process by obtaining some assurances from Washington. In fact, U.S. President George W. Bush criticized Türkiye's request for guarantees on the economic and other costs that would arise by portraying the negotiations with Türkiye as horse bargaining (Egeli, 2015: 201). Therefore, during the preparation phase of the intervention in Iraq, there was very intense diplomatic traffic between Türkiye and the United States, and within the framework of the plan made by Washington, it was planned to use Turkish territory and deploy American troops in Türkiye for a successful intervention. As a matter of fact, while Ankara is experiencing a dilemma between the costs and opportunities that will arise with the intervention in Iraq, the U.S. pressure on Türkiye has been disrupted by the March 1 resolution. Foreseeing that the unilateral intervention of the US in Iraq could lead to regional instability as a result, Türkiye has tried to open up space for itself with diplomatic moves such as the March 1 resolution and the Initiative of the Neighboring Countries of Iraq (Iran, Syria, Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait took part in the first place). Therefore, it seems more accurate to explain Türkiye's foreign policy behavior around soft balancing during the U.S. intervention in Iraq (Balcı and Yeşiltaş, 2006: 21). In fact, the fact that Turkish foreign policy displayed an independent attitude despite American threats during the intervention process in Iraq was met with great appreciation, especially in the Arab world. Taking initiatives such as the summit of countries neighboring Iraq, taking diplomatic initiatives to prevent the region from being dragged into instability, and contacting Arab countries have led to a positive change in the approaches of Middle Eastern countries towards Türkiye. Likewise, the image of Israel and pro-US Türkiye in the 1990s in the eyes of the Gulf countries changed and the new foreign policy of the AK Party government found a positive response. In fact, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye's concerns about the American intervention have brought the regional perspective of the two countries closer, which has had an impact on the Gulf countries. Because the idea that the Tehran administration will be effective in the future of Iraq after Saddam disturbed Riyadh very much. On the other hand, Qatar provided logistical and political support to the United States for the intervention. The UAE, on the other hand, has made a logistical contribution militarily while explaining its negative attitude politically (Yetiv and Oskarsson, 2018: 47).

From Türkiye's point of view, the close work of the formations led by Massoud Barzani and Jalal Talabani and the American administration and the possibility of the rise of Kurdish nationalism led by these two actors in the reconstruction process of Iraq after Saddam Hussein have raised concerns about the emergence of a Kurdish autonomous structure in the north of Iraq. However, Türkiye has predicted that Iran will increase its influence in post-Saddam Iraqi domestic politics and the regional equation. The main concern for the Gulf countries, which have seen Iran as a conventional threat since the Islamic Revolution, has been the possibility of increasing Iranian influence in Iraq. In particular, the main concern of the Riyadh administration is focused on how the political future of Iraq will develop after Saddam Hussein. This is also one of Türkiye's reservations. Considering the demographic structure in Iraq, it is foreseen that the Shia and Kurdish populations will be the most powerful actors in Iraq to be formed after Saddam. Therefore, the common security threat between Türkiye and some Gulf countries and Türkiye's refusal to allow American troops to use their territory with the March 1 resolution before the intervention in Iraq has prepared the ground for the rapprochement of Türkiye and the Gulf countries. Of course, in addition to the conditions created by international systemic conditions in the Middle East, the AK Party government's new foreign policy understanding and its orientation towards a paradigm shift in Middle East politics have enabled Türkiye to benefit from systemic factors. Under the AK Party government, Turkish foreign policy abandoned its unilateral and Western-centered diplomacy approach and prioritized multidimensional foreign policy, aimed to increase interaction with the Middle East geography, turned to cooperation with its neighbors in the surrounding geographies in order to create mutual economic dependency, and displayed very dynamic diplomacy. In this way, by taking advantage of the opportunities brought by international systemic conditions, it tried to repair its relations with the Middle East in general and the Gulf countries in particular and to establish cooperation by establishing more contacts. From this point of view, the military presence of the US in the Middle East region after September 11 and the intervention in Iraq both prevented regional powers from developing policies and revisionist tendencies towards the use of hard power and caused regional powers to move to softer areas due to the impossibility of structural change at the regional level (Yalçın, 2015: 18).

In addition to the absence of any challenge to the regional order and a systemic transformation that would change the regional status quo, the presence of the leader of the international system as a military power in the region has limited the fierce-centered competition between regional powers. In this period, Türkiye's Qatar policies were directly

affected by the fact that the U.S. military presence in the region did not allow the formation of intra-regional tensions and that the Middle East political structure was under the control of the hegemonic power. As a requirement of structural conditions, regional power competition continued on a softer level and Türkiye seized the opportunity to get closer to Qatar with its diplomatic activism. In this period, thanks to the ground provided by systemic factors in Türkiye's Qatar policies, strategic cooperation in the field of security and diplomacy has been established. Following historic high-level visits with the Gulf countries, bilateral relations have reached a rapprochement on the strategic plane. For example, the Gulf countries supported Türkiye's 2009-2010 UNSC provisional membership and its obtaining observer status in the Arab League, and in addition, a "High-Level Strategic Dialogue" (2008) agreement was signed between Türkiye and the GCC. Qatar has tried to increase its engagement with Türkiye since getting rid of Saudi hegemony in its foreign policy and being in elbow contact with alternative powers in the region is an important parameter. This approach in Türkiye's proactive foreign policy towards the Gulf coincided with Qatar's foreign policy, and the military deployment of the United States in Qatar was considered as a security guarantee for the Doha administration. Qatar, which supported the Washington administration in the fight against terrorism after September 11 and hosted one of the most critical centers in the Iraqi intervention, considered the Defense Pact signed with the United States in 2002 and the decision to move the Air Operations Command Center located at Prince Sultan Air Base in Saudi Arabia to Al-Udeid Base in Qatar (US Central Forces Command [CENTCOM] is located here) as a guarantee for its national security. Therefore, Qatar, which has the comfort of being under the American security umbrella, has turned to steps that will increase its prestige and regional power capacity in foreign policy. Qatar's mediation has qualities that ease the hand of American foreign policy. The conduct of negotiations with the actors with whom the Washington administration did not want to establish direct contact, the resolution of crises, and the exchange of mutual demands were carried out under the mediation of Qatar (Kelkitli, 2018: 143).

For the United States, the Doha administration's successful role as a mediator in issues such as Libya, Iraq, the Hamas-Israel conflict, the Taliban, and Jabhat al-Nusra has produced concrete results for both Qatari and U.S. foreign policy interests. At this point, Türkiye and Qatar, which are simultaneously engaged in mediation activities and diplomatic activism in the Middle East, have increased their regional and bilateral engagement day by day. Türkiye and Qatar aimed to increase their influence in the region by pursuing soft power diplomacy through mediation activities such as Syrian-Israeli indirect negotiations, mediation between Iraqi

groups, Iran nuclear negotiations, Palestinian groups, and Lebanese internal political dialogue and emerged as countries that could negotiate with all parties. In a conjuncture where the regional order does not have a confrontational character, the fact that Türkiye and Qatar can easily exhibit their mediation activities and make good use of the opportunity offered by the international system has also resulted in intensifying their diplomatic interactions and getting closer. Because in many of these mediation initiatives, it is seen that Türkiye and Qatar work closely to produce joint solution mechanisms. In this way, the diplomatic closeness between the two countries has led to the acceleration of political relations and the convergence of regional perspectives (Kelkitli, 2018: 144).

4.1.3. The U.S Withdrawal From Iraq and the Arab Revolts

President Obama has already signaled during the election process that the costs of intervention in Iraq are a burden on Washington and that US foreign policy will be more cautious if he becomes president. In addition to the costs of its military engagements, especially in Iraq, Obama has tried to ensure that the United States, which has to bear the effects of the 2008 economic crisis, turns to new security and foreign policy strategy. As a matter of fact, the Obama administration, which built its American foreign policy on the strategy of "retrenchment" after becoming president, turned to the effort to solve international security problems by enabling other actors and especially international institutions to intervene instead of foreign interventions. President Obama's foreign policy preferences have an approach that aims to solve international security problems within international institutions by including other powers to abandon the unilateral interventionism of the United States and shift global obligations on other actors and avoid costs (Yalçın, 2015: 63).

In this way, the United States aimed to reduce the pressure on its economy through obligations arising from international engagements and even to share global responsibilities with other actors by increasing global cooperation. Obama's decision to withdraw American troops from Iraq is a very concrete indicator in this respect. The withdrawal decision, which is one of the cornerstone steps of President Obama's foreign policy strategy, can be expressed as the step that forms the backbone of the new route to be followed by the US in global politics and its policy towards the Middle East. With the decision to withdraw, it is now possible to say that the desire of the United States to solve international security issues with international organizations and a multilateral approach has become concrete rather than activating military

options. Therefore, we can explain the American foreign policy strategy of the President Obama era with the concept of retrenchment (Prifti, 2017: 115).

As the actor that withdraws itself at the military level but regulates the functioning of the system, the Washington administration has a foreign policy approach that prevents the deterioration of the balance of power through more diplomatic interventions, economic sanctions, and the use of limited military options and shares the responsibility. The U.S. Middle East policy during the Obama era has also developed in the context of its repositioning strategy in accordance with its new foreign policy. The U.S. has turned to a foreign policy that prefers to reduce its military presence in the Middle East, especially in Iraq, tries to get rid of costs, and aims to establish a regional balance of power by placing the responsibilities on the backs of regional actors. In the Middle East, there is an approach in which the U.S. refuses to use military options unless any situation threatens its hegemonic position and national security arises, but does not forget with diplomacy that it is the only great/dominant power in the region. As a matter of fact, when the Daesh threat emerged, the Obama administration sent troops to Iraq again and tried to share the cost by forming a broad coalition against Daesh (Juneau, 2020: 389).

The foreign policy preferences of the United States have also brought about problems with its allies with whom it has security cooperation. Actors under the American security umbrella in various geographies of the world have worried that there will be a decrease in security commitments with the policy of the Washington administration trying to get rid of costs. The beginning of the Arab Revolts and the reduction of its military engagement in the Middle East with the decision of the US to withdraw troops from Iraq have revealed a serious fluctuation in the regional security structure on the one hand and the situation of trying to fill the vacuum left by the Washington administration by other powers on the other. The United States, which tried to stand on the sidelines by trying to show a costless attitude in the Arab Revolts and not be involved in the burden that may arise in the region, tried to act very cautiously in each country where the wave of rebellion reached (Mason, 2014: 41).

Of course, this approach of the United States has led to inconsistent behavior in its foreign policy. The goal of getting rid of costs and the policies it prefers to achieve this goal have often caused tensions with the allies of the United States in the first place. There has been a contrast between Washington's strategic partners, to whom it has committed to security militarily, trying to drag the United States into tension, and the Obama administration's choice

to stay away. However, President Obama's speech at Cairo University (June 2009) was considered a turning point for the Middle East. Because Obama emphasized that he does not see working with authoritarian regimes and characterizing them as the element that ensures stability in the region as the most fundamental interest of the United States in its Middle East policy. As a matter of fact, the United States, which tried to follow a very sensitive and ambivalent strategy in the developments in Egypt with the beginning of the Arab Revolts process, did not prevent the Muslim Brotherhood movement from entering the political system as one of the legitimate actors, but on the other hand, it supported the process of removing the legitimate government from power by the military with a coup (Telci, 2018: 205).

Likewise, the fact that the American administration never expressed its strong support for democracy in the period leading up to the coup, and US Secretary of State John Kerry tried to legitimize the coup by using the phrase "restoration of democracy" immediately after the coup emerged as important indicators reflecting Washington's position. Although President Obama announced the suspension of aid to Egypt after the coup, this decision was not a reaction to the coup, but rather stemmed from an article in the American judiciary that included the article "imposition of sanctions against third countries where the coup was carried out" (Brands, 2014).

Of course, Washington's position on the Arab Revolts process is not easily understood. While the foreign policy moves of the Obama administration have raised question marks in the actors in the region, it has often been discussed whether the United States has a consistent and comprehensive foreign policy. Regional actors trying to exploit the power vacuum created by the military withdrawal of the United States had to wage proxy wars by supporting different groups within the areas experiencing civil war or instability in order to balance each other (Gervais, 2017: 32). In this way, it aimed to weaken the capacity of the rival power and stop its regional goals, and the rival powers had to assume a very costly burden to exhaust each other. Of course, there are exceptions for some countries. For example, the U.S. military presence in the region has created an even more costly situation for Iranian national security. Therefore, most actors in the region have made efforts to ensure the continuation of the opposition movements or the status quo in that country. Thus, global and regional actors have preferred to side with one of the internal actors in every country where the wave of change/transformation is experienced. Because the success achieved in the country in question with the support given to one side in the internal political power struggle creates the possibility of a strong alliance relationship with this country in the future. However, while the political and social fluctuation

in the Middle East geography due to the Arab Revolts moved the regional order, the power competition in the region also accelerated. The instability caused by the Arab Revolts at the regional level has led many actors to benefit maximum from this process. Both the rise of security threats and the instability of weak states as a result of opposition movements and their drift into civil war have allowed regional powers to increase their ability to intervene. In this period, while the actors trying to take advantage of the opportunities in the Middle East political system tried to increase their power capacities and influence, the formation of new competition centers was inevitable.

In this process, which corresponds to the first term of President Obama (2009-2013), it has been seen that Türkiye and the United States act in very close contact with foreign policy and that the two countries have overlapping perspectives on many topics. In fact, in an interview with Time magazine in 2012, President Obama described Prime Minister Erdoğan as one of the five leaders he found close to him. Thanks to Türkiye's UNSC provisional membership (2009-2010), in which Türkiye was elected with a record number of votes, Ankara has intensified its diplomatic initiatives in regional and international crisis areas and increased its mediation and conflict resolution efforts on topics that coincide with Washington's Middle East policy. However, both the negative approach of the United States to the Tehran agreement signed regarding Iran's nuclear studies and the deployment of the NATO Early Warning Radar System to Türkiye with the decision of the Missile Shield Project at NATO's Lisbon summit has led to the problem that Ankara and Washington are trying to use different methods and tools related to common goals. As a matter of fact, Türkiye's vote of no on the embargo vote against Iran in the UNSC despite all the pressures of the United States revealed this difference (Poghosyan, 2013: 41). Türkiye's active foreign policy has brought about the "axis shift" debate. Accordingly, there has been an accusation that Türkiye is no longer turning to the West but to the East and that it has an authoritarian tendency, not a secular or Islamic and democratic tendency. However, it is not possible for a state to experience an axis shift in its foreign policy within the framework of a sudden decision, but only if it is in a long time and if national interests and capabilities undergo a serious transformation (Başer, 2015: 292). Therefore, although there were a lot of joint diplomatic efforts and initiatives in Turkish and American foreign policies before the Arab Revolts began, it is possible to say that there is a very obvious problem of harmony.

At this point, it would be useful to mention Türkiye's foreign policy priorities in the process of Arab Revolts. When we look at its approach to the change/transformation process

that started in the region with the Arab Revolts, it is possible to say that Turkish foreign policy has made a very active effort. Türkiye has evaluated the wave of rebellion that started with the self-immolation of Mohamed Bouazizi in Tunisia (December 17, 2010) and that affected the entire Middle East as a belated normalization in favor of changing the regional system/order. Türkiye considered the international system of the Middle East to be far from reflecting the social dynamics of the 21st century as a remnant of the post-colonial period and therefore saw the wave of rebellion as a historical breaking process for the transition of the region to the democratic system. It has taken the stance that the demands of the people ruled by authoritarian governments for many years for democracy, freedom, economic prosperity, and political freedom must be met. In fact, the experience of democracy, economic success, international image, and the will to take part in the system by protecting Islamic values have enabled Türkiye to be seen as a role model by the opponents in Egypt, Tunisia, Libya and Syria (Köse, 2014: 44).

Türkiye, which wants to increase its influence by using its influence and image in the region during the Arab Revolts, has been able to realize that the strategic priorities of the Washington administration and its regional vision are not in harmony with the strategic priorities of the Washington administration while making efforts to realize the transformation in the Middle East political structure by carrying out a policy of following the United States. The most concrete consequences of this have had to be confronted in the Egyptian and Syrian issues. Türkiye's expectation has developed around the U.S.-led democratic transformation in the region and for this purpose, for example, the military intervention of the United States, when necessary, in order to achieve the goal of overthrowing the Assad regime in Syria. On the one hand, as in the case of Syria, for example, Türkiye has tried to drag the United States into an entanglement in the tension of the Arab Revolts. On the other hand, it has made efforts to be effective in all these areas of tension by activating its own possibilities. However, American foreign policy, which tries to hold back from responsibilities and costs, has adopted to stay away from military methods regardless of the conditions in any country where the revolutionary wave reaches (Özşahin, 2016: 80). Thus, it has been inevitable that a problem of harmony will arise between the main objectives of Türkiye's Middle East policy and the priorities of the United States in its foreign policy preferences.

In order to look at the reflections of systemic influences on Türkiye's Qatar policy, it is of course essential to take a look at the foreign policy preferences of Doha and Abu Dhabi in this period. First of all, it should be noted that Qatar is the rare country that did not encounter

any social opposition during the Arab Revolts and that the street protests seen in North Africa and the Middle East region were not experienced in this process. However, despite this, Qatar has taken a position as the most ambitious side of the regional competition. From the moment the Arab Revolts began, Qatar has seen it as an opportunity for its foreign policy. In the tensions in the region such as the Iran-Iraq War, the First Gulf War, and the US intervention in Iraq, while the GCC members tried to act around the common threat perception, this unity disappeared with the Arab Rebellion process and different fronts emerged. This divergence, especially in the case of Islamist movements such as the Brotherhood, has given rise to a bloc in which Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Bahrain are axes on one side and Qatar is on the other (Ulrichsen, 2020: 57).

Qatar, which based its foreign policy on the search for autonomy during the Arab Revolts, has tried to distance itself as much as possible from its allies in the Gulf, which are trying to limit itself within the framework of the search for autonomy that began in the mid-1990s. Saudi Arabia has always been disturbed by Qatar's independent foreign policy activism. For example, due to Al Jazeera's publications, he reacted by withdrawing his ambassador from Doha between 2002 and 2008. Therefore, it is possible to say that the foreign policy behavior in the process of Arab Revolts is directly proportional to Qatar's quest to gain autonomy. The Doha administration, which is trying to get rid of Riyadh's hegemony, has made efforts to make an independent foreign policy since as early as 1996. The fact that it plays the role of a fair mediator in terms of being suitable for its own power capacity until the Arab Revolts process and it prefers a foreign policy that meets with everyone by standing at an equal distance from all actors in order to reinforce this image stems from the fact that Qatar knows that it cannot take part in the power struggle in the region. However, with the beginning of the wave of rebellion, the Doha administration has tried to actively use the soft power capacity it has accumulated over the years. He has put his experience of mediation between the Islamist movements in the region, especially the Muslim Brotherhood, and their rivals (regional and global actors) as an important tool of his foreign policy in this process. In this respect, the Doha administration both saw the Arab Revolts as a historical opportunity to increase its own power capacity and tried to emerge as an active actor in the regional power struggle and a candidate country to play a central role in the Middle East (Haykel, 2013: 2-3).

It is possible to see the effect of the Washington administration's Middle East policy on Türkiye's policies towards Qatar, which tried to manage the wave of rebellion in the Middle East by prioritizing engagement with the United States until 2013. Both countries, which are

traditional allies of the United States, have tried to use the advantage of being strategic partners with the superpower of the international system while determining their foreign policies. Türkiye and Qatar have sought U.S. support for change/transformation in the region. However, since Washington has determined its strategic choice not as value-centered but as avoiding responsibility, it has displayed behavior that tries to engage in developments instead of meeting these expectations. For example, although the overthrow of Assad is the common goal of Türkiye, Qatar, and the United States in foreign policy, the methods preferred by the Washington administration for this goal have been quite different from those of Türkiye and Qatar (Sick, 2014: 11).

As a result, it is possible to state that systemic factors are decisive in Türkiye's Qatar policy in this period. As a medium-sized power, Türkiye has tried to increase its status and autonomy both at the regional and global levels. Similarly, Qatar displayed an active foreign policy during the Arab Revolts in order to expand the balance of power in the Gulf region in its favor and to become an actor at the regional level. Therefore, although Türkiye and Qatar have differences in scale, it can be said that their foreign policy motivations based on the search for autonomy are essentially compatible. Türkiye has developed policies around similar principles and goals in each country reached by the wave of rebellion, but with different methods. Within the framework of the cost avoidance policy, it has been seen that the US has taken steps to establish a balance of power among the actors in the region instead of using its capacity to ensure the final transformation in the region. In this process, Türkiye has tried to keep other actors in the region by its side due to the distanced approach of the United States to the targets it has determined within the framework of regional politics. Therefore, it is possible to say that Türkiye is getting closer to actors like Qatar in order to replace the lack of support expected from the United States. However, considering the efforts to limit Qatar in the Gulf, pursuing Ankara is a very rational foreign policy strategy for the Doha administration. Therefore, we can say that the national interests of Türkiye and Qatar are similar in Syria, Egypt, Libya, and other countries where the wave of rebellion is seen.

4.1.4. Coup in Egypt and Systemic Restrictions

The coup d'état in Egypt led by General Al-sisi on July 3, 2013, was a turning point in terms of the Arab Revolts and the international system in the Middle East. The military coup against the elected government in a country like Egypt, which is extremely important for the Arab geography and the Middle East, has revealed how effective external dynamics are as well

as internal dynamics in the countries of the region. Egypt, the heart of the Arab world, has always had strategic value in the context of security in the Middle East. For this reason, Egypt's role in the regional power struggle has been important. The Brotherhood's rise to power has been Israel's main source of security concerns, along with Gulf states such as the UAE and Saudi Arabia. For these countries, the disruption of the wave of Arab Revolts in Egypt was seen as an important step towards eliminating the wave of rebellion by eliminating national security concerns and maintaining the regional status quo (Steinberg, 2014: 19). As a matter of fact, with the coup d'état, there was a sharp break in the popular revolts that continued in the Middle East geography and the revolutionary processes were seriously damaged.

With the coup in Egypt, the multipolar structure of the Middle East international system came to the fore in the process of Arab Revolts and an attempt was made to prevent a single actor from acting in an expansionist manner within this structure. In this way, the concentration of power alone by any actor has been prevented and a balance of power has been established in the region. The polarization that emerged in the region presented itself in the conflict areas as a proxy war and the actors built their security and foreign policies on wearing each other down. The UAE and Saudi Arabia, which we can call the anti-revolutionary status quoist bloc at the regional level, have formed a new axis with Israel and achieved an important gain in the regional power struggle with the Egyptian coup. For this reason, since 2013, the revolutionary process in the Middle East has begun to decline, the Brotherhood has ceased to be a threat to the status quo powers, and the regional policies of countries such as Türkiye and Qatar, which support the regional transformation process, have been disrupted (Calculli and Legrenzi, 2016: 232).

While the coup in Egypt opened the door to a new uncertainty in the Middle East political order, it was recorded as the most important development that shows how Washington's foreign policy goal based on repositioning is full of contradictory attitudes in the process of Arab Revolts. Of course, the coup in Egypt is one of the developments that led to the re-uncertainty of the regional order and showed that the United States, although it has many contradictions in the process of Arab Revolts in general, has not deviated from its foreign policy goals. The fact that Western countries, especially the United States, remained unresponsive to the military coup and that the narrative of value-based liberal democracy was easily abandoned in the face of realpolitik interests raised concerns that the regional status quo would be returned. Undoubtedly, Washington's avoidance of new obligations originating from the Middle East, as well as its desire to restart the Iranian nuclear negotiations and the priority of the fight against the emerging Daesh threat, has become the main pillars of US policy in the Middle East. On

the other hand, the storming of the American Embassy in Libya and the assassination of the ambassador led to the cessation of US support for the Arab Revolts – at least at the level of rhetoric – and a change in its view of the opposition in its Middle East policy. As can be seen in examples such as Syria and Libya, it has become difficult to distinguish between the opposition and radical groups and terrorist organizations on the ground, and the US has determined the fight against Daesh terrorism as a priority. However, Washington's efforts to reduce its systemic obligations as a regulatory actor of the system have of course caused it to have problems in its relations with all actors with which it has entered into security engagement at the global and regional level (Ertem and Karadeniz, 2019: 11).

The inability of the actors in security cooperation with the United States to obtain the American support they need for their ultimate goals has caused Washington to experience tensions with these actors. The United States, which has had problems with Israel and some Gulf countries due to its stance on the Arab Revolts process, especially with Israel and some Gulf countries, and with Türkiye due to its approach on topics such as Egypt and Syria, has experienced problems in its bilateral relations with its allies due to the sharing of responsibility not only in the Middle East but also at the global level. In his second term, President Obama continued to shape his foreign policy preferences in accordance with his repositioning strategy and there was a very tense period in bilateral relations, especially contrary to Türkiye's expectations. Due to this tension, Türkiye was subjected to systemic restrictions between 2013 and 2016 and faced many global pressures. Undoubtedly, due to the coup in Egypt, an important break occurred in Türkiye's regional politics. Türkiye's harsh stance towards this coup was due to the strong belief of the Turkish government that the coups were anti-democratic and illegitimate/illegitimate on the principle and of course the negative impact on the national interests of Ankara's loss of an important partner such as Egypt in economic, security and strategic terms with the coup (Yeşiltaş and Telci, 2013).

Therefore, Ankara, Egypt in particular, reacted to the intervention of foreign factors in the Middle East in general and the intervention of the newly democratized countries in their natural channels and struggles for democracy. Because the role played by Israel, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE in the process leading up to the coup and the political and financial support they gave to the coup plotters played a critical role in the coup process (Fergany, 2016: 9). The Egyptian coup d'état, which is one of the main developments that prevented the realization of change and transformation in favor of democratization in the Middle East political system, has caused serious disappointment, especially in Türkiye. For the first time in the history of the

Republic, Türkiye's influence in the Middle East has developed so strongly. For example, AK Party 4. The participation of many leaders from the region in the Ordinary Congress (September 2012) has manifested as a clear picture of how Türkiye's influence and influence in the region has increased. After the coup, Türkiye's foreign policy activism was prevented from progressing in harmony with the efforts of the Middle Eastern countries that experienced political transformation towards democratization, signs of returning to the old order appeared in the region with the effect of the coup and the power struggle in the region was carried to a new stage. On one side of the power struggle in the region, axes formed by Türkiye and Qatar and on the other side by the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Israel have emerged. Although the U.S. is on the axis of Israel in this blockade, it has not allowed any side to establish a clear superiority and has turned a blind eye to the actions of the parties as long as it does not produce costs for itself. Actors trying to maintain the status quo have taken steps against Türkiye and Qatar as well as areas of tension. They aimed to ensure that Qatar remained in its ranks by punishing it and that its regional influence was broken by limiting Türkiye (Aktürk, 2017). In this way, they wanted to completely prevent the wave of Arab Revolts, to break the activities of Ankara and Doha in the region to ensure that the social movements that authoritarian states had to face would not happen again and to ensure that the actors who supported these movements were punished.

The limitation of Türkiye in terms of its power capacity has become the common policy not only of the status quoist powers in the region but also of many Western actors, especially the United States. In particular, Türkiye's taking a position against the coup and adopting a very harsh stance has aroused discomfort in the eyes of the West. In this respect, the Egyptian coup d'état, in addition to disrupting the regional transformation process and hindering Ankara's regional politics, is a critical case in which the systemic restriction against Türkiye has begun to be applied. Türkiye, which has been cut off from Egypt, which is a very powerful and close actor in the balance of power in the region, has been subjected to various accusations due to its continued resolute stance on this issue in the following period. So much so that in order to put pressure on Ankara and limit its regional policies, these claims were frequently voiced in the Western press, and Türkiye was heavily criticized. One of these accusations is that Türkiye objected to the removal of President Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood from power simply because of ideological affinity. However, there have been many unrealistic accusations such as supporting radical elements, collaborating with Daesh terror, and helping jihadists in the region (Ananicz, 2015: 26).

4.1.5. Syrian Uprising

Türkiye acted with the expectation that the Washington administration would intervene in some way to respond to the Syrian people demands of democracy and regime change, which did not happen, until 2013 when it was looking for joint solutions with the United States in both Syria and other areas of instability. However, Türkiye's accumulation of power in the region has slowed down due to the fact that the regional transformation process has begun to reverse with the coup in Egypt, the US has turned to restrictive policies towards Türkiye and the areas of tension between the two countries have increased. Since then, terrorist acts have increased domestically, especially the Gezi Park violence acts; Terrorist organizations such as the PKK, Daesh, and DHKP-C have intensified their terrorist activities in metropolitan cities. As the terrorist threat began to rise, it became imperative for Türkiye to turn inward, and foreign policy activism declined relatively. From this point of view, 2013 is a serious breaking period in which systemic restrictions on Türkiye have started in the context of both internal and external developments. Developments such as the Gezi Park protests, the Egyptian coup, the involvement of radical elements in opposition formations in Syria, the Hendek terrorist acts, the October 6-8 events, and the FETÖ coup attempt have been recorded as phenomena aimed at limiting Türkiye. The fact that Türkiye has conflicting interests in foreign policy with the United States, the superpower of the unipolar structure, has led to some costs. The Washington administration has used options to limit and punish Ankara with sophisticated methods at regional, economic, and security issues (Martin, 2019: 264).

4.1.6. U.S Presidential Election and Systemic Opportunities in 2016

The systemic limitation initiatives that Türkiye has been subjected to since 2013 continued until the end of 2016. The fact that the U.S. and other Western countries have implemented a policy of restriction against Türkiye in all areas has created a deep distrust in Ankara towards these countries. The fact that the Obama administration has a very negative view of Türkiye and cooperates with the PYD/YPG, especially in Syria, has brought the ropes between the two countries to the breaking point. In addition to the political pressures emanated by the United States, the terrorist acts carried out by Daesh, DHKP-C, and PKK in urban centers and beyond the borders, and the instabilities caused by Syria and Iraq pushed Türkiye towards a defensive security policy. However, the presidential election held in the United States in 2016 brought about an important break in terms of Turkish foreign policy both at the global and regional levels.

Donald Trump has put forward his approach around the "America First" conceptualization that tries to save American foreign policy from global security costs and prioritizes protectionist economic policies (MacDonald, 2018: 410). Thus, Trump – just like Obama – aimed to contribute less to the provision of international security and tried to put the costs on the backs of other actors (Stokes, However, unlike Obama, the Trump administration has tried to gain superiority in foreign policy). strategy and demonstrated an approach that bypassed international institutions. As pointed out in its national security document, the Trump administration has determined as a foreign policy priority the assumption of the responsibility necessary for international security, especially in the Middle East, by other countries and the limitation of China, which has the potential to challenge it in the global system (Pascal, 2019: 23).

In this context, Trump's foreign policy agenda focused on avoiding the cost and limiting China on the one hand, and his effort to reduce the American military presence, on the other hand, has affected the political developments, especially in the Middle East. Of course, Washington's foreign policy goals have led to its indifference to international security issues and have led the United States to display its leadership role more diplomatically. However, this situation has made it difficult to ensure consistency between the foreign policy objectives and methods of the United States and has led to the conclusion that President Trump lacks a strategic plan for foreign policy (Walt, 2018: 6). Due to the inconsistencies exhibited, uncertainties have occurred in the attitudes and behaviors of the United States on a global scale, and other actors who recognize this uncertainty early have found room for themselves. In this regard, it is possible to say that Turkish foreign policy, especially since the end of 2016, has started to take advantage of the slack in the international system and has built its foreign policy on making maximum use of systemic opportunities.

Following the problems experienced with the Obama administration in Turkish-American relations, Trump's election as president has opened the possibility of a new beginning in bilateral relations. Trump's harsh criticism of Obama's Middle East policy during the election process and his warm messages towards Türkiye after his election created a positive atmosphere that the disagreements in bilateral relations would be resolved (Kanat, 2018: 287). Of course, the role of Türkiye's paradigm shift in its security policies after the July 15 coup should not be ignored (the fact that the US did not take any concrete steps against FETÖ and that it engaged closely with the PYD/YGP in Syria increased Ankara's discomfort. Although systemic opportunities have emerged, the emergence of more dangerous disputes between the United

States and Türkiye, far from de-escalating tensions, has increased tensions between the two capitals. There have been very difficult problems to solve between the two strategic allies, especially the FETÖ, PYD/YPG, S-400/F-35, and Halkbank case crises (Haugom, 2019: 211).

From this point of view, although systemic opportunities emerged in front of Turkish foreign policy in this period, political crises deepened with the United States in many titles. Less than a year after the downing of the Russian plane in November 2015, Türkiye's rapprochement with Russia and the two countries' strategic steps on security and foreign policy issues were an important move to balance Washington's pressure on Ankara, but this situation caused deep discomfort in the United States (Haugom, 2019: 212). With this move, while Türkiye opened a space for itself in Syria, it also ensured that the instabilities arising from Syria were reduced by creating alternative channels through diplomatic solution mechanisms such as the procurement of air defense systems and the Sochi/Astana processes.

Qatar's pragmatism in foreign policy can be clearly seen in its relations with Iran. The Doha administration, which is trying to stay away from behaviors that would isolate it within the GCC, has also tried to escape from Saudi Arabia's domination by keeping its contact with Iran dynamic. For example, while Qatar declared Hezbollah as a terrorist organization (with the 2016 GCC decision) and confronted Iran through proxy actors in Syria, on the other hand, it attached importance to developing its relations with Iran in order to balance Saudi Arabia at the same time (Zaccara, 2019: 124). Qatar, which participated in the Yemen intervention (2015) with Saudi Arabia and the UAE in order to maintain the balance between the two regional powers, later withdrew from this coalition (2017). Similarly, Qatar withdrew its ambassador in response to the burning of the Saudi embassy in Tehran during protests by Saudi Arabia against the execution of Shiite cleric Al-Nimr (2016) but sent back its ambassador after an attempted blockade and diplomatic isolation (June 2017) against him (Baabood and Baabood, 2020: 171).

A video of the Qatari emir allegedly making positive comments about Iran, Hamas, and Hezbollah and negative comments about President Trump and the Riyadh and Abu Dhabi administrations has also emerged. Qatar denied these allegations, claiming that the websites where the video was published were hacked by the UAE. Later, the diplomatic isolation and blockade of Qatar included countries such as Egypt, Mauritania, and Djibouti. Although the Qatari and UAE-Saudi Arabia administrations tried to carry out the power struggle between them in areas outside the Gulf, this struggle was carried into the Gulf politically and diplomatically in 2017. Immediately after the emergence of the crisis, Türkiye strongly

expressed its support for Qatar politically and on the security plane and called on King Salman to solve the problem. In order to show this support, the military agreement signed with the Doha administration two days after the Qatar crisis was approved in the Turkish Grand National Assembly. In addition to the Turkish soldier deployed to the Tariq bin Ziyad Military Base for the first time in 2015, armored vehicles and personnel were reinforced. Türkiye, which has declared its political and security support to the blockaded Qatar, has also relieved the hand of the Doha administration by taking rapid steps towards the urgent need for food with cargo planes. As a matter of fact, the fact that the blockade coincided with the month of Ramadan brought about the food problem. In this sense, it was not surprising that one of the first items of the 13-point list of demands presented to Qatar during the diplomatic crisis between the bloc led by Saudi Arabia and the UAE and Qatar was demanded to close the Turkish military base in Doha. Türkiye's expansion of its military presence beyond its borders and the establishment of military bases, especially in Qatar, have greatly disturbed the UAE and Saudi Arabia (Al-Din Arafat, 2020: 174). Because the presence of Turkish troops in the Gulf is a move against these countries that both supports Qatar's national security and directly affects the balance of power in the Gulf. As can be understood from the Qatar crisis, Türkiye has tried to establish a balance in the regional power struggle by taking Qatar with it against the UAE-Saudi and Egypt axis, and this camp has clearly shown itself in the areas where the proxy war continues. Three major areas of confrontation stand out in this power struggle: Syria, Libya, and the Horn of Africa.

4.1.7. Arab Spring

In the early years of the Arab Revolts, although Türkiye, Qatar, the UAE, and Saudi Arabia seemed to be on the same side against the Assad regime in Syria, the competition between them was continuous. With the Arab Revolts, Türkiye, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia have largely supported the rebels who have risen up against the Assad regime, while the UAE has displayed a very cautious approach. The UAE's involvement in the Syrian civil war has been quite low compared to Qatar and Saudi Arabia and has maintained some contact with the Assad regime due to the threat of the Brotherhood. For example, the fact that Assad's mother, Enise Makhoul, settled in the UAE in 2013 and resided in Dubai until her death (2016) showed that the UAE has not lost contact with the Assad regime (Daher, 2019: 4). The UAE's open support for the PKK presence in Syria, which Türkiye considers to be the first national security threat, has increased the tension between the two countries. While the UAE provided financial and equipment support to the PKK/YPG terrorist organization in order to block Türkiye in the

Syrian field, it re-established diplomatic relations (2018) with the Assad regime on the other hand (Üçağaç, 2019: 226). Saudi Arabia and the UAE, which started to provide financial and military support to the PYD/YPG, the Syrian branch of the PKK, thus aimed to limit Türkiye.

4.1.8. Türkiye's Qatar Relations in the 2017 GCC Crisis

With the Arab Spring and especially in the events in Egypt, political differences among the Gulf countries began to become more pronounced. In this context, when the military coup was carried out against the Mohammed Morsi regime in Egypt in 2013, Qatar sided with Morsi, who is supported by the Muslim Brotherhood, while the UAE and Saudi Arabia supported Al-sisi and took a stance in favor of maintaining the status quo. After the coup in Egypt, the members of the Muslim Brotherhood started to gather in Qatar's capital Doha again, and as a result of the discourse expressed, the Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, was summoned to the capital Riyadh by King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia and warned about the discourse. In addition, GCC countries have been told to sign a security agreement not to interfere in their internal affairs (Ulrichsen, 2017). As a matter of fact, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Bahrain withdrew their embassies in Qatar for nine months on March 5, 2014, claiming that Qatar supported the Muslim Brotherhood and opposition movements, which they described as terrorist organizations, and therefore the Doha administration did not comply with the said agreement. Although the relations with these countries improved in the same year with the mediation of Kuwait, they prepared the ground for a bigger crisis (Ataman, 2017). To put it this way, the developments in Egypt have had an escalating effect on the tension within the GCC due to the fact that Qatar and other GCC countries supported different sides in the events that took place during the Arab Spring process, and the Doha administration was criticized for supporting Muslim Brotherhood members, especially in Egypt (Zweiri and Doğan Akkaş, 2021: 24).

On May 23, 2017, about two weeks before the embargo was imposed on Qatar, the Qatari Official News Agency (QNA) published the alleged statements of the Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, which included statements in support of Iran while taking a stance against the United States. Following these statements, Qatari Foreign Minister Saif Ahmed al-Thani described the statements made by stating that his country was subjected to a cyber-attack as fabricated and unrealistic (Yiğit, 2017). On the other hand, despite the statement made by the Qatari Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Gulf countries such as the UAE and Saudi Arabia continued to publish the news. This situation ignited the Gulf crisis that will soon take

place. As a matter of fact, on June 5, 2017, an economic and diplomatic embargo was imposed on Qatar by Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain, and Egypt on the grounds that it "supports terrorist groups". The Gulf crisis began when Saudi Arabia, which has a single land border with Qatar, closed its land border and four countries blockaded Qatar by land, sea, and air (Gümüşlüoğlu, 2019: 198).

One of the remarkable points about the blockade of Qatar is that the crisis emerged with the coming to power of the new president of the United States, Donald Trump, who is considered Qatar's main ally. Trump made his first trip abroad after being elected president to Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia, on May 20, 2017. During this visit, Trump signed a \$ 110 billion agreement with the Riyadh administration in the military field, as well as a total of \$ 400 billion in various fields (Erzaro, 2019: 17). Therefore, Trump did not try to prevent this blockade against Qatar by pretending to give the green light to these countries to put pressure on Qatar during his visit to Riyadh (Bakir, 2019:208). Although the U.S. has tried to strengthen its relations with the GCC countries during the Barack Hussein Obama era, Trump has focused more on bilateral relations in the context of Saudi Arabia and the UAE. It is also known that Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner has a close bond with Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and the UAE's Ambassador to Washington, Yusuf al-Uteybe (Ulrichsen, 2017: 6). In addition, documents have been published showing that al-Utaybe took a stand against the Doha administration (Bakir, 2021: 186). Therefore, these names are united around the anti-Qatar sentiment in the region.

On the other hand, Trump, while criticizing Qatar for supporting radical ideologies by pointing to Qatar with the statements he shared on his social media account after the blockade of Qatar, later changed his attitude on the Gulf crisis and conveyed a message of gratitude to Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim for supporting the US fight against terrorism (Jafiero, 2019: 139). In fact, on June 15, 2017, shortly after the outbreak of the crisis, the United States conducted a joint exercise with Qatar and an agreement was signed between the two countries on the purchase of F-15 fighter jets, which cost a total of \$ 12 billion (Aljazeera, 2017). Therefore, the different approach of the US towards Qatar under the leadership of Trump can be explained by the fact that on the one hand, Qatar does not want to come under the sovereignty of Saudi Arabia, and on the other hand, there are different views within the Washington administration regarding the crisis (Erboğa, 2019: 16).

When we look at the causes of the crisis and why the Arab Quartet has blockaded Qatar, the period in which the relations between Qatar and these countries began to deteriorate is actually with the Arab Spring, but its origins are based on the policies adopted by Sheikh Hamad in 1995 when he overthrew his father Khalifa bin Hamad in a bloodless coup and came to power. As a result of Sheikh Hamad's overthrow of his father in a bloodless coup, his pursuit of independent foreign policies from Saudi Arabia has caused discomfort in the GCC countries (Ulrichsen, 2017). At this point, Sheikh Hamad made some strategic moves within the framework of the foreign policy he adopted and established the international publication Al-Jazeera in 1996, and in the following period, Al-Jazeera became an area where opposition figures in the region could criticize the regime leaders (President, 2012: 42). This situation has paved the way for the opposition figures in the region to gather in Qatar.

Regarding the crisis, the group in question has leveled a number of accusations against Qatar. Accordingly, criticizing the broadcasts of the Qatar-based Al-Jazeera channel and Qatar's close relations with Türkiye and Iran are some of the accusations leveled. One of the main reasons for the embargo imposed on Qatar by the Arab Quartet was the accusation that the Doha administration generally supported opposition groups, especially the Muslim Brotherhood (Kinninmont, 2019: 7-8). Of this group, the UAE and Saudi Arabia saw the formation of the Muslim Brotherhood as a threat to their regimes and internal security. In this context, in 2014, both the UAE and Saudi Arabia included the Muslim Brotherhood in the list of terrorist organizations (Zweiri and Doğan Akkaş, 2021: 25). It should be noted here that the presence of the Muslim Brotherhood in Qatar cannot be associated only with the Arab Spring process. Therefore, the Doha administration has hosted names associated with the Brotherhood such as Yusuf al-Qaradawi since the 1960s and Abdul-Badi Saqr, who came to Qatar in the 1950s and later managed the Qatar National Library (Roberts, 2017: 54). The main reason for the crisis is ideological reasons as a result of the Doha administration, which has been adopting an anti-status quoist attitude since 1995 and pursuing an independent and contradictory foreign policy, and supporting the formation of the Muslim Brotherhood, especially during the Arab Spring process. In other words, countries such as Saudi Arabia and the UAE, where opposition groups are concentrated, have perceived opposition groups that rise in the region on the basis of the Muslim Brotherhood as a threat to their regimes.

In July 2017, the so-called Arab Quartet published a list of demands containing 13 articles for the end or lifting of the embargo they had imposed on Qatar and gave the Doha

administration a 10-day period to fulfill these demands. Some of the important items on the list of requests are:

- You should cut diplomatic relations with Iran and close your offices in Iran. You must expel members of Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps from Qatar. You must end military cooperation with Iran. You must comply with U.S. sanctions on trade with Iran.
- You should immediately cancel Türkiye's military presence in Qatar. You should end your military cooperation with Türkiye on Qatari soil.
- You have to end your relationship with terrorist organizations like the Muslim Brotherhood, Daesh, al-Qaeda, and Lebanon's Hezbollah. You must officially declare these structures as terrorists.
- You should close Al Jazeera and its connecting stations.
- You should stop interfering in the internal affairs of other countries. You should not grant Qatari citizenship to citizens of Saudi Arabia, UAE, Egypt, and Bahrain. Those with Qatari citizenship should cancel their passports if they violate the laws of their home country.
- You must pay compensation for the loss of life and property in recent years due to Qatar's policies. The amount of compensation will then be determined together with Qatar (Al-Jazeera 2017).

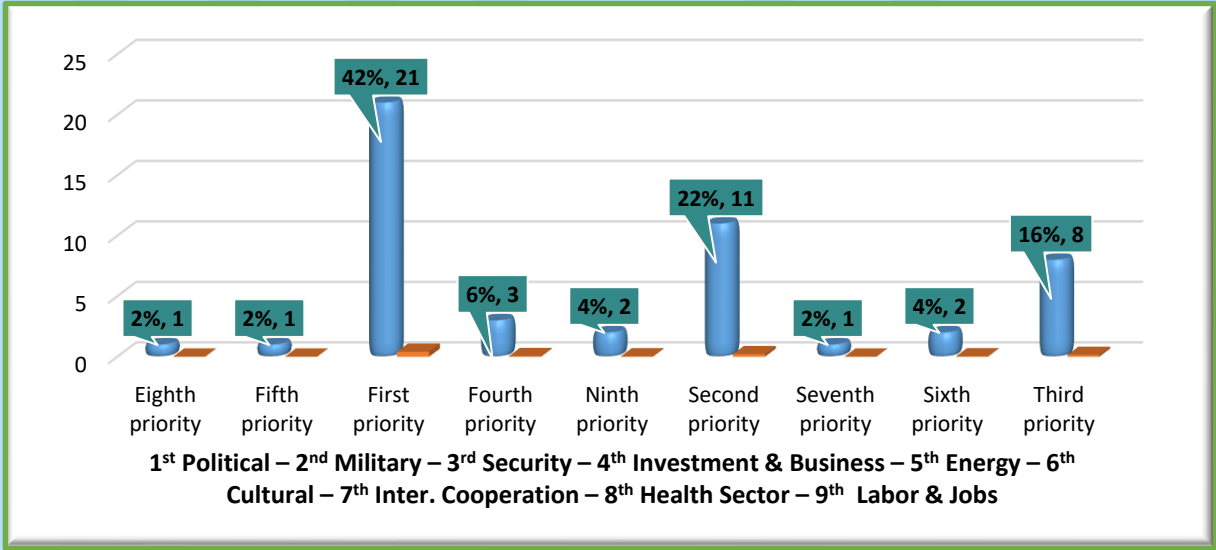
Qatari Foreign Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman al-Thani made a statement regarding the list published by the Gulf countries under the leadership of Saudi Arabia and stipulated that the demands must be fulfilled by July 3, 2017, to end the crisis. Minister of Foreign Affairs al-Thani stated that the Doha administration would not accept the 13-point list of demands and stated that these demands were contrary to the law and Qatar's sovereign rights, and underlined that the Arab Quartet countries acted contrary to freedom of expression (Seçkin, 2017).

Looking at Türkiye's attitude towards the Gulf crisis, it first made diplomatic initiatives on June 5, 2017, the date of the embargo on Qatar, and first made telephone calls by calling for dialogue instead of being a party to the crisis in question (President and Pala, 2020: 67). In this context, President Erdoğan held a telephone conversation with the Emir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia, Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmed al-Sabah, the Emir of Kuwait, and Russian President Vladimir Putin and stated that the crisis should be resolved within the framework of diplomacy and dialogue (Muric, 2020: 9). In

addition, President Erdoğan stated that he did not find the blockade initiated against Qatar correct and said that the incident in question was not in the interest of any country in the region (Anadolu Agency, 2017). Another initiative of Türkiye regarding the resolution of the crisis was the visit of President Erdoğan to Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Qatar on a tour of the Gulf between 23-24 July 2017. In this context, Erdoğan stated that he supports the ongoing efforts of Kuwait to solve the crisis and other initiatives related to the solution of the problem (TCCB, 2017). Thus, in the first moment of the crisis, the Ankara administration tried to reduce the tension between the relevant parties by activating channels of diplomacy and dialogue. Because Türkiye's neutrality towards the crisis has been short-lived.

This was supported by the research findings in a related context when Turkish and Qatari citizens were asked about the priorities of the bilateral relations between both countries and the priorities were in political, military and security sectors which shows the dependency of Qatar on the vital Turkish role in a realist international relations point of view, to keep supporting a small state like Qatar in its military and security needs, at the same time, Türkiye is selling and investing in this dependency to earn fame and financial income.

Figure 6: Qatari and Turkish Interviewees Priorities in Bilateral Relations - Source (Research Data)



In order to establish security and stability in the country by providing military support to the blockaded Qatar, Türkiye passed the draft law on June 5, 2017, which foresees Türkiye to deploy troops in Qatar, just two days after the embargo imposed on Qatar, and put it into force on June 8, 2017. Accordingly, a new unit of 23 soldiers, military personnel, tanks, and five armored vehicles were sent to the Tariq Bin Ziyad Turkish base, which was established in

April 2016 and named after a famous Berber commander, on June 22 (Bakir, 2019: 211). On the other hand, the framework of the Turkish base to be established in Qatar was determined by the bilateral defense agreement signed by Ankara and Doha in 2014 and the subsequent signing of additional agreements to the said agreement in 2015 and 2016 (Kinninmont, 2019: 29). In this context, the number of soldiers in the base of the Ankara administration exceeded three thousand towards the end of 2018.

Türkiye's diplomatic efforts in the context of the crisis and its sending troops to Qatar have shown that the Doha administration is not alone and that Türkiye stands by Qatar. These moves made by Türkiye have caused discomfort in the Gulf countries, especially in Saudi Arabia. So much so that in order for the blockade to end, the second item of the 13-point list of demands that Qatar must realize was the closure of the Turkish base in Qatar. In fact, the then Saudi Arabian Foreign Minister Adel bin Ahmed al-Jubeir said in his statement that they hoped that Türkiye would remain neutral in the crisis with Qatar (BBC Turkish, 2017).

There have been various discursive responses from Ankara regarding the demand for the closure of the Turkish military base in Qatar. In this context, President Erdoğan stated that the relevant countries, especially the Riyadh administration, went too far in their demands to Qatar and described the closure of the Turkish base, which is included in the second article of the demand list, as disrespectful to Türkiye (Al-Dosari, 2021: 67). In addition, the Minister of National Defense at the time, Fikri Işık, stated that the military base was related to ensuring the security and military training of the Doha administration, while Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu underlined that the military base in Qatar was of interest to Ankara and Doha administration (Akdoğan, 2018: 238). However, people close to the Doha administration stated that Türkiye saved Qatar from the invasion of Saudi Arabia by sending troops (Gümüslüoğlu, 2019: 212). In other words, both Ankara and Qatar conveyed the expected response to the closure of the Turkish military base in Qatar to the relevant parties and stated that this was not the case. This is noteworthy in that it shows that the relations between both countries are also good in military terms.

Türkiye, Qatar's regional ally, has made a second strategic move to break the economic embargo imposed on Qatar and prevent problems in the supply of basic necessities in addition to sending troops to Qatar during the crisis (Bakir, 2019: 211). In addition to Qatar's climatic conditions, the low amount of arable land (about 1 percent) has left the country in danger of a food crisis as Qatar, which is the only land border of the country and meets a significant part of

its food imports through the line, closing the land border of Saudi Arabia (Sümer, 2017: 42-43). At this point, food aid was provided to Qatar by ships and planes from Türkiye. Thus, in addition to providing five thousand tons of food aid from Türkiye to Qatar with more than 70 aircraft, cargo ships carrying four thousand tons of food were also sent (President and Pala: 2020: 68). Between June 5 and 25, when the crisis began, Qatar's imports from Türkiye tripled to around \$32.5 million (Göksedef, 2020). As a matter of fact, Türkiye has shown that it is on Qatar's side with economic support in providing food aid in order to prevent the diplomatic, military, and humanitarian crisis from the first moment of the crisis that broke out in Qatar. On the other hand, Qatar sided with Türkiye when the Fetullahist Terrorist Organization (FETÖ) attempted a failed coup against the Turkish government on July 15, 2016. So much so that in the first hours of the failed coup attempt and while the process was not yet clear, the first country leader to contact President Erdoğan was Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, the Emir of Qatar, and he emphasized that the Doha administration was in solidarity with Türkiye and held a telephone conversation with President Erdoğan as an indication that mutual trust was being built (Al-Khatib, 2016). Also on 30 July 2016, Qatari Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman al-Thani paid an official visit to Türkiye, becoming the first foreign official to visit Türkiye after the coup attempt (Bakir, 2019: 207). Therefore, both Qatar and Türkiye have paved the way for the further strengthening of their relations by supporting each other both politically and economically during the crises they have been exposed to.

When the crisis is evaluated from the point of view of the countries in the region, the support provided by Qatar, especially the Riyadh administration, to the formation of the Muslim Brotherhood has formed the starting point of the escalating reasons. This situation has shown that regime security concerns are effective in determining policies for the countries in the region (Lynch, 2017: 16). In addition, it can be said that the GCC, one of the purposes of its establishment is to balance the Iranian threat in the region, is now experiencing a fracture within itself and contains counterbalancing elements (Bakir, 2019: 214). However, Iran's opening of its airspace to Qatar during the embargo also led to the development of cooperation on the Doha-Tehran line (Askeroglu, 2021). Therefore, while the crisis caused Qatar, which had adopted a policy against the Tehran administration in the previous periods, to get closer to Iran, on the other hand, it also showed that the partnerships at the regional level began to change. On the other hand, in the last months of 2020, important developments related to the Gulf crisis took place. In this direction, the fact that the Democratic candidate Joe Biden won the presidential elections in the U.S on November 3, 2020, the economic concerns arising from the

oil price crisis, the fact that the Saudi Arabia and UAE axis did not want Qatar to establish close relations with Iran and Türkiye, and the fact that the blockade imposed by the Doha administration by successfully managing the crisis did not receive support from the international arena were effective in ending the crisis by changing the policy of Saudi Arabia and the UAE axis against the Doha administration (Rakipoğlu, 2021). In addition, it can be said that there is a move to end the crisis in order to correct the image of Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman at the regional level that has not been successful and that Biden's election as president could revive the nuclear deal with Iran and especially the image deteriorated by the murder of Jamal Khashoggi. Prior to the 41st GCC al-Ula Summit, the Emir of Kuwait, Sheikh Nawwaf al-Ahmed, who has been mediating between the parties since the beginning of the crisis, held a telephone conversation with the Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Tamim, and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman of Saudi Arabia. Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Ahmed Nasser al-Mohammed as-Sabah announced on January 4 that the Riyadh administration decided to end the blockade of Doha and that the parties had reached an agreement on this issue (Harb, 2021). Then, on January 5, 2021, the 41st Anniversary Celebration was held in the city of al-Ula in northwestern Saudi Arabia. With the al-Ula Declaration (Solidarity and Stability Declaration) signed between the parties at the GCC Summit, the land, sea, and air blockade imposed against the Doha administration for three and a half years has come to an end. However, it should be noted here that although the crisis ended as a result of the agreement in question, the policies to be followed by the parties against each other in the following process will determine the reconciliation and stability within the GCC (Yetim, 2021: 102). With the end of the crisis, it can be said that Qatar has successfully emerged from the three-and-a-half-year blockade process and is the winning side. Following the lifting of the blockade imposed on Qatar, a statement was made by the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and it was stated that the steps towards the opening of land, sea, and air borders between Qatar and Saudi Arabia were welcomed (Doğan Akkaş, 2021). On the other hand, Türkiye, by siding with Qatar in the blockade process, has been effective in the failure of the political design projects that Saudi Arabia and the UAE axis are trying to establish in the region (İncekaya, 2021). Therefore, this situation is important in terms of showing Türkiye's power in the region. On the other hand, comments have been made that the GCC countries resolving their own problems will have more positive returns to Türkiye in regional diplomacy (Doğan Akkaş, 2021).

The Türkiye-Qatar alliance, which is called the anti-status quo and pro-revolutionary bloc by supporting the popular movements in the region, which has frequently been mentioned

during the Arab Spring process, has become closer in the context of the crisis and deepened relations. Looking at the year 2017 when only the Gulf crisis was experienced, the Ankara administration had three official visits to Qatar. In this context, in the official contacts held under the leadership of President Erdoğan in February of the same year, the issue of raising bilateral relations to the highest level was discussed (Al-Jazeera, 2017). When evaluated in the context of Türkiye's establishment of a military base in Qatar on the one hand and Qatar's financial support to Türkiye in the currency crisis of 2018 on the other, it can be said that one dimension of the alliance in question is based on military and economic needs and complementary to each other (Özşahin, 2021: 35). So much so that President Erdoğan, who visited Qatar in 2018, stated that they will continue to develop bilateral relations in all areas and that the relations between Türkiye and Qatar will deepen in the near future (Qatar Tribune, 2018). However, bilateral relations have been tested in the Gulf crisis, and Türkiye, a regional power, has not only shown that it is a reliable ally of Qatar during the crisis, but also that it is ready to use its hard and soft power to ensure regional stability.

4.2. TÜRKİYE'S QATARI RELATIONS AT THE STAGE OF GCC COLLAPSE

4.2.1. History of the Gulf Cooperation Council

The Cooperation Council of the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC), as its name suggests, is the six Arab countries in the Gulf Region; It is a regional organization operating in the economic and political fields consisting of Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain and Oman (Al-Hayarı, 2018). The first idea of the establishment of the Gulf Cooperation Council was based on the British declaration of withdrawal from the Gulf Region on December 1, 1968. British hegemony in the Gulf region lasted from 1820 to 1971 (Ulrichsen, 2009: 3). The new Arab countries in the Gulf, which gained their independence from Britain in 1971, sought to cooperate and forge closer relations to establish a single politically targeted system aimed at unifying their own defense and economic systems (Almotairy, 2011: 10-11). In this context, based on the success of the experience of the United Arab Emirates that took place in 1971, in May 1976, when Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah was the Crown and Prime Minister of Kuwait, for example, in all areas; It wanted to ensure cooperation in the political, economic, educational, media, etc. fields and to establish a union based on solid foundations for the interests and stability of the peoples of this region. Thereafter, in December 1978, Sheikh Saad al-Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah visited Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Oman, and in joint statements published in his meetings with these countries, he

called for efforts for the unity of the Arab position and the desire of Arab citizens to progress further (Al-Shamari, 2012: 41). Relatedly, the idea of establishing a Gulf Cooperation Council emerged after bringing together Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al-Nahyan to hold talks on the establishment of the Gulf Cooperation Council (Al-Hayari, 2018).

Economic and political events that occurred in the 1970s, for example, The oil crisis in 1970, the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979 and Iran's efforts to export this revolution to the Arab countries in the Gulf, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq war in the same decade caused some countries in the Middle East to come together (Almotairy, 2011: 10). The reason for these countries coming together is to respond to the political and economic developments in the Gulf Region and the world in the best way and to be cautious against crises (Low, Sazlar, 2010: 1). The Gulf Cooperation Council of Arab States was established on 25 May 1981 between six neighboring Arab countries (Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, and Oman). However, the studies on the establishment of this organization date back much earlier (The Concept and Foundation of GCC, 2020). As mentioned earlier, the political and economic tensions at the regional and international level in the late 1970s forced the countries in the Gulf Region to come together and cooperate. As a matter of fact, the governments of the Gulf countries have started to hold emergency and consecutive meetings. It is also envisaged that these countries will come together and gather under one roof, so that the Gulf countries can organize cooperation among themselves and provide a common defense force against the threats they face. In addition, in cooperation and coordination, they aimed to protect both the common action and unity that the people have desired for years, as well as the security and prosperity of the Gulf Region. Kuwait continued to embrace this idea in all Gulf and Arab forums, and in November 1980, Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah, then the Emir of Kuwait, expressed his ideas on the establishment of the Gulf Cooperation Organization in the presence of other Arab leaders in the Gulf at an Arab conference held in Amman, the capital of Jordan. Thus, for the first time, Arab leaders formally discussed this issue at this conference. Also in the late 1980s, other official meetings were held in Saudi Arabia between Gulf leaders, at which the issue of establishing Gulf cooperation was seriously discussed. Six Arab countries in the Gulf Region; The establishment of a Gulf union was considered with the participation of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, and the Sultanate of Oman). In connection with this issue, the foreign ministers of these six Arab countries met in Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia, on February 4,

1981. On February 6, 1981, Saudi Arabia declared that the treaty to establish the Gulf Union was not aimed at the establishment of its political or military union. According to Saudi Arabia's statements, the main purpose of the Gulf union should be to organize and develop aspects of the cooperation that exists between these six countries.

Subsequently, in order to implement the statements made by the foreign ministers of these six countries, the Committee of Experts met in Riyadh on 24 and 25 February 1981 to establish a comprehensive system containing the main articles of the Cooperation Council and to prepare the Council's statutes. The Committee held its second meeting in Muscat, the capital of Oman, on 7 and 8 March 1981. The said meeting was held to complete the discussion of the draft system of the council based on two reports submitted by Oman and Kuwait. On 9 and 10 March of the same year, the foreign ministers of the member states met again in Muscat to discuss the charter of the council and set 25 and 27 May 1981 as the day of the summit meeting to be held in Abu Dhabi. At the summit meeting, decisions were taken on both the Constitution of the Council and the rules of procedure of the Supreme Council, the Council of Ministers, and the General Secretariat. It was also proposed that the Secretary-General of the Council should be in Kuwait. Then, on 25 May 1981, the first summit meeting of the GCC was held in Abu Dhabi, where the constitution of the Gulf Cooperation Council was signed. In addition, the Leaders of the member states discussed a report on joint work. They stated that the emergence of the Gulf Cooperation Council meant responding to the historical, social, cultural, economic, and strategic reality of the region. In addition, this report drew attention to the common characteristics of the people of the region and the threats to the resources of the region, pointing out that the establishment of the council would put an end to the rumors about the power vacuum in the region. The said meeting was accepted as the establishment of the Gulf Cooperation Council and the legal beginning of the council. Moreover, Abdullah Yakup Başara was elected as the general secretary of the council at this meeting. After that, with the formation of the dispute resolution Committee, the bylaws of the council were also written. Later, on 10 and 11 November 1981, the leaders of the GCC member countries also signed the joint economic agreement at the second session of the Supreme Council held in Riyadh (Al-Shamari, 2012: 41-43).

4.2.2. Reasons for the Establishment of the Gulf Cooperation Council

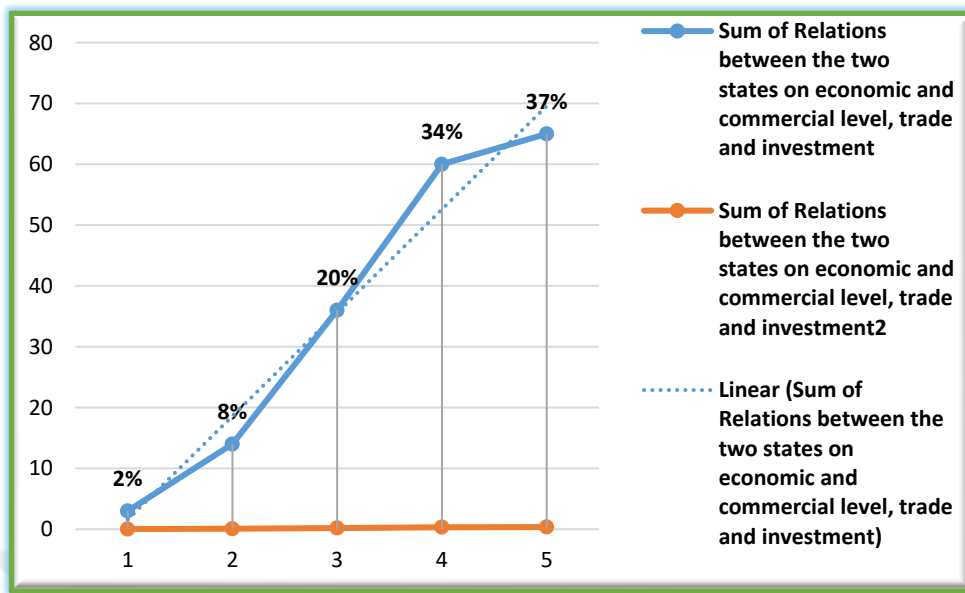
As it is understood, the Gulf Cooperation Council was established on 25 May 1981 between six Arab countries bordering the Persian Gulf (Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates

(UAE), Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain, and Oman. The main common features of these six countries are as follows; The population of these countries is ethnically Arab and religiously Muslim, have a monarchy system, is oil-rich and oil-producing countries, and all economic development programs are financed by oil revenues. In addition, all of these countries suffer from labor problems. Despite all these common features, there are some differences between these countries. For example, there are differences between these countries in terms of population size, surface area, oil, and natural gas reserves. In the Gulf Region, from the early 1980s to 2003, there were three major wars, including The Iran-Iraq War (1980–1988), the Gulf War-1991 (Operation Desert Storm), and the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq. (Mirhosseini, 2012: 9866). According to most sources, there are a number of reasons for the establishment of the Gulf Cooperation Council, the most important factors can be summarized as follows: economic reasons, political reasons, and strategic and security reasons.

4.2.2.1. Economic Reasons

One of the most important reasons leading to the establishment of the Gulf Cooperation Council is the fundamental changes in global economic relations. In addition, the results of these changes; are the emergence of the Gulf as a region that produces the oil and natural gas that others need. Therefore, the energy resources in the aforementioned countries have attracted the attention of developed countries, which have been perceived as a threat by the oil and natural gas-rich countries in the region. Thus, they concluded that these countries could not protect their energy resources through traditional means and preferred to come together to secure their own economic interests. Because other states have demanded that the Gulf States consider their own needs. In fact, the member countries of the organization have been exposed to the political and economic pressures exerted by the global powers against the Gulf Region from time to time. All this led to an organic connection between the six Gulf countries, bringing them together and encouraging these aforementioned states to establish a regional organization. In addition, the desire to face the problems of development, labor, external migration, and political and social structures is another reason for the emergence of the Gulf Cooperation Council. These countries have made efforts to reduce their dependence on oil, diversify their sources of income, and establish agricultural and industrial zones that will meet some of the needs of the region (Al-Shamari, 2012: 45). The space for Turkish and GCC cooperation on economic level, was shown by the data of surveyed interviewees stating that more than 75% of them are with the development of the Turkish VS. GCC economic cooperation.

Figure 7: Turkish and GCC Citizens Opinion with the Development of the Economic Relations - Source (Research Data)



4.2.2.2. Political Reasons

Political factors consist of two main issues: the first has to do with Iran, and the second has to do with Iraq. The Iranian revolution (February 1979), the establishment of an ambitious and expansionist regime in Tehran, has been the source of a dangerous ideology that has provoked revolutionary sentiments. Moreover, this regime has racially caused the balance and coexistence in the region to be disturbed. Thus, as a result of the threats, tensions, and instabilities posed by the Iranian revolution against its neighbors in the Gulf Region, it has encouraged the Arab countries in the Gulf to cooperate with each other. Apart from this, the Iran-Iraq war that took place in 1980 was another reason that led to the establishment of the Gulf Cooperation Council. These six Gulf states, in particular, feared the possibility of the war spilling over into their own lands because it was characterized as a war that led to political, geographical, and social changes that the region would not endure. In addition, this war had the potential to destroy the balance of the region, the status quo, its symbols, and its values. Therefore, it was in the interest of this equestrian country to maintain the status quo of the region as it was. At the same time, this war has encouraged Gulf states to think and behave in an unconventional way to confront the process of changing the status quo. In this context, the establishment of the Gulf Cooperation Council has been one of the unconventional images in the region (Martini vd. 2016: 12-13).

4.2.2.3. Strategic and Security Reasons

Although the Gulf Cooperation Council's constitution does not explicitly mention security, their concerns about security are counted as one of the main reasons leading to the establishment of the GCC. In addition, one of the main reasons why these six countries have come together is to provide a common security system to their own countries. In other words, the purpose of this organization is to ensure the security of the Gulf Region on the one hand and international peace and security on the other. The fear of the Gulf Cooperation Council members was Iran's ambition to bring the region under its hegemony and penetrate the Arab regional system. In particular, the Khomeini regime had a political and strategic dimension, according to which after the Islamic revolution, Iran was trying to control other countries in the Gulf. Another threat was that the Soviets would approach the Persian Gulf and compete with the United States over the natural resources in the region. This rivalry between the Soviets and the United States was particularly over the oil resources in the region. Apart from this, it is necessary to mention Iraq's aggressive and expansionist policy. Although the members of the Gulf Cooperation Council supported Iraq against Iran during the Iraq-Iran War, Iraq continued its expansionist policy towards the Gulf Region and threatened the region. All these events encouraged the Gulf countries to establish the Gulf Cooperation Council. The establishment of this organization was a healthy and solid vision of the Gulf countries equalizing the regional balance in the Persian Gulf. The Gulf Cooperation Council countries have tried to reorganize the balance of power in the Gulf Region with Iraq and Iran. However, due to the difference in the political and economic power of these countries, they have not been able to achieve a triple balance in the Gulf Region (Martini vd. 2016: 5-12). In addition, due to the superiority of Iraq and Iran over other countries in the region, the balance of power in the Gulf Region remained between Iraq and Iran. It can be said that the purpose of the establishment of the Gulf Cooperation Council is based on several important facts, the main ones of which can be summarized as follows:

- 1- Regardless of Arab national security, there is not a single Arab country that can provide its own internal and external security.
- 2- The issue of development is a unitary national issue. Therefore, development cannot be achieved within a small and closed entity, so the issue of development in the Arab world is more a national issue than a local one. Moreover, it encompasses the need for integration, coordination, and diversity.

- 3- Regional groupings have become a feature of the period. In this context, the Gulf Arab countries have sought a formula that can be harmonized between the geographical characteristics of their own countries and the necessity of unity.

The Gulf Cooperation Council was seen as the most logical formula for bringing together six Arab countries with the same social structure, ethnic groups, etc. And uniting them into a regional whole. Moreover, the establishment of this organization is a convenient method of reuniting the citizens of the Gulf. In addition, as a regional council, it tries to secure the cooperation mechanisms that are carrying the region into the twenty-first century (Al-Shamari, 2012: 45-47). Compared to the crises that the Arab League and the Arab Maghreb League constantly face, the GCC has been characterized as the best-performing regional organization in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA Region). The relatively small number of members of the GCC, strong family and cultural ties between member countries, concerns about security, similar governance structures, and a relatively homogeneous socio-economic system can be considered among the factors that facilitate higher levels of cooperation and even integration among GCC members (Sarto, Lecha, 2018: 8). This relative alignment among GCC members can be largely explained by security problems in the Gulf region in the late 1970s, intensification of the threat landscape, and concerns about Iran's growing influence and hegemony in the region. Furthermore, these factors are the main factors that explain the links between GCC member states. In the political sphere, a common monarchical identity brings GCC countries together, while sensitivities about sovereignty drive these countries apart. In the economic sphere, although economies of scale allow access to larger markets and reduce transaction costs, they hinder economic development in which these countries do not have a diversified economic system. In a real sense, these factors stopped this organization from advancing instead of building a more cohesive GCC. However, the hopes go far beyond reality, and in this context, when the GCC is compared with other regional organizations, it is understood that this organization has not reached the level of integration (Martini vd, 2015: 29).

4.3. Objectives of the Gulf Cooperation Council

In fact, following the British withdrawal from the region, the idea of establishing a cooperation organization among the leaders in the Gulf countries developed in order to maintain Arab national unity and solidarity in the Gulf (Al-Jundî, 2017). Therefore, as understood in the founding charter of the GCC signed on February 14, 1981, this organization will be the instrument of maximum coordination, integration, and stronger relations between member

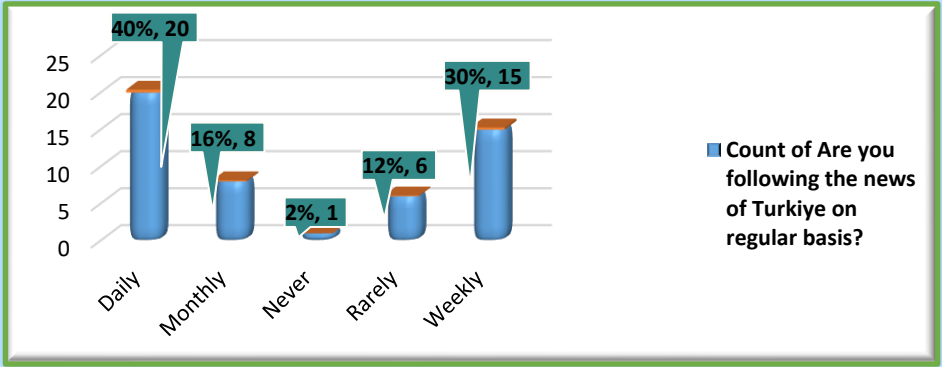
countries in the social, economic, and cultural fields (Duglin, 2010: 9). It is also stated that the organization aims to make regulations in the fields of social, health, media, tourism, legislative and administrative affairs, as well as various economic, financial, commercial, customs and transport. Moreover, the council supports both technical and scientific progress in the fields of mining, industry, agriculture, and water resources, and encourages the establishment of scientific research centers, the creation of joint projects, and the cooperation of private sectors (Al Jazeera, 2014).

The main objectives of the GCC can be summarized as follows:

- 1- To realize coordination, integration, interdependence, and connections between the member states in all areas.
 - 2- To deepen and strengthen the existing ties and cooperation between the citizens of the member states in various fields.
 - 3- To decide in various fields such as economic, financial, trade, customs, transportation, education, culture, social, health, media, and tourism.
 - 4- To promote scientific and technical progress in the fields of industry, mining, and agriculture and to establish joint scientific research centers (Makhawi, 1990: 154).
- It should be mentioned here that while some of the determined targets are implemented, planning and arrangements are still continuing for some of them (Akkaya, 2013: 10).

In a related context, the research showed that the Qatari and Turkish citizens are following the media news on regular basis.

Figure 8: Qatari and Turkish Media Followers - Source (Research Data)



Another point that needs to be emphasized is that while the economic and social objectives of the GCC are clearly expressed, its political objectives are mostly stated in general texts. In addition, there is no mention of the political and military objectives of the council, or the establishment of a military institution to prevent external security or even external danger. Moreover, due to the uncertainty of the security dimension of the council, it is understood that the leaders of the six-member states are trying to compensate politically. Moreover, in the statements made after all the summit meetings, he emphasizes that the security and stability of the region are the responsibility of citizens and member states. It expresses the will and right of the member states of the Council to defend their security and maintain their independence. Although this attitude was not directed at all world powers, the Arab countries in the Persian Gulf were ready to accept the US presence in the region and the security role it played in the region in order to control any political developments in the region. But this was done on the condition that it was not within the framework of binding agreements and alliances that would formally turn the region into a global conflict zone and that it did not enter into a direct confrontation with Iran, which aimed to eliminate US influence in the Gulf. In fact, the United States of America (USA) showed interest in playing this role during the presidency of Ronald Reagan (1980-1988) (Al-Shamari, 2012: 44). As already noted, the purpose of the establishment of the GCC was to cooperate in economic areas rather than military cooperation. The main reason for this policy, which was pursued by the member states of the GCC, was not to provoke the new revolutionary regime in Iran. However, the tension in relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia and the security concerns of the GCC member countries due to Iran's support and protection of Shiite groups in Bahrain led to the establishment of the military arm of the organization (Mirhosseini, 2012: 9866). In this context, the regimes in the Gulf have made political alliances with the United States in order to provide their own countries with a strong protection system. Through these political agreements, the Arab monarchies in the Gulf have enabled their own countries to protect both their internal and external security. It is obvious that the Gulf Cooperation Council emerged especially after the overthrow of the Shah's regime and the Iranian revolution of 1979. During this period, there have been major security problems and political instability in the Persian Gulf. In this context, Iran's threat to the countries of the region in order to export its revolution to other Arab countries in the region and the aforementioned country's continued occupation of the islands of Great Tunb, Little Tunb, and Abu Musa belonging to the United Arab Emirates, in addition, as a result of the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq War and its 8-year duration, the Gulf Cooperation Council countries have brought security and defense issues to the forefront. In the first final statement of the GCC Supreme Council on 25-

26 May 1981, although it did not explicitly address security and defense issues in the Gulf, they pointed out that if the countries in the Gulf Region showed determination in their collective roles, the power vacuum in the region could be ended.

4.4. Gulf Cooperation Council Membership

Membership of the Gulf Cooperation Council is the focal point of Article 5 of the Council's constitution. Accordingly, it is stated that the members of the GCC consist of six countries participating in the meeting of foreign ministers held in Riyadh on 4 February 1981. Thus, the Gulf Cooperation Council is a regional organization with limited membership. Without opening the door to membership of the council and designating the council members as six countries, membership of the Gulf Cooperation Council means that it is closed to other countries. Membership is based on the principle of sovereignty and legal equality among member states. Thus, each member country has one vote regardless of its area, population, and economic strength (Al-Shamari, 2012: 44-48).

4.5. Institutional Structure of the Gulf Cooperation Council

4.5.1. Supreme Committee (High Şura)

It is the highest authority of the Gulf Cooperation Council. The Supreme Council, which determines the general policy of the GCC and the main lines it follows, is composed of the leaders of the member countries, and is chaired by the head of a different state every year. In this regard, the presidency of the Supreme Council changes periodically between the member states in alphabetical order and meets once a year on a regular basis. In addition, special sessions may be held in extraordinary circumstances requested by any of the six member states and with the support of another member. At the GCC's summit meeting held in Abu Dhabi, the capital of the UAE, in 1998, the Supreme Council decided to hold consultation meetings between the last and the next summit. In order for the said consultation meeting to take place, two-thirds of the member states must attend the meeting. Voting takes place in the Supreme Council and each member has one vote. The main decisions of the Supreme Council are taken by the unanimous vote of the participating member states, and the decisions on implementation are taken by majority vote (Beaujouan, 2019: 6).

4.5.2. Council of Ministers

The Council of Ministers consists of the foreign ministers of all the member states of the GCC or their representatives. The Presidency of the Council of Ministers is held by the state presiding over the last ordinary session of the Supreme Council. The Council of Ministers normally holds a meeting three months apart, and in extraordinary circumstances, special meetings may be held upon the invitation of any member and with the support of another member, and with the participation of two-thirds of the Member States. The task of the Council of Ministers is to formulate policies and make recommendations aimed at improving cooperation among the member states in the economic, social, cultural, etc. fields, as well as to ensure coordination among the member states for the implementation of ongoing projects. It is also the task of the Council of Ministers to try to promote and coordinate existing activities in different areas among the member states and to make recommendations to the Supreme Council to direct the most appropriate decisions. The Council of Ministers is tasked with preparing the Supreme Council meetings and agenda. Independently of this, the voting procedures in the Council of Ministers are similar to the voting procedure in the Supreme Council (Alasfoor, 2007: 40).

4.5.3. General Secretariat

The duties of the Secretary-General, headquartered in Riyadh, which is mainly to prepare the budget of the Gulf Cooperation Council; In general, it can be summarized as the preparation of special studies related to cooperation, coordination, planning, and programming of joint actions. The Secretariat General carries out the preparation of periodic reports on the work carried out by the Gulf Cooperation Council, monitoring the implementation of its decisions, preparing reports and studies upon the request of the Supreme Council or the Council of Ministers, deciding for the holding of meetings of various bodies, preparing draft texts of decisions and finalizing agendas. General Secretariat: The Secretary General consists of the Secretary-General's eight Deputy Ministers, the directors general of the functional departments of the Secretariat, and all other subordinate employees, all of whom are appointed by the Secretary-General. Functional structure of the General Secretariat; It consists of different units such as political affairs, security, military, economic, humanitarian, and environmental affairs, legal, financial, and administrative affairs, and information center. The office of the Secretary-General, press and publication affairs, the Office of Technical Communications based in the Kingdom of Bahrain, and the Office of the Consultative Commission in the Sultanate of Oman,

delegates of the GCC's European Union and United Nations missions form part of the administrative structure of the Secretary-General (Secretariat General of the GCC, 2020).

4.6. The Collapse of Gulf cooperation Council and Qatar Crisis

The Arab Spring has had the utmost impact on the relations between the GCC member countries and their policies towards the region. While the approaches of the GCC countries towards the protests that emerged in the region due to the aforementioned Arab Spring and the popular uprisings against dictatorial regimes sometimes overlapped with each other on issues such as the suppression of the Bahrain uprising, they sometimes followed different policies as in the case of Egypt. However, during the Arab Spring, Qatar's foreign policy has been drastically different from the other member states of the GCC. In addition, one of the main reasons why the country is in a different position from the GCC countries, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE during the Arab Spring has been its support for the Brotherhood movement in Egypt. Overall, Qatar's relations with the Muslim Brotherhood have greatly influenced and shaped both Gulf and Middle East politics. The rise of Islamic parties in the Middle East has been perceived as a worrying political development by some members of the GCC. In addition, some Gulf countries with a monarchical structure, such as Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Bahrain, have seen Islamic parties as a serious threat to their own power because Islamic movements have demanded that the Gulf people have a greater say in the administration. Moreover, while these countries sided with the anti-change bloc in the face of the rise of an alternative understanding of governance in countries such as Egypt and Tunisia, Qatar supported the political developments in these countries. For this reason, the economic and political relations between Qatar and the coalition led by Saudi Arabia and the UAE have been further strained in the recent period (Akkaya, Elrantisi, 2015: 13-21).

In this context, on June 5, 2017, with the participation of Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain, and Egypt from outside the Gulf, Qatar was blockaded by land, air, and sea, while the relevant countries cut all political, diplomatic, and commercial relations with Qatar. While the embargoed countries accused Qatar of supporting Islamic Movements and terrorist organizations, as it became clear over time that this embargo was not a normal political dispute, the event was called the Gulf crisis, or more precisely, the Qatar crisis (Cengiz, 2018). In fact, the first wave of Qatar's diplomatic crisis emerged in 2013, but it didn't make itself feel so much until 2017. As a matter of fact, the crisis mentioned in 2017 has become unprecedented. Historically, it has long been known that Saudi Arabia and the UAE have been dissatisfied with

their efforts to establish supremacy in the region and the foreign policies pursued by Qatar in this context. However, the fact that countries in the region came out so harshly against Qatar in 2017 compared to before is linked to a number of political developments. The most obvious of these is that Trump (Yılmaz, 2019: 114-115), who came to power with the promise of putting the interests of the United States first, visited Saudi Arabia in May 2017 and an arms agreement of 460 billion dollars was signed between these two countries during this visit (Arslan, 2018: 80). When Trump emphasized that radical ideologies should not be supported in the Middle East geography in the statement he made after the aforementioned agreement, the leaders who were with him said that the US president meant Qatar. In the statement in question, the US president; explained that Qatar is a country that supports terrorism. Immediately after this statement, the Gulf countries, especially Saudi Arabia and the UAE, acted against Qatar without wasting any time and canceled all their relations with this country in the first place. Later, they declared that their own citizens should leave Qatar as soon as possible and demanded that Qataris return to their own countries from these countries (Yılmaz, 2019: 115). It can be said here that Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Bahrain; tried to isolate Qatar in the Gulf Region. "Qatar is a Gulf country caught between two regional powers that are rivals in every sense, such as Saudi Arabia and Iran. However, although it is a very small country in terms of area and population, it has increased its importance both in Middle East politics and on a global scale by making the right use of oil and natural gas resources.

In this context, in parallel with Qatar's rise in the economy, the most important regional political development that has made a name for itself in global politics has been the Arab Spring" (Görgülü, 2017: 6). It can be said here that Qatar, which is engaged in a political activity that is not expected from its geographical size with the area opened to it by its economic power, has come to the forefront with mediation activities in the problems occurring in the countries in the region. However, the country in question began to lose its mediator feature during the Arab Spring. In this context, Qatar, which contributed to the development of popular movements with its impressive media network (Al Jazeera) in the period following the Arab Spring and participated in NATO-led military operations in Libya, clashed with other Gulf countries by openly taking part in the anti-regime front in Libya and Egypt. Although the Gulf countries in Qatar, Bahrain, and Syria acted together with Saudi Arabia in particular, the balance policy it followed in the region and the steps it took in this context worried Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Bahrain. More specifically, in recent years, Qatar has achieved solid trade ties with revenues from oil and gas exports and various investments around the world.

Therefore, Qatar's rapid development in terms of economy and its economic and political initiatives independently of other Gulf countries have contradicted the interests of Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain, and Egypt (Sdam, 2017: 4-5). In particular, Qatar, which is in favor of the reforms demanded by the people in the region and has been following its policy of distancing itself from the Al-sisi regime that seized power with a military coup in Egypt, was blockaded on June 5, 2017, by some countries in the region, especially Saudi Arabia and the UAE, due to such attitudes (Görgülü, 2017: 7). When we look at the justification of this blockade, it is observed that Qatar is accused of supporting structures such as the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, Hamas in Palestine, Hezbollah in Lebanon, the Hussi in Yemen, DAESH and Al Qaeda in Syria, as well as maintaining good relations with Iran. However, the Qatari government has denied such accusations and declared that it has been subjected to cyber-attacks. However, Qatar's statements did not convince the bloc led by Saudi Arabia. As a result, within the GCC, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Bahrain have taken a very tough stance against Qatar and completely cut ties with this country, accusing it of supporting terrorist organizations and creating instability in the region (Tomar, 2017).

Apart from the GCC, countries such as Egypt, Yemen, Libya, Maldives, Mauritania, and Senegal have severed their relations with Qatar, while Jordan and Djibouti have lowered the level of their diplomatic relations. In addition, Türkiye, Iran, and Morocco have tried to reduce the impact of the blockade with food, medicine, etc. aid to Qatar from the air. Kuwait and Oman were not parties to the embargo. Apart from this, Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Russia, China, Japan, and India suggested that the crisis should be resolved through dialogue (Bingöl, 2017: 1). In this context, Kuwait has mediated between the two sides for the resolution of the crisis. As a result, a 13-point list of demands was forwarded to Qatar by the Saudi Arabian bloc. In the list in question, there were demands such as Qatar immediately breaking off diplomatic relations with Iran and promising not to carry out any activities regardless of the politics of the Gulf countries. However, the demands of the Saudi Arabian-led bloc were rejected by Qatar (SDAM, 2017: 2).

Looking at Qatar's geographical position, it is understood that it is impossible to cut ties with Iran. As it is known, Qatar, which is rich in oil and natural gas, is a peninsular country located in the Persian Gulf. The economy of this country depends to a considerable extent on revenues from oil and gas exports. From this point of view, Qatar needs to pass through the Free Bosphorus to export its natural gas and oil to other countries. In other words, Qatar's only way out from the Persian Gulf to the Gulf of Oman and then to the Indian Ocean is through the

Strait of Hormuz, controlled by Iran and Oman. Apart from this, the "North Field-South Pars", which is considered to be the largest natural gas field in the world, is common between Qatar and Iran. In short, Qatar's relations with Iran are mainly geopolitical and geo-economic. Since the Iran-Iraq war, there has been no serious problem between these two countries in terms of natural gas sharing or other issues. Qatar's keeping relations with Iran at the required level is of great importance for the extraction and export of natural gas. As mentioned earlier, the relationship with Iran is a necessity for Qatar not only for the endless exploitation of natural gas deposits but also for the export of liquefied gas through the Strait of Hormuz to world markets. Thanks to Iran's geographical location and military capabilities, it has the capacity to slow down the passage through the Strait of Hormuz, to cause difficulties, and to prevent it when it takes risks. For all these reasons, maintaining good relations with Iran for Qatar stands out as a necessity rather than a choice (Bingöl, 2017: 6). On the other hand, this country acts independently of the difficulties imposed by the geography and the foreign policies pursued by the GCC member countries in order to get rid of the hegemony of Saudi Arabia. In this context, it has sought cooperation with countries such as the U.K, the U.S, Iran, and Türkiye. In fact, it has made huge investments in some of these countries. In fact, they have attempted to isolate this country because such policies pursued by Qatar do not suit the interests of Saudi Arabia and its successor member states, but they have not been very successful. In fact, the blockade and embargoes initiated against Qatar by the countries led by Saudi Arabia have also made the existence of the GCC, the most important organization in the Gulf, questionable. Even if the organization in question served as a guarantor among the member countries, it is not possible to say that it was able to reach an organizational mission that played an active role in the rapid and hot developments in the region during the Arab Spring in which the Middle East was reshaped and could be an authority in strategic decisions. "Although the GCC, which has left behind 40 years with more than one war and political tension, was established with the common strategic objectives of the member countries, the most politically and economically powerful country of the council is undoubtedly Saudi Arabia. The aforementioned strong country element makes it inevitable for Saudi Arabia to become an influential country over the organization. As a matter of fact, in the recent crisis in the region, with Saudi Arabia playing the leading role in the siege against Qatar and the dysfunction of the administrative mechanisms of the council, comments such as the GCC falling into a coma have begun to increase. The most obvious example proving that the GCC is dysfunctional in terms of administrative procedures was seen in December 2017 with Kuwait's intensive diplomatic initiative following the embargo, with limited participation from Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Bahrain at the council's annual ordinary

meeting held in Kuwait. Due to the weak participation of the parties due to the blockade, the summit, which usually lasted two days in open and closed sessions, was reduced to a single day. Moreover, no serious decision was taken at the GCC's annual summit meeting to end the embargo on Qatar. This situation naturally led to comments that the organization is not a strong administrative structure within itself or that the council cannot be the solution authority in the crises experienced" (Cengiz, 2018).

Finally, it should be noted that as a result of Kuwait's intense diplomatic anchors, which have assumed the role of mediator since the beginning of the crisis, both sides participated in the 41st summit of the GCC. The 41st summit meeting of the GCC was held on 5 January 2021 in the city of Al-Ula in the northwest of Saudi Arabia. At the said meeting, the Qatar Crisis, which lasted for about three and a half years, was officially ended (Vakil, 2021). As a result, the different approaches adopted by the GCC countries towards the political developments in the region and the occasional fact that they carry out separate policies according to their own economic interests distract this organization from being a "similar model of the European Union" from its founding mission.

CHAPTER V

5. CONCLUSION and RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Conclusion

The events of September 11, 2001, one of the international developments that took place in the 2000s, and the events that followed affected the bilateral relations between Türkiye and Qatar. In this direction, the U.S. interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq in 2003 following an aggressive policy after the September 11 events created a series of events that deeply affected regional dynamics. These events had a positive reflection on the relations between Türkiye and Qatar. In other words, the fact that the US made its military presence felt in the region and moved its air force from Saudi Arabia to Qatar aroused the feeling that national security was guaranteed under the security umbrella of the United States in the Doha administration. This situation paved the way for the Doha administration to act to realize the policies it has adopted rather than dealing with threat perceptions against the regime's security and has been the driving force in establishing relations with the Ankara administration. On the other hand, the U.S.'s intervention in Iraq and its military presence in the region has helped to limit the tensions that may arise between regional powers and pave the way for Ankara and Doha administrations to establish close relations with each other.

In addition to these international developments, the process that broke out in the region at the end of 2010 and was called the Arab Spring affected the regional dynamics as well as the development of relations between Türkiye and Qatar in particular. In this context, during the Arab Spring process, which broke out in Tunisia at the end of 2010 in line with democratic demands and spread to the region, Türkiye and Qatar supported the demonstrations by siding with the people and pursued policies in this direction, unlike the countries that took a stance in favor of maintaining the status quo in the region. During the Arab Spring process, both sides carried out common policies, especially in Libya, Egypt, and Syria, and acted in political harmony in this sense. This situation brought about the rapprochement between Türkiye and Qatar and led to the emergence of the Türkiye-Qatar partnership.

When we look at the events that took place in Egypt, where the Arab Spring process broke out after Tunisia, it was examined that Türkiye was the first country to call on the Hosni Mubarak regime to comply with the demands of the people, and Qatar was the first Gulf country to state that it was on the side of the people. However, in 2012, both Ankara and Doha supported

Mohamed Morsi, who was supported by the Muslim Brotherhood who came to power in Egypt through democratic elections. So much so that in this process, both sides provided economic support to the Morsi administration and developed their relations with Egypt in the political field. However, the close relations established by Egypt and Türkiye, and Qatar in particular with regard to the Muslim Brotherhood have disturbed the countries led by Saudi Arabia and the UAE, which are in favor of maintaining the status quo in the region, and these countries have taken a stance against the Ankara-Doha line. In the following period, a coup was carried out against the Morsi administration in July 2013 under the leadership of Al-sisi and Türkiye and Qatar were among the countries that voiced their reactions to the coup. In this direction, it has been seen that the support given to the Muslim Brotherhood by Ankara and Doha administration, especially in Egypt, disturbs the countries that take a stance in favor of maintaining the existing order in the region and that these countries are trying to isolate Türkiye and Qatar in the region in this respect. It can be said that this situation leads to the closer proximity of the Ankara-Doha line to each other and constitutes the driving force for the establishment of close relations between the two sides.

It has been observed that Türkiye and Qatar have achieved political harmony in their attitudes regarding the events that took place in Libya during the Arab Spring process. This political harmony was clearly seen in the fact that both Ankara and Doha joined the NATO-led humanitarian intervention force in Libya upon the escalation of tensions, and provided both military and political support to the GNA against Haftar's forces by seeing the Tripoli-based GNA as Libya's legitimate representative. On the other hand, although it is seen that Türkiye plays an active role in the field because it has historical ties with Libya from the past, it can be said that Qatar also adopts an active political stance on Libya. This situation has disturbed countries such as the UAE and Egypt, which support Haftar's forces, and caused them to take a stance against Türkiye and Qatar while bringing the Ankara-Doha line closer together.

In the events that developed in Syria during the Arab Spring process, it was seen that Türkiye and Qatar took a stance in favor of the overthrow of the Assad regime and supported the opposition politically, logistically, and economically. In addition, it was examined that both sides participated in both national and international meetings aimed at achieving peace in Syria and acted in harmony by hosting these meetings. On the other hand, it has been concluded that the policies pursued by Ankara and Doha administrations towards Syria were hampered by the participation of the terrorist organization the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIS) and international actors in the civil war process that broke out in Syria. In addition, in the context

of the civil war in Syria, Türkiye, unlike Qatar, has faced a refugee problem with the fact that it borders Syria. Therefore, while the joint policies of both Ankara and Qatar in Syria brought about the establishment of close relations between the two sides, it was seen that Türkiye was more active in the field due to reasons such as the refugee issue. As a matter of fact, during the Arab Spring process, it has been seen that the policies pursued by Ankara and Doha administrations in the region in general, especially in Egypt, Libya, and Syria have brought the two countries closer to each other and led to the establishment of deeper relations between them, and the alliance or partnership between Türkiye and Qatar has begun to be mentioned in the region. In other words, the Arab Spring process led to the formation of various blocs in the region and brought about an order in which Türkiye and Qatar made a name for themselves within the same bloc. In addition, the geopolitical environment that emerged in the regional context with this process has strengthened the partnership between the two sides by allowing Türkiye and Qatar to act in line with their own goals.

The partnership situation between Türkiye and Qatar was tested both in the July 15 coup attempt and in the Gulf crisis that occurred in 2017. In this context, the events that took place during the Arab Spring process, especially in relation to the Muslim Brotherhood in particular in Egypt, on the one hand, escalated the tension within the GCC, and on the other hand, they revealed an equation in which countries such as Saudi Arabia and the UAE took opposing positions against Türkiye and Qatar at the regional level. In the following period, it was seen that countries such as Saudi Arabia, UAE, Bahrain, and Egypt, which are called the Arab Quartet and which take a stance in favor of maintaining the status quo in the region, built on the theme of "providing support to terror groups" and that the division at the regional level became more evident in the Gulf crisis that broke out with the embargo applications against Qatar in June 2017 for various reasons. In addition, it should be noted at this point that although the countries in question imposed an embargo against the Doha administration citing many articles, the main reason for the crisis was the perception of opposition groups as a threat by countries such as the UAE and Saudi Arabia, whose influence began to increase in the regional context during the Arab Spring process. In other words, the emergence of the perception that the security of the regime was in danger in these countries was effective in the embargo applications against the Doha administration. Türkiye has made several diplomatic initiatives to resolve the Gulf crisis, providing both military and economic support to the Doha administration shortly after the crisis erupted, as well as providing food aid. This situation has

further deepened the close relationship between Türkiye and Qatar, which generally adopted a common stance by siding with the people during the Arab Spring process.

When the attitudes of Türkiye and Qatar regarding Iran's nuclear deal, which is described as one of the developments effective in the regional context, are examined, it is seen that the two countries have taken a common stance in the said incident and have approached the agreement positively towards the agreement in terms of political, economic and energy security in particular in the context of their interests in general. Therefore, the fact that Türkiye and Qatar have taken a common stance on Iran's nuclear program both in line with their own interests and in terms of ensuring regional stability has triggered the opening of cooperation channels between Doha and Ankara. The relations between Türkiye and Qatar have affected the internal dynamics of both countries as well as international and regional dynamics. In this respect, first of all, as to whether the leaders of Türkiye and Qatar have influenced the course of bilateral relations, it has been seen that the policies adopted by the AK Party under the leadership of Erdoğan and the political attitudes followed since the period of Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani in Qatar are similar. In addition, it was concluded that the visions adopted by Ahmet Davutoğlu, who served as the Minister of Foreign Affairs in Türkiye between 2009 and 2014, and Hamad bin Qassim bin Jaber al-Thani, who served as the Minister of Foreign Affairs in Qatar, and the steps they took in this direction were similar. As a matter of fact, although it is examined that the leadership element is not the main factor in the development of bilateral relations, it has been analyzed that it constitutes the driving force in the rapprochement of relations between the Ankara and Doha administrations.

It was emphasized that close historical and cultural ties among the intellectual elements analyzed under the heading of local dynamics were effective in establishing close relations between Ankara and Doha administrations. On the other hand, it was concluded that the ideology factor was not effective in establishing close relations between the two sides. In other words, it has been seen in the literature that the view that Türkiye and Qatar have developed their relations based on the ideological factor is not valid and that the two countries act within the framework of a pragmatic foreign policy understanding rather than ideological elements. Finally, it was analyzed that the intersection of political, economic, and security-based interests between the two sides in the Middle East geography played an effective role in the development of relations between Türkiye and Qatar. In this direction, it has been seen that the two countries have established close relations both in line with common interests and goals and for pragmatic reasons. On the other hand, in the developing bilateral relations between Türkiye and Qatar, the

economic interests that the two countries have gained from each other have played a decisive role, although not the main motivation. This situation in particular has manifested itself in Qatar's investments in Türkiye. It has been seen that the developments in Qatar's investments in Türkiye and the increase in the number of Turkish companies in Qatar are also reflected in areas such as tourism and energy cooperation between the two countries.

However, on the one hand, Qatar invests in various fields in Türkiye, especially in the financial sector in recent years, and on the other hand, more than 500 Turkish companies operate in various projects in Qatar. It has been seen that Ankara and Doha administrations have developed cooperation with the military and defense industry with the effect of the successful steps taken in the field of defense industry in Türkiye in recent years. At this point, it was examined that Türkiye not only exports defense industry products to Qatar but also provides training to people in the relevant field. In addition, in addition to the cooperation between the two countries on energy, it was seen that the trade volume between Ankara and Doha administrations started to increase especially after the AK Party came to power and that the volume exceeded one billion dollars in 2008. However, it is stated here that although it is examined that the trade volume between Türkiye and Qatar has increased since 2002, it has been concluded that the increase in question is behind the Gulf countries such as Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

5.2. Recommendations

As a result, although it is thought that the future of the good relations between Türkiye and Qatar may be influenced by the factors that may arise at the international, regional, and local levels, it is foreseen that the partnership relationship between the two sides will deepen further.

The recommendations that this research concludes are:

1- To Qatar and Türkiye:

- Both states can work on deepening the relations to nations level and increase the cultural rapprochement.
- The ongoing world energy crisis can be a further page of bilateral cooperation in energy venue which is a hot topic on global politics agenda.

- Further cooperation on diplomacy level and international representation arena level, and enabling further events and occasions for this international prominence i.e., Antalya Diplomacy Forum, Doha Forum, ...etc.
- Better experience sharing in mediation roles, like when Qatar facilitated the Taliban-U.S. talks or when Turkey made the grain agreement between Ukraine and Russia.
- Keeping the political lobbying and advocacy for joint political agenda in Arab countries, i.e., in Syrian file, in Libya and others.

2- To GCC leadership:

- Since Turkish existence in the Gulf area has been a reality and will be so for a long time to come, it would be better to invest in the Gulf - Turkish relations in military cooperation and related defense industries fields.
- Turkish recent normalization with UAE, Saudi Arabia can be extended further to other countries in the region like Egypt.
- Türkiye can unify its foreign policy towards Arab nation along with UAE and Saudi Arabia which are the leader countries in Arab World.
- GCC can take a proactive approach to be more open towards the Turkish role in Arab countries.
- GCC can cooperate with Türkiye to fulfill its political agenda in other countries – geopolitically this is possible in Syria, Somalia, and Libya where Turkish army exist.

This thesis discussed the horizons of future cooperation between two states on the people's level and in the light of the GCC relations. There are other topics still that this research recommends to further researches to consider, i.e., cooperation on media level and mutual TV channels broadcasts in both languages, Qatari assistance to Türkiye in petrol exploration which need further research, and the heavy industries in Türkiye in Qatari's investment eyes.

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