T.C.
ANKARA YILDIRIM BEYAZIT UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

TÜRKİYE'S SOFT POWER POLICIES IN CENTRAL ASIA: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

MASTER'S THESIS

Rabia Nur AK

DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

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Thesis Advisor
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APPROVAL PAGE

The thesis, prepared by Rabia Nur AK and titled "Türkiye's Soft Power Policies in Central Asia: A Comparative Analysis" is accepted by unanimous vote as a master's thesis at Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University, Institute of Social Sciences, Department of International Relations.

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Thesis Defense Date: 29.08.2024

I certify that this thesis fulfills the requirements to be deemed a master's thesis at Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt Universirty, Institute of Social Sciences, Department of International Relations.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work, and I affirm that I have not engaged in unethical behavior violating patents and copyrights at any stage, from the planning to the writing of the thesis. I state that I have acquired all information in this thesis in accordance with academic and ethical rules and have cited the sources of all information and comments used in this thesis. 29.08.2024

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Rabia Nur AK

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the ever-changing international system, it is my conviction that it is crucial for the sustainability and recognition of Türkiye's ancient and noble history as well as the current state of our country to develop relations based on trust and security with countries that have the same history, similar lifestyles and language structures that do not at all sound unfamiliar in terms of phonetics. In this respect, I owe a debt of gratitude and lifelong appreciation to my thesis advisor, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Sevinç ÖZCAN, who helped me to visualize once again that the strength that our country needs in the face of the historical and structural challenges it faces is present in the blood flowing in its veins, who never withheld her positive approach even in the most critical moments, and who transformed the piles of intellectual clay in my mind into a precious work of art with her invaluable contributions and benevolence. I would also like to extend my eternal gratitude to Prof. Dr. Cem KARADELİ, Prof. Dr. Burak ÖZPEK, and Assist. Prof. Dr. Kenan ASLANLI for their comments and contributions, for having deemed this study worthy of their comments and contributions, and for the new horizons they have illuminated and the paths they have enlightened through the insights they have shared.

I would also like to thank my beloved father, Atty. Yıldırım AK, for his lifelong counseling, the many books he poured into my hands, for sharing his deep historical, cultural, and intellectual accumulation with me, often in high and sometimes in soft and gentle tones, for nurturing my sense of curiosity and inquisitiveness, for never leaving my questions unanswered, and for planting the seeds of the research topic of this study when I was just a little girl. I owe my sincere appreciation to my dear mother, Pharm. Nesrin AK, for doing everything she could to facilitate the research process, for never withholding her love and support from me, for providing me with the motivation I needed to complete this study in her own unique ways, and for valuing my individuality and self-worth above all else. I wish to thank my beloved sisters, Elif Neslihan KOÇ and Atty. Büşra Aslıhan AK POLAT, their beloved husbands Nail KOÇ, and Batuhan POLAT for their understanding and support, for their unwavering love and patience for my neglect of them and my precious nieces and nephews during this process. I would like to extend my infinite thanks to Tomris CANATAN, my ray of moonlight, who brought a smile to my heart in the most difficult times and illuminated my next step.

Last but not least, to my dearest (future) husband Batuhan GÖKBULUT, who went through this process together with me, who lifted my spirits when I was ready to give up, who smoothed my stress and tension upon his chest, who provided me with the understanding and space I needed, who shouldered the burden of the stress for me from time to time during the countless days I spent studying, and most importantly, for never having lost his faith in me. In the hope of having planted a small sapling in the shade of which future generations will be fortunate enough to sit and enjoy discussions on art and philosophy when the sapling grows to be a magnificent tree…

ABSTRACT

Türkiye's Soft Power Policies in Central Asia: A Comparative Analysis

When the history of international relations is examined, states have perceived the use of hard force, which includes military elements and the use of force, as almost the sole alternative to achieve a certain goal. Today, when technology, knowledge, and globalization have developed rapidly, the perception of power in the international system has also changed. The importance of soft power, which derives its source from the cultural and political values and foreign policy of a country, has increased especially after the Cold War.

This study, which was prepared to understand the role of soft power in Turkish foreign policy and the utilization, role, and importance of soft power in Central Asia, aims to reveal Türkiye's potential, fields of activity, and practices in this field.

After the Central Asian Republics gained their independence in 1991, soft power came to the fore in Türkiye's regional policies. During the rule of the Justice and Development Party (AK Party) governments, policies in this direction have gained prominence, which consequently has resulted in the perception that soft power activities emerged during the AK Party era. In particular, economic and humanitarian aid, and cultural and educational activities have been identified as soft power strategies. Türkiye has pursued soft power strategies in Central Asia, especially in the fields of education, culture, social, economic, religious and foreign policy.

Keywords: Soft Power, Central Asia, Turkish Foreign Policy

ÖZET

Türkiye'nin Orta Asya'daki Yumuşak Güç Uygulamaları: Karşılaştırmalı Analiz

Uluslararası ilişkiler tarihi incelendiğinde devletler, askeri unsurları ve güç kullanımını içeren sert güç kullanımını belirli bir hedefe ulaşmak için neredeyse tek alternatif olarak algılamışlardır. Teknoloji, bilgi ve küreselleşmenin hızla geliştiği günümüzde uluslararası sistemdeki güç algısı da değişmiştir. Kaynağını bir ülkenin kültürel ve siyasi değerlerinden ve dış politikasından alan yumuşak gücün önemi özellikle Soğuk Savaş sonrasında artmıştır.

Türk dış politikasında yumuşak gücün rolünü ve Orta Asya'da yumuşak gücün kullanımını, rolünü ve önemini anlamak amacıyla hazırlanan bu çalışma, Türkiye'nin bu alandaki potansiyelini, faaliyet alanlarını ve uygulamalarını ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır.

Orta Asya Cumhuriyetleri'nin 1991 yılında bağımsızlıklarını kazanmalarının ardından Türkiye'nin bölgesel politikalarında yumuşak güç ön plana çıkmıştır. Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AK Parti) hükümetleri döneminde bu yöndeki politikalar ön plana çıkmış, bu da yumuşak güç faaliyetlerinin AK Parti döneminde ortaya çıktığı algısına neden olmuştur. Özellikle ekonomik ve insani yardımlar ile kültürel ve eğitsel faaliyetler yumuşak güç stratejileri olarak tanımlanmıştır. Türkiye Orta Asya'da özellikle eğitim, kültür, sosyal, ekonomik, dini ve dış politika alanlarında yumuşak güç stratejileri izlemiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yumuşak Güç, Orta Asya, Türk Dış Politikası

CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

AA	: Anadolu Agency
AFAD	: Disaster and Emergency Management Authority
AKP	: Justice ans Development Party
ASAN	: Azerbaijan Presidential State Agency for Citizens' Services and Social Innovations
BRI	: Belt and Road Initiative
BSEC	: Black Sea Economic Cooperation
CATIC	: Chinese Military-Technical Company
CRI	: China Radio International
D-8	: Developing Eight Countries
DIB	: Directorate of Religious Affairs of Türkiye
ECO	: Organization of Economic Cooperation
GDP	: Gross Domestic Product
KDK	: Public Diplomacy Coordinatorship
KEK	: Türkiye-Tajikistan Joint Economic Commission
OIC	: Organization of Islamic Cooperation
PKK	: Kurdistan Workers' Party
RHM	: Russian Humanitarian Mission
SARFT	: The State Administration of Radio Film and Television
TIKA	: Turkish Cooperation and Development Agency
TOBB	: Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Türkiye
TRT	: Turkish Radio and Television Company
TURKSOY	: International Organization of Turkic Culture
TÜSAİD	: Turkish Industry and Business Association
YEE	: Yunus Emre Institution
YTB	: Presidency For Turks Abroad And Related Communities

INTRODUCTION

The concept of soft power was conceptualized by Joseph Nye in the 1990s and introduced to the literature. Since then, the concept has been discussed by academic circles. The changes in the international system, the increase in international communication, the revolution in information, and the rapid progress of globalization have been the factors that have contributed to the importance of soft power. The concept of soft power, characterized as the ability to persuade and influence the preferences of others through elements such as appeal and attraction without resorting to hard power and rooted in culture, foreign policy, and political values, was introduced in the 1990s. Establishing closer relations with regions with cultural and historical ties, developing deeper relations with the peoples of these regions, dealing with their problems, and utilizing culture and values, which are important sources of soft power, demonstrate Türkiye's aspiration to become a soft power.

The process that initially emerged with İsmail Cem and began with the goal of establishing favorable relations with communities with close cultures and histories continued with the great influence of Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu in foreign policy. In the wake of the 2002 General Elections, it is fair to say that Türkiye, similar to other states, has acknowledged the internal dynamics of the state and the changes in the international system as well as the emergence and importance of soft power, and has achieved progress in this field. Today, developing relations with the peoples of the region, addressing regional problems, assuming an order-building role, and prioritizing universal norms and values in a broad range of areas from Central Asia to the Caucasus, from the Balkans to Africa, from Europe to the Middle East have become contributing factors to Türkiye's soft power. This study attempts to examine the role of soft power in Turkish Foreign Policy and the use of soft power in Central Asia based on the soft power approach conceptualized and outlined by Nye. The study covers the period from 1991 to April 2017 and has descriptive and situational characteristics as well.

In this study, Türkiye's use of soft power and identity construction in Central Asia is investigated comprehensively with reference to the influence exerted by China and Russia. The first chapter explores the concept of power in international relations under various

theoretical frameworks. A variety of theories such as realism, liberalism, and structuralist approaches are employed in the attempt to explain how the concept of power is conceived and how Türkiye has formulated a strategy in this context. The study examines the concept of soft power based on elements such as embedded cultural, and political values, and foreign policy. Moreover, it analyzes how Türkiye has utilized these resources to enhance its influence in Central Asia. Identity construction is explored at the cultural, individual, and communal levels, centering its focus on Türkiye's identity construction processes in the region and how such processes are integrated into its soft power strategies. In addition, Türkiye's Central Asia policy, the resources on which it relies, and the role that the use of soft power steers in this process are comprehensively discussed. Türkiye's influence in the region in various fields such as education, culture, economy, social interactions as well as religion is examined. The final sections of the study emphasize the influence of Russia and China on the use of soft power and identity construction in Central Asia. In this context, an important comparison is offered to understand Türkiye's strategies. The study provides a well-balanced analysis, offering a broad perspective for assessing Türkiye's influence in Central Asia, while also taking the influence of other important actors in the region under consideration.

1. Nature, Content and Limits of Problem

The scope of the research includes Türkiye's foreign policy and cultural diplomacy in Central Asia after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. The limits of the research are as follows:

- The study covers only the former Soviet republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. Other Central Asian countries such as East Turkistan, Mongolia and Afghanistan are excluded.
- The study focuses only on Türkiye's public diplomacy activities towards Central Asia. Türkiye's economic, military or political relations in the region are excluded.
- The research focuses only on the interests of China and Russia in Central Asia. The role of other regional or global actors in the region is excluded.

The significance of the research can be expressed as follows:

- The research aims to reveal the dynamics and consequences of Türkiye's identity construction and the use of soft power in Central Asia. Thereby, it aims to contribute to the evaluation of Türkiye's effectiveness and potential in the region.
- The research aims to analyze the dimension and impact of the competition between Türkiye, China and Russia in Central Asia. Thus, it aims to contribute to the comprehension of the geopolitical importance and security of the region.
- The research aims to analyze the status and role of the Turkic republics in Central Asia in the relations between Türkiye, China and Russia. Hence, it aims to contribute to highlighting the political and cultural identity and diversity of the region.

The hypotheses of the research can be listed as follows:

- The research postulates that Türkiye is in the process of identity construction in Central Asia. This process aims to strengthen Türkiye's historical, cultural, religious and ethnic ties to the region.
- The research postulates that Türkiye pursues a soft power strategy in Central Asia. This strategy aims to increase Türkiye's attractiveness, influence and cooperativeness in the region.
- The research postulates that Russia and China pursues a policy of preservation of interests in Central Asia. This policy aims to preserve the security, sovereignty and leadership of Russia and China in the region.

The limitations of the research can be stated as follows:

- The research may lose its currency due to the rapid and changing political and social developments in Central Asia. Therefore, the results of the research may only be specific to the research period.
- The research may face challenges in the data collection process due to the difficulty and limitation of data access in Central Asia. Therefore, the scope and depth of the research may be limited.
- Due to the complexity and sensitivity of the relations between Türkiye, Russia and China the research may encounter problems in the level of sincerity and

honesty of the interviewees. Therefore, the validity and reliability of the research may be affected.

2. Problem and Sub-problem

Problem: What is the relationship between Türkiye's identity construction, use of soft power and Russian and Chinese influence in Central Asia and how does this relationship affect Türkiye's influence in the region?

Sub-problems:

- How can Türkiye's identity construction in Central Asia be characterized and what are its elements?
- Through which institutions, instruments, and activities is Türkiye's use of soft power in Central Asia being realized?
- What is the extent of Russian and Chinese influence in Central Asia and in which areas does it manifest itself?
- Does Türkiye's identity construction and use of soft power in Central Asia offer an alternative to Russian and/or Chinese influence? If so, how effective and recognized is this alternative?
- How does Türkiye's identity construction and use of soft power in Central Asia affect its prospects for cooperation or competition with Russia and/or China?

3. Aims and Expected Benefits of Research?

The aim of this research is to analyze the relationship between Türkiye's identity construction, use of soft power and Russian and Chinese influence in Central Asia. The research problem can be defined as follows: How does Türkiye's identity construction in Central Asia affect its use of soft power? How does this utilization challenge the influence and interests of Russia and China in the region?

The research may also analyze the position and role of other countries in Central Asia in the relations between Türkiye, Russia and China. By doing so, it can contribute to the evaluation of the region from a broader perspective.

The research may also address Türkiye's economic, military, or political relations with Central Asia. Hence, it can contribute to Türkiye's multidimensional engagement in the region.

The research may also analyze the role of other regional or global actors in Central Asia. Thereby, it can contribute to the region's position in international relations.

4. The Method of Research

The research is qualitative and will employ a comparative methodology. The positions of five Central Asian countries in the relations between Türkiye, Russia and China shall be compared. The research will use document analysis as data collection method. The research will use content analysis as the method of data analysis. The collected information will be interpreted as it relates to Türkiye's identity construction, use of soft power, and Russian and Chinese influence.

1. THE USE OF SOFT POWER

1.1. The Concept of Power

Hans Morgenthau placed the concept of power at the center of the arguments of the realist approach after having identified the main purpose of international politics as the pursuit of power and the struggle for power as well as having defined national interest in terms of the concept of power. However, the exact nature of this concept, which is assumed to have such determining significance, has not been revealed. Holsti (1964: 179) argued in criticism of Morgenthau's use of this concept in various and ambiguous ways, namely to refer to the concept as a type of relationship, as the most primal goal in international politics, and as a means to achieve what is ultimately desired. According to Holsti, power represents the capacity of a country to influence and direct the behavior of another country in line with the interests of the latter by leveraging its capabilities and assets through various strategies such as reward, punishment, persuasion, or coercion. According to Ashley (1984: 272), this concept has been widely employed in the realist conception both in the sense of having the ability to influence other actors ("having power") and in the sense of the actor who possesses these abilities ("being the power").

Some have attempted to define power with respect to its elements (Morgenthau, 1985: 127-164), while others have tried to contextualize the concept by examining the results of the adopted policies (Dahl, 1957; Ward/House, 1988; Nye, 1990a: 155). Accordingly, the interpretation of power may be based on attributes such as geography, natural resources, industrial capacity, population, national character, diplomatic capacity, and the quality of government, as well as on the consequential outcomes of a country's actions emerged as a result of the channelization of another actor, i.e. the manner in which power is exercised. However, it is clear from the findings that providing an explanation of power does not offer an analytical contribution in the theoretical sense. After all, analyses based on consequences are more likely to generate retrospective logical narratives about historical events than to provide predictive explanations. Thus, the concept of power construed in such a manner does not prove to be an analytically convenient notion.

Nevertheless, the explanations based on the elements of power or the available resources are also inconclusive since what is possessed or commanded may not always have

the political consequences that are associated with power. Then, these elements remain merely as sources of potential. Moreover, what others possess is as important for the characterization of power as the controlled resources. To put it in other words, power is in fact a relative concept and can only acquire relevance when compared to the respective capacities of other countries. This comparison may come relatively effortless in an environment with a small number of actors, but it is much more challenging in the context of complicated relations between a large number of states.

A fundamental conundrum in recognizing the issue is whether resources or elements that are not used for political purposes can be included in the characterization of power. Elements that are possessed but are not utilized can only qualify as potential power. However, actual power can be correlated with a purposeful use of power. In order to refer to power, its constituent elements need to be controlled and utilized in a way that is capable of producing the desired consequences. If the possessed elements are not fit to be utilized or if they do not yield the intended results, it is unlikely that the elements will come together. The elements of power ought to be used in line with a certain intention and to achieve certain results. Nye (1990: 178) defines the ability to bring the elements of power into combination and utilize them as an instrument of policy as the ability to transform power ("power conversion"). It is the institutional structures, the ability to negotiate, and the political processes shaped by preferences that matter in the process of transforming elements of power into actual power (Keohane/NYE, 2001: 46). To put it in other terms, unless certain elements are used as part of a specific policy, they cannot actualize power but remain merely as potentials. This approach argues that power is essentially a behavioral concept, i.e. the accumulation of elements that are used to influence the behavior of other actors. However, the underlying challenge remains far from being that simple.

There exist two fundamental challenges in defining the concept of power. The first one is related to the fact that the broad scope and ambiguous nature of the concept of power require the consideration of a large number of elements in definitions. Once the above-mentioned elements are itemized in detail, it becomes clear that nearly all aspects related to the quality and quantity of a country are included in the definition of power. Moreover, it is challenging to concretely define how some elements, such as the quality of education and diplomacy, transform into power. Thus, making power more ambiguous and elusive to define. In addition, some argue that possessing the elements of power does not necessarily

equate to being powerful. This implies that in addition to possessing the elements, there also needs to be an intention to use the power at hand, which can be referred to as political will. Power without the intention to use it does not carry any significance in the analysis of international politics. For American power to be of any value in international politics, for instance, the intention to assume the respective roles required by its power had therefore to be adopted in the aftermath of the Second World War.

The next challenge of defining power stems from the evolving nature and composition of power over time that depends on the nature of the systemic relations. While for example, in times when the rules of international law and communication technologies were not as advanced as they are today, military elements constituted the main content of power whereas today, in addition to the quality of diplomacy, control over information sources and communication processes constitutes the main characteristic of power. The prominence of economic relations as a result of globalization leads to the decline of the prominence of military power and governmental relations and instead puts economic elements and non-state actors at the forefront (Nye, 1990a: 156-157; Barber, 1996: 23-34). With the prominence of economic factors, for example, the power of multinational corporations that do not affiliate with any particular country must also be included in the definitions. Therefore, the conclusion is that the concept of power, like other concepts in international relations, evolves over time, and the elements that define it continue to change.

In fact, when power is mentioned, the first thing that comes to mind is that it is revealed through violence or force. In this sense, being strong means being able to resort to violence when necessary. America's ability to maintain its superpower status after the Cold War has been made possible by its army, which has the capacity to conduct overseas operations. Undoubtedly, neither military nor economic power makes sense unless it is supported by economic power or unless economic interests are protected by military power.

Hans Morgenthau (1985: 32-36), differentiates military power from political power in order to stress that power is not a concept based solely on violence or coercion, and defines political power as the exercise of control over the thoughts and behaviors of other people, and states that this is a form of psychological interaction. Due to psychological influence, one party can make the other comply with the other's will. In a psychological relationship that reflects power, there appear to be three elements that enable one party to accomplish the

desires of the other: expectation of benefit, fear of disadvantage (harm), and respect or affection for the individual or organization. If such psychological effects may be achieved and such a relationship may be established, then a power relationship may be referred to. In this relationship, the desired results can be achieved through the use of coercion, threats, charisma, or a combination of each. If violence is resorted to, this psychological relationship is terminated and the desired results are attempted to be achieved by force. However, the efficient use of power is possible not necessarily through actual violence, but through a psychological influence that implies the potential for the use of violence.

The concept of power need not be exclusively associated with a coercive policy method as it may initially be perceived. According to Baldwin (1989: 59-70), positive and negative sanctions, i.e. rewards and punishments, can be applied to steer the behavior of other actors to a desired outcome. There is also a paradoxical relationship between positive and negative sanctions since the relatively greater rewards that often characterize positive sanctions tend to be associated with greater risks of retribution. The risk of not being able to secure greater rewards might carry the same psychological effect on actors as that of losses. Therefore, power can only be referred to in the context of specific goals, objectives, and expectations (Baldwin, 1989: 132-135; Waltz, 1967: 216).

The scope and context of the issue, and the emphasis and gravity that each actor attributes to the issue, play an essential role in shaping the definition of power. The capacity to achieve an objective and the benefits to be obtained or losses to be incurred in achieving it is a crucial component of the definition of power. This concerns all the potential costs that can be incurred and all the costs that are considered to be worth incurring. This is because not all actors attribute similar or equal emphasis to all issues and allocate resources under the same proportionality. This sophisticated understanding of power also demonstrates the complexity of analytical concepts such as the balance of power, which at first appears to be quite simple. Therefore, it is not possible to define the elements of power in a tangible, precise or universal way. Power, which is considered to be multi-dimensional, may be defined not as the capabilities and capacities of an actor, but as a type of actual or perceptual relationship between two or more actors that may shift depending on the context. Therefore, power needs to be considered with regard to the issue at hand and the actors engaged in it.

1.2. The Concept of Power in International Relations Theories

In many studies, theory, which is derived from the ancient Greek word meaning "contemplation, mental gaze, thinking" (Yurdusev, 2005: 157), is defined either with similar or different approaches. One of these defines theory as "a system consisting of laws or law-like generalizations based on experimental and observational and testable phenomena." However, it is widely recognized that a conclusive and rigid testability level is not possible to be achieved in social and natural sciences (Arı, 2013: 22-23).

Theories in international politics are often expected to "enable us to understand and explain the reality of international politics, to put our knowledge in a certain order and to access new knowledge". The idea that led to the emergence of the theory at the beginning of the 20th century was to understand the politics between countries and avoid potential wars in the future. Hence, theorists who assumed that an international institution that would ensure cooperation among countries would be established have produced different artifacts (Arı, 2013: 22-23).

The theorists who advocate the current notion are regarded as idealists by some, and the ideas they advocate are called idealism. The fundamental rationale for the existence of the idea is that the hegemonic position of idealism in intellectual thought did not last very long. The 'World Economic Crisis' of 1929 and the subsequent events have undermined the presumptions of the idealists. It was in this environment in which the realist thought had emerged and the idealist thought was exposed to severe criticism. This thought was dominant from 1930 to 1960 (Aydın, 1996: 89-90). At this point, a theory that can be accepted as a "grand theory" has not yet been developed. (Sezgin Kaya, 2008: 84) The theories were effective in thinking in the years they were developed, but they lost the phenomenon of explicitness day by day. Accordingly, the difference between the two phenomena did not represent a superiority, but a difference in understanding of the form and functioning of thought.

1.2.1. Concept of Classical Realism and Power

According to Vasquez, "since idealists cannot test their theories in their laboratories, theories are in the real world" (Vasquez, 1998: 35-38). In other words, the optimistic atmosphere that emerged during the interwar period came to an end with the Second World

War and the idealist approach gradually lost its appeal. In realism, two particular factors are influential as the main element in international politics. Contrary to liberalism (idealism), realism promoted inter-state relations as a separate field of study. As a result of this promotion, international relations became a separate field of thought from other fields of study. Furthermore, the period in which realism emerged as ar thought rather than an ideological phenomenon was the same period as the emergence of the foreign policy of the superpower of the time, the United States. Since the US foreign policy did not possess an accumulation of answers to immediate problems, it had to turn to scientific methods in international relations. (Smith, 1987)

Realists, who played a crucial role in the establishment and development of international politics, devised a theory that emphasized power as the core of international politics. Realists argue that international politics is a power struggle and construe the continuation of the system with the concept of power. Morgenthau stated that countries have been under mutual struggle throughout history due to their demonstrations of power and argued that even though they try to justify their foreign policies with law and morality, they are merely trying to legitimize practices that stipulate the use of force (Morgenthau, 1993: 110). Realist thinkers based the process of power struggle on human life and actions. According to realists, human beings are by nature warlike, determined, selfish, and greedy. He also harbors the desire to wield power in his grasp in order to dominate the surrounding environment. States, which are composed of individuals and societies, are no different from human beings. States also pursue their own interests and seek to have power since those who govern states are also human beings (Aydın, 1996: 38). In the absence of an authoritarian structure, and even more so in the absence of a structure to decide who is right and who is wrong, states are almost obliged to possess the power to sustain their own survival (Arı, 2013: 190).

Therefore, in a pro-war international conjuncture, all states must primarily ensure their own security, and whether they please or not, they form temporary alliances and conclude agreements, yet in reality, they rely only on their own national power (Uzer, op. cit.: 59). Realists have constantly pointed out the importance of military power, including the Cold War years. As the importance of military power declined as the international dynamics shifted, neo-realism emerged as a continuation of the realist theory in international

relations emphasizing economic power, administrative structures, or national ideas more than the radical ones (Eralp, 2003: 83-85).

According to realists, effective use of power is the key to the settlement and resolution of disputes between countries throughout the world (Arı, 2013: 164). At this point, for example, one of the biggest determinants of victory in wars is in whose possession the power is and how effectively it is exercised. Peace, which is the only option in wars in which the powerful prevail over the powerless, may result in very dire consequences for the defeated party in the war. Peace treaties, which are often concluded following lost wars, have proved to have the possibility to have very bitter consequences for the defeated party of the war.

Power appears to be a significant element that causes substantial and profound damage to international behavior. According to Claude, power and power management in international behavior is a race-based conflict concerned with "survival and freedom". Claude, through the concept of power, argues that military power is of greater importance since power enables violence (Claude, 1964: 5-6).

Military power remains relevant in the dialogues among countries as it is the very last way out of war. War is a dominant factor in international dialogues and military power has become a constant tool of politics. Military power is seen not as a tool in a country's struggle for survival, but rather as a core asset of power. That is why the most destructive and violent wars in the world begin with the aim of increasing the military power of one country while destroying the military power of another (Carr, 1956: 107-113). In conclusion, realism is a concept identified with the concept of power in international politics. This is indeed because the concept of power constitutes the basis of the theory constructed by realists. According to classical realists, international politics is a sphere of conflict between the powers.

1.2.2. Liberalism and the Concept of Power

Conceptually Liberalism

In Europe, the term "liberal" has had a variety of connotations since the 19th century. The Latin word "liber" was used to refer to segments of the population that were "free".

However, the term “liberal” has also been used in the sense of “generous”, so to speak, referring to people who offer their help with an outstretched hand, and from time to time it has also been used as a concept implying “open-mindedness” (Heywood, 2010: 41).

There are different viewpoints on the first use of liberalism in the political sense. Accordingly, the concept, which was first used with the expression “liberales” (as liberaux in France) in reference to the rebels in Spain (1810-12), had a negative connotation at the onset of the century, but later transferred from Spanish to English and assumed its place in “political terminology” (Sartori, 1993: 401; Heywood, 2010: 41; Conway, 2011: 85). According to another viewpoint, the concept of “liberalism” was first used in Adam Smith's book The Wealth of Nations (1776) (Yayla, 2002: 15). It materialized as a political action in the Spanish Liberal Party in 1812 and in the Liberal Party formed by the merger of “Whigs and Radicals” in Britain as of 1840 (Hayek, 2009: 198). It was only in the second half of the century that the concept acquired a positive connotation and evolved into a term used to express liberties.

The notion of liberalism as a contemporary ideology emerged subsequently to these developments. As will be discussed below, the nomenclature of liberalism as an ideology came long after its philosophical foundations had already been laid. Sartori, describing this fact as a misfortune, stated that “the birth was too late and the acceptance and establishment of the name even later” (Sartori, 1993: 401). Liberalism, which is the product of an accumulation of thought over a long period of time, can be defined in its broadest sense as “an ideology that accepts freedom as the most fundamental value of individual and social life and defends political, legal and economic structures suitable for freedom” (Yayla, 2008a:140). However, a brief discussion of the philosophical foundations, general principles, and types of liberalism as a political doctrine would allow for a more explicit understanding of the issue.

The Relation of Liberalism to Soft Power

The first of the debates over the existence of international dialogues was that between realism and liberalism (Sandıklı and Kaya, 2013: 62). Idealism and liberalism, which assume the same philosophy, have been seen as ideas that advocate the same thought, even though

they have some differences, although not completely, and have been used interchangeably in studies (Arı, 2013: 104).

Other theories of liberalism can be described as follows: Contrary to the conventional realist thinking in international dialogues, liberal theorists argue that foreign elements are indispensable for the global community due to the increasing value of economic and social elements and the policies being implemented incorporate these elements. According to another theory, liberal thinkers claim that all countries are the guardians of society, but according to this theory, what truly matters is whose social principles align with whose interests and who they represent. Another idea is that the relevance of war or peace in the global arena depends on the actions and aspirations of the particular country (Stone, 2010: 462). The major distinction between liberalism and realism is their interest in human nature. However, while realism sees human beings as harmful and malevolent from the moment of their conception living in a world where everyone is in conflict with each other, liberalism argues that human beings have good intentions and that institutionalization is simply not sufficient.

Accordingly, liberalism prioritized the definitions of peace, international justice, cooperative efforts, rights, and liberties instead of the definitions of power, struggle, superiority, and social interests that characterize realist thought (Dağı, 2003: 185-187). The most prominent common feature of the two key ideas, which have a large share of prominence in international relations, is that they propose restrained behavior in foreign policies. Liberalism, like realism, undertakes the task of influencing the foreign policy of countries or the thoughts of politicians. Liberalism attempts to provide answers to the questions of "what to do" and "what should be", while realism does not necessarily affirm that the preferences or actions have to be either positive or negative. (Kegley, 1995: 113.)

Liberal thinkers are particularly concerned with the economic consequences of the concept of power, rather than engaging in the struggle to conceptualize military power. Such thinkers therefore lack a clear definition of power. However, liberals are invariably concerned with power. Instead of the use of power, they are concerned with the transnational manifestation of power (Waltz, 1967: 26). In this respect, liberals have an inclination that emphasize economic power and cooperation between states rather than the acquisition of military power.

1.2.3. The Concept of Structuralist Approach and Power

The structuralist approach opposes the assumption of the existence of the state as the main determinant of international order. According to this approach, the studies conducted on the international order ought to encompass the entire order. According to this approach, the worldwide environment, which constitutes the field of action of all elements, has an impact on the attitudes of elements (Waltz 1967: 216). The posture of the elements of which the results are demonstrated through peace and cooperation should primarily be taken into consideration as well as observing the posture of an element at the global level (Baldwin, 1989: 132-135).

According to the assumption of the structuralist approach, it is simply not a sufficient approach to investigate the impact of the global environment on people. According to structuralists, the historical developments that generated the order itself should also be explored. Otherwise, the international order being studied will be analyzed without its core assets (Lukes, 2006: 28).

Economics is a key mode of conduct for the Structuralist approach. However, when structuralists refer to the concept of power, the first element they consider is economic power. Those who have economic power have the ability to freely pursue what they desire within the order and to arrive at easily made decisions (Lukes, 2006: 32-34).

The structuralist approach recognizes that states are influential elements in the world order. However, it adds not only states but also organizations and larger structures to the basis of its research. Researchers who adopt the structuralist approach state that economic elements are the most valuable assets. States, large corporations and international organizations pursue the interests of those who dominate the world economic order.

1.2.4. Neo-liberalism and the Concept of Power

When the history of political thoughts is examined, it cannot be argued that any theory emerged independently of or unaffected by existing theories (Serdar, 2015: 16). Therefore, we cannot think of neoliberalism independently of current theories in terms of its contemporary or past. Therefore, as Çakmak states, liberalism has formed the basis of many theories in the discipline of international relations and has been a guide in the formation of

many new theories (Çakmak, 2007). Especially after the First World War, the efforts of the states, which were damaged more than the damage caused by the wars, to prevent wars and conflicts were observed. This effort has led to the emergence of liberalism as a theory aimed at explaining international relations. The failure to achieve peace in the interwar period and the outbreak of the Second World War, which resulted in greater destruction, further increased the search for peace. As a result of these searches, the most important theory that emerged as an alternative to realism in the 1980s was neo-liberalism (Çakmak, 2007: 160). The pioneers of the theory are Joseph S. Nye, Jr. and Robert O. Keohane count.

Because the harsh and brutal violence environment and experiences of realism have shown that the world no longer needs war but peace. The peace and cooperation that the world longed for found itself in neo-liberalism. When we look at the basic features of neo-liberalism, which is the new hope of the peace environment, we first come across "analyzing peace and cooperation". Neo-liberalism analyzes international relations at the unit level as an approach. However, neoliberals are "concerned with the consequences of unit-level causes at the system level" (Arı, 2010: 305).

Neo-realists, unlike realists, think that "states continue to be the most important actors of international relations, even if they are not the only actors". However, according to neoliberalism, states are rational actors (Arı, 2010: 306). For this reason, realizing their own interests and cooperating instead of conflict is considered as a more rational choice. Because cooperating is a more profitable and risk-free method than conflict

Neo-liberals argue that "interdependence" increases in economic problems between countries and that states attach more importance to economic power rather than military power, and therefore focus on economic cooperation and achieve success. For this reason, interdependence is an important concept in neo-liberalism. In other words, in neo-liberalism, power does not only mean military power. Because in neo-liberalism, the concept of power includes economy, social and cultural riches, education and technology. As neo-realists emphasize, geography, population and raw material elements have lost their place in the concept of power (Nye Jr, 1990: 117). This undoubtedly refers to an important approach that distinguishes both theoretical approaches from each other.

Neo-liberals differ from neo-realists on the concept of power, on the issue that the strength of a state does not mean the weakness of other states. Because the point that

neoliberals emphasize on power is absolute gains. Therefore, superficial gains do not mean that they are ignored by neoliberalists. Because "Neo-liberalism aims to update liberalism by recognizing that states are the key players in international relations, which is a neo-realist proposal, but also emphasizes the importance of International Organizations and non-state actors." Neo-liberalism, on the other hand, was influenced by economic theory. Neo-liberalism was effective in shaping the theory of inter-country dependency, which increased during the Cold War Period, and therefore it was also called liberal institutionalism.

1.3. Power and Interdependence

Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye came to the fore as the most important and first representatives of the neo-liberal view that criticized state-centered traditional international relations statements. The book Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition, published by two theorists in 1977, focuses on the theory of interdependence in order to analyze the dynamics of the international system in a different way (Alagöz, 2016: 36). With the book in question, Keohane and Nye challenged realism and the basic assumptions of realism, supported the theory of interdependence with various hypotheses and tested these hypotheses. The idea that Keohane and Nye basically advocate in their work is that "the existence of interdependencies in the world has caused realism to be insufficient to explain international relations" (Griffiths et al., 2011: 107).

Keohane and Nye criticized the fact that traditional theories developed to explain international relations prioritize military issues in the behavior of states in foreign policy and depict a potential war situation in international relations. According to Keohane and Nye: international relations employees (students, academics, etc.) who adopted this kind of understanding were very slow to understand the developments that took place outside military security issues. Keohane and Nye also stated that military power in international relations is now outdated and that economic interdependence is the best foreign policy option for states, which will lead researchers to make mistakes to the same extent (Keohane and Nye, 1989: 5).

Keohane and Nye, in response to the fact that realism sees the state as the only and main actor in international relations, explains the international system anarchically, attaches great importance to the concepts of power and interest, and military security issues accept

high politics in the foreign policy hierarchy and economic and social issues as low politics, have constructed the theory of interdependence in a way that creates a new and different understanding of foreign policy (Dalar, 2015: 50).

According to Keohane and Nye: with interdependence, states do not act completely independently in the international environment as advocated by the realist view (Alagöz, 2016: 36). According to the idea accepted in the theory of interdependence, international relations include the relations of multinational companies, international organizations, international organizations and national/international pressure groups with each other, as well as the relations carried out by the dominant states. Thus, with the theory of international policy interdependence, it has begun to be analyzed as a political interaction process carried out through all these actors, which differs from a political process in which sovereign states interact with each other through official bodies, that is, the state is the main actor, and non-state actors are involved (Arı, 2002: 373).

Keohane and Nye defined dependence in the simplest sense as "a state being guided or significantly influenced by external forces" (Keohane and Nye, 1989: 8). Interdependence is the mutual interactions that occur in interstate relations. These interactions are generally due to issues such as monetary, social, global, financial and security (Arı, 2002: 374). However, Keohane and Nye emphasized that the cost factor should be included in the process in order to include the interactions between states on various issues in the context of interdependence. Keohane and Nye stated that if the interacting states are exposed to a cost from these interactions mutually (even if not fully symmetrical), interdependence can be mentioned in their relations, and that interactions without a cost factor cannot be handled within the framework of interdependence (Keohane and Nye, 1989: 8). At this point, cost emerges as the most prominent factor that distinguishes interdependence from other state interactions.

Regarding what exactly the concept of interdependence means, Keohane and Nye drew attention to the "benefit" that emerges in state relations. Stating that what is meant by interdependence is not mutual benefit, Keohane and Nye stated that such an assumption will only be analytically useful where military power is now a very small threat, that is, where the modernist view is adopted, and that situations such as strategic interdependence between

the United States and the Soviet Union will not be handled within the framework of interdependence (Keohane and Nye, 1989: 9).

The assumption that states that are assumed to be interdependent in order to understand what the cost element means in terms of interdependence theory will tend to avoid possible problems that will arise in their bilateral relations is the basis of the thought. Problems arising in bilateral relations will have negative consequences for all parties involved in the process, but it is wrong to expect that the negative consequences will have the same cost for both states. In any case, the existence of the relationship between the two states is more important for one than the other. Despite the differentiation in the importance of bilateral relations, both sides do not adopt a policy approach to ensure the continuity of their relations and make moves to solve problems (Gürkaynak and Yalçıner, 2009: 75).

Asymmetric and symmetric situations are at two different ends in interdependence, and most interdependence relationships are between these two situations (Keohane and Nye, 1989: 11). States that have an interdependent relationship can focus on total earnings as well as relative earnings as a result of their relations. For this reason, interdependence should not be perceived as a type of relationship in which the parties have equal interests after their relationship (Alagöz, 2016: 36). If the relationship in question is asymmetrical, the state, which is more dependent on the other party, may be exposed to political influence due to this relationship and the state to which it is dependent may be in a dominant position due to its advantage over the dependent state in bilateral relations. In relations where interdependence is symmetrical, the states that are parties to the relationship are equally affected by the developments (Arı, 2002: 374).

When the existence of interdependence is accepted in the relations of the two states with each other, the possible negative developments in the said relationship affect both parties. The important factor at this point is for which party the relationship is more important. Steve Chan explained the differentiation of the importance given to the relationship by the states with interdependence through the actors A and B. Accordingly, in the relationship between states A and B, if state B needs state A more, state A has an advantage in this relationship, that is, more bargaining power. If the relationship deteriorates in a situation where state B needs state A more, it causes more damage to state B, while state A suffers from this situation (Chan, 1984: 235). In other words, the two states, which have

an interdependent relationship, suffer to a certain extent from the negative developments in the relationship, regardless of who needs the relationship more.

In relationships where there is interdependence, the bargaining power of one state over the other state depends on the sensitivity and vulnerability of the other state to these relationships (Arı, 2002: 376). Sensitivity refers to the reactions of a state to the developments in relations of interdependence. It defines the cost sensitivity created by the new policy in response to the changes in relations. Sensitivity is the ability of states to make policy changes in the face of developments and thus reduce the costs incurred against them. Vulnerability, on the other hand, refers to the inability of states to avoid costs despite policy changes against developments in relations (Özdemir, 2008: 132). In other words, the fact that a state is less sensitive to changes allows it to maintain its own status. The fact that a state is more sensitive to changes requires it to carry out decision-making processes more frequently and quickly. If a state is less vulnerable, the state can retain control in relations thanks to the policy changes it has made and can make. The state, which is more vulnerable, has difficulty in finding answers to the problems arising as a result of the changes (Rogerson, 2010: 421).

Regarding sensitivity and vulnerability in interdependence relations, Keohane and Nye cited the ways in which the United States, European countries and Japan were affected by the increases in oil prices in the 1970s (Keohane and Nye, 1989: 12). Although the sensitivities of America, Europe and Japan towards the regional oils were generally the same, the vulnerabilities of the parties to the price increases varied (Arı, 2002: 376). Although America imported only 16% of the oil it needed from the Middle East, this rate was around 95% in Japan. For this reason, America has shown a certain sensitivity in the face of the price increase, but it has not been as vulnerable as Japan (Kakışım, 2019: 71).

Keohane and Nye define power as the ability to get other actors to do something they would not normally do and to have control over possible outcomes. In addition, Keohane and Nye state that it is very difficult to measure power based on these definitions and that asymmetric interdependence can be a source of power (Keohane and Nye, 1989: 11).

In cases of interdependence, each actor has the capacity to influence other actors. Normally described as weak, states can gain advantageous positions thanks to interdependence on strong states. According to the theory of interdependence, the source of

effectiveness and power in relationships depends on dependencies and the degree of these dependencies (Arı, 2002: 376). As a result of the policies developed in the face of negative developments in relations, it is critical that actors can or cannot get rid of possible costs. At this point, sensitivity in interdependence relations can be defined as the freedom of movement of states within the system. While states with high freedom of movement may avoid possible costs, vulnerable states will be exposed to high costs as their freedom of movement will be limited (Özdemir, 2008: 132). In the face of the increases in oil prices, America has managed to avoid the costs imposed by price increases thanks to its high freedom of movement. However, the fact that European countries and Japan are vulnerable, that is, have low freedom of movement, has caused price increases to impose high costs on them.

1.4. Sources of Soft Power

There are many sources that provide soft power in International Relations. These resources also provide hard power in some cases. According to Gallarotti, who has researched the concept of soft power, there are two types of sources, international and national, that reveal soft power. While respect for international rules, laws and institutions constitute the sources of international soft power, the characteristics of the cultural structure and political institutions of the country constitute the sources of national power. The main features of the political institutions of soft power countries are the importance and adoption of pluralism, democracy, liberalism and the rule of law. The main features that make up the cultural structures of countries with soft power are a high level of welfare, freedoms, wide opportunities of individuals and a lifestyle with a high standard that will attract people (Anaz, 2013: 9).

Nye (2005: 20), the researcher who first introduced the concept of soft power, discusses the soft power resources that countries can benefit from under three main headings;

- Culture
- Political values
- Foreign policy

The soft power of countries can consist of upper cultural components such as literature, art, education system and popular culture components for entertainment, which

are attractive to other countries and the people living there. In cases where culture is an element of soft power, the effect it will have is expected to have an impact on different groups and people in the country rather than direct decision-makers. Political values are also an element of soft power. The political values and the extent to which these values are complied with are taken into account when policymaking at the national and international level. When examined in terms of foreign policy, which is the last soft power element, it is important that the foreign policy of the countries is legitimate and moral.

1.4.1. Culture

Nye defines culture, which he ranks first among soft power sources, as "all the values and practices that have meaning for a society" and states that cultural values at various levels are a form of social behavior spread by community groups. According to him, culture is divided into two sub-dimensions. While the cultural dimension that appeals to the upper class (elite people) such as literature, education and art is called upper or higher culture, the cultural dimension related to entertainment in general is called popular culture (Nye, 2005: 20).

Almost every country in the world and consequently the society that lives on it has a cultural structure. However, for this cultural structure to be an element of soft power for other countries and their citizens and to be used as a soft power, it must be attractive and attractive. Nye's approach to power in terms of the US being a leader in the global framework also determined his perspective on culture. According to him, the culture structure, which is expected to produce soft power, should have universal values in order to create an international effect and provide the expected results. In this respect, it is quite difficult for closed cultural structures and narrow values to produce soft power. Based on these ideas, he suggests that the global leadership of the USA will continue thanks to the widespread American Culture around the world. In defending this thesis, he gives the example of the statement made by the German editor Josef Joffe that America's soft power is more than its hard power with military and economic dimensions. Joffe compares the soft power of the USA with the soft power of the Roman Empire and the Soviet Union, and argues that the high or low culture of the USA has an influence all over the world, although the cultural effects of the two end at the military borders. Stating that the soft power of the USA

dominates an empire where the sun never sets, he states that there is a relationship between American culture and soft power, which has become widespread in the world.

Nye objects to approaches that argue that only through culture can soft power be built. Likewise, he argues that some brands that have become symbols of American popular culture cannot be sufficient alone to change the preferences of people and leaders in countries that do not adopt US foreign policy, and that cultural and therefore soft power cannot be created only through brands. For example, the fact that brands such as Coca Cola or Mc Donalds, which are important brands of American popular culture and an important means of transporting this culture to other countries, have become widespread throughout the world cannot have the effect of ensuring that American policies are adopted and supported by those countries alone. Although these popular culture tools are important, they can contribute to the desired results when evaluated with other soft power elements and appropriate conditions (Nye, 2005: 21).

According to Nye, popular culture is neglected and underestimated by some circles because it does not contain subtlety and is predominantly aimed at making a profit, it is more entertainment than information, and it cannot have a political effect. Therefore, elements of popular culture are seen as a sleeping pill that has nothing to do with politics (apolitical) and numbs people. However, Nye states that popular culture can also be politically influential due to its potential to affect individualism, consumer preferences, and the subconscious. For example, cinema and music, which are seen as elements of popular culture, can also play a role as a carrier of political messages. In addition, visually transmitted messages are much more effective than verbally transmitted messages. World-famous Hollywood, the center of the American film industry, is considered the world's largest advertising and promotional base and exporter of visual symbols (Nye, 2005: 52).

The release of dozens of films that try to spread the image that America is a country that "saves and brings peace to the world" every year and the Rambo Series, Superman Series, Captain America Series, films about the struggles against the invasion of aliens can be considered in this context. Not only cinema and music but also popular sports have an important place in popular culture. Today, one of the easiest and most common ways to reach even the most remote places in the world is sports-related activities. Thanks to the developments in information and communication technologies and the increase in

opportunities, the number of people who follow sports activities is increasing. Even sports activities on a national scale often go beyond political boundaries and are monitored by the international public. The most prominent and beautiful example of this is the American National Basketball League (NBA) matches, which are broadcast in 42 different languages in many countries of the world, although they are held at the national level in the USA as of 2005. Baseball matches, another popular sport in the USA, which are held at the national level, are broadcast in various countries around the world in 11 different languages (Nye, 2005: 53). As of 2015, NBA final matches were broadcasted in 215 different countries.

Music, which is another element of popular culture, can indirectly serve the realization of political goals, sometimes directly with its political discourses and sometimes with its discourses expressing liberal thoughts and freedoms. Music played an important role in the efforts of the Western bloc to influence the East, especially during the Cold War. Nye (2005: 54) gives an example of this: "The Beatles system was the silent way of our rejection" used by a deputy of Soviet leader Gorbachev after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The Beatles were a British band that was very popular around the world in the 60s. This shows the soft power effect of music as a popular culture dimension. Nye explained that popular culture could have an impact on foreign policy as a soft power dimension by citing the US policies in the Cold War years as an example. In addition to the monetary expenditures made for this plan, the Marshall Plan, which was implemented by the USA for European countries in the early years of this period, had a positive effect on the transmission of American popular culture and thus American ideas and policies to these countries and the reconstruction of Europe.

In addition, it is accepted that these ideas play a role in the reconstruction of Europe and the realization of the goals of the USA (Nye, 2005: 54). The development of communication technologies and the increase in the number of communication channels have also increased the effectiveness of popular culture. Popular culture was relatively less prevalent and its reach was more limited during periods when the means of communication were scarce and used to meet the needs of a particular group. However, today, thanks to phone messages or social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, any post can make millions of people aware of it at the same time. Everything that reflects American values creates popular culture. In addition to concepts such as ostentation, sexuality, violence, materialism and soullessness, the active, pluralist, individualist, populist and at the

same time libertarian lifestyle is among the characteristics of American popular culture (Nye, 2005: 50).

After the end of World War II, the rapid adoption of American popular culture by European societies positively affected their democratization. Phenomena such as freedom, mobility, freedom, freedom for young people, modernity, and vision-building contributed to the rejuvenation and vitality of Europe's post-war culture. It is also accepted that popular culture was effective in the US winning the Cold War against the Soviet Union. Television and cinema, which were important elements of popular culture long before the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, pierced this wall and reached the societies there (Nye, 2003: 53-54).

Popular culture may not always contribute to soft power in the same way in every society. Although it is an important source of soft power, in some cases, it can create a positive reaction on a certain part of a society and cause a negative reaction in another part of the same society. For example, while American popular culture is admired by some young people in Iranian society, it may disturb conservative youth or mullah management (Nye, 2005: 57).,

While popular culture is mostly aimed at influencing large masses of people, high cultural elements such as art, literature and educational activities target the elite. One of the most effective factors in transforming high culture into soft power by transferring it to other countries is educational activities. The USA, which is aware of the extent to which educational activities are effective and important, is one of the countries that make the best use of this high cultural dimension. Every year, half a million foreign students graduate from American universities and return to their countries. While this situation shows how the American education system can be a soft power factor through attraction in the world, it also comes to the fore as one of the ways that American culture spreads throughout the world as an element of high culture. Graduates of American universities, which are highly respected and popular in their own countries, also play a role in communicating American culture and ideas to the elites in the country. In addition, the fact that the leaders of many countries are themselves or their children have been educated in American universities allows American views to have a direct impact on the highest points of those countries. “Exchange programs were like a Trojan Horse for the Soviet Union,” said Oleg Kalugin, a former senior director of the Russian Committee for State Security (KGB), about the extent to which educational

activities could guide the country's politics. It played a major role in the collapse of the Soviet system "(Nye, 2004: 44).

Providing only students from other countries with the opportunity to study at the university does not constitute educational activities within the scope of upper culture. There are various structures from cultural institutions that teach their own language and culture to people in other countries to educational institutions that carry out educational activities at different levels. The use of French as the language of diplomacy in the 17th and 18th centuries, the fact that English is widely accepted and spoken all over the world today, and the presence of American Cultural Associations, Chinese Confucius Institutes, and Yunus Emre Institutes in various parts of the world are examples of the above-mentioned issues.

1.4.2. Political Values

Political values are one of the sources of soft power and are a reflection of the domestic and foreign policies of the country's governments. In order for the political values of the countries to turn into soft power, they need to be admired by others. However, admirable values for some countries can have the opposite effect for some other countries. Nye considers this in the context of individualism and freedoms in the case of America and states that these values are attractive for most people, but the same values lead to US hatred in the eyes of some fundamentalists (Nye, 2005: 60). The fact that a country is governed by democracy, has a state of law, attaches importance to individual rights and freedoms, protects the environment and exhibits sensitivity, and is known for delivering humanitarian aid to many geographies of the world are important power factors that increase the reputation of that country as well as showing its soft power throughout the world. According to Nye, the values that a country's government advocates through its behaviors in domestic, international organizations and international diplomacy can guide the preferences of other people and countries. Governments can attract or alienate people with their successful policies. Even if countries with authoritarian and totalitarian governance structures, known for human rights violations and unlawful practices have military and economic hard power, their reputation and soft power skills in the eyes of other countries will be insufficient (Nye, 2005: 23).

Political values that positively affect the soft power of countries are the importance given to human rights and democracy. However, it is accepted that these political values will create attractiveness at the action level rather than discourse. Despite the positive discourses, reluctance to take action or different practices from the discourse will harm the soft power due to the negative effect they will cause. Governments that attach importance to soft power should pay attention to the harmony of discourse and action and take action in this direction. Political values do not consist only of universal values such as human rights practices and democracy. Issues that are not very close to each other such as crime rates, occupational safety, divorce rates and average life expectancy, which may affect the image of the country positively or negatively, are also discussed within the scope of political values. For example, when the USA and European countries are compared in terms of their soft power, it is stated that the death penalty applied negatively affects the image of the USA, while it is in a better situation than Europe in terms of religious freedoms. From this, it is understood that many issues from legal sanction methods to religious freedoms constitute the political values of a country and these have a significant effect on the increase and weakening of the soft power of the country in question (Nye, 2005: 60-61).

1.4.3. Foreign Policy

All soft power sources form a dynamic structure by changing with variable conditions. Foreign policy is the element that undergoes the fastest change among the aforementioned resources put forward by Nye. Since the execution of foreign policy is generally under the control of the state, a change in this field takes place in a shorter time. For this reason, it is accepted that foreign policy is the most important source of increasing the soft power of countries (Nye, 2005: 61). A country's foreign policy is a source of soft power if it is considered legitimate by other countries. For this reason, it is very important how and for what purposes foreign policy instruments are used. One of the ways that a country's foreign policy is accepted as a soft power is that it should address the common values accepted by all states in the international arena. The concepts of democracy and human rights are seen as universal values in international circles and it is important to create policies in this direction. According to Nye, many US presidents realized this and formed their policies based on democracy and human rights. Jimmy Carter is more concerned with creating policies for human rights than the Reagan and Clinton administrations are with

developing democracy. As a result of Carter's policies in the 1970s, the popularity of the USA in Argentina increased and American policies were supported by the Argentine government in the UN and the Balkans.

One of the sensitive issues in the international arena is the activities carried out under the name of humanitarian and development aid to countries where earthquakes, floods, tsunamis and similar natural disasters occur and where hunger and poverty are experienced. These activities to be carried out in these situations where the international public is sensitive are of great importance in terms of the implementation of soft power. Türkiye's Syrian foreign policy in this regard contributes significantly to the deepening of Türkiye's soft power in international platforms.

Nye states that the style used in foreign political approaches that affect the soft power of a country is very important and that no matter how accurate the policies followed, if arrogance prevails instead of humility in the discourse used, it will not be possible for these policies to achieve the desired results. According to the results of a public opinion survey conducted in 11 countries after the Iraq War in 2003, 65% of the respondents described the USA as an arrogant superpower. This arrogant image played an important role in the erosion of the soft power of the United States. So much so that even the British, who are known for their support to the USA, were uncomfortable with the arrogant rhetoric of the USA during this period (Nye, 2005: 62). Nye stated that the unilateral political action that caused the USA to lose its appeal was not only the Iraq War that took place in 2003, and that many people in the world opposed the war in Vietnam and that this policy of the USA was not supported.

The pursuit of unilateral foreign policy strategies that are not accepted as legitimate by the international community in international policies harms soft power. Nye states that the unilateral foreign policy implemented by the US administration under the leadership of Bush negatively affects the soft power of the US. For example, the fact that the USA has not signed the Kyoto Protocol, which aims to reduce carbon gas emissions, is negatively received by the international public. In this sense, Nye thinks that conducting wide-ranging and forward-looking multi-dimensional foreign policy strategies based on negotiation instead of implementing unilateral policies can increase the soft power of countries. The inclusion of supranational organizations such as the UN and NATO in foreign policy will

positively affect soft power as it will eliminate the impression that a unilateral policy is followed. Likewise, policies carried out in cooperation with these organizations will provide significant advantages in the context of international legitimacy (Nye, 2005: 63).

In order for the resources described above to create soft power, first of all, it is obligatory to show an attitude and behavior that will establish trust and sincerity towards the target audience or society. It is not possible to consolidate soft power through unreliable and unfriendly policies. Therefore, there should be a consistent relationship between the local policies developed and the foreign policy implemented. A difference between both policies will create the impression that a hypocritical policy is being pursued and will adversely affect soft power. In addition, countries do not need to have all three of the above-mentioned basic resources in order to be accepted as having soft power. As a matter of fact, although Norway does not have a unique cultural structure and political values, it is an important country in terms of soft power in terms of acting as a mediator in foreign policy, being among the forces aimed at maintaining foreign aid and peace, hosting peace conferences, conducting studies in the fields of international peace and hosting the Nobel Peace Prize (Nye, 2005: 63).

1.5. Difference Between Soft Power and Hard Power

There is a reciprocal relationship between soft power and hard power; soft power sources sometimes have a positive or negative effect on hard power and sometimes hard power sources cause a positive or negative effect on soft power and reduce or increase each other. Soft power is also used for the same purpose as hard power, which is another dimension of power. Both are used by countries that want to get what they want, but there are differences between them in terms of tangible or intangible resources and behavior patterns. Countries can resort to the use of hard power on the one hand and soft power on the other. While giving orders or forcing is the main feature of hard power behavior, attracting or attracting is the main feature of soft power behavior.

Compelling factors, mostly including military and economic measures, come to mind in the use of hard power. In the use of soft power, elements other than military and economic (economic) elements are used to ensure that a country achieves its political purpose. While it is aimed to reach the result as soon as possible in the use of hard power, a force is used to influence the other party by creating attraction, the effect of which emerges over time at the

expense of achieving the same goal more slowly in the use of soft power. In the use of soft power, behaviors aimed at arousing admiration and creating an agenda are mostly exhibited. In the use of hard power, methods such as threat, use of force, coercion, and pressure are the most prominent forms of behavior.

Although the tools and behaviors used in the implementation of economic power and military power differ, there is no difference between them in terms of the direct use of power. However, there are differences in the implementation of soft power in terms of tools, behaviors and government policies. Likewise, unlike direct use in hard power applications, the use of soft power is indirect. There are also differences in the tools used, such as behaviors. The tools of soft power are values, culture, policies that will make others see what you do as legitimate. However, tools such as coercive diplomacy and war are used in hard power. While concrete methods such as money and coercion are associated with hard power, abstract concepts such as values, legitimacy of policies and ideas are associated with soft power. In this context, hard power is pushing and soft power is pulling (Nye, 2005: 20).

According to Nye, military power can be used as an option to achieve any goal. Countries that use military force can turn to government policies such as resorting to coercive methods in diplomacy, declaring war or making alliances with other countries that aim to use hard force. The behavior of the states that implement these policies is usually in the form of forcing the other country to adopt their own policies, to act in accordance with their interests, to give up behaviors that do not comply with their interests, and to protect them if they serve the interests of the country that uses hard power. The tools used to force the opposite actor on a certain issue, to discourage or protect him/her from the step he/she will take are often threats or the use of military force.

For example, before the Gulf War, the international community and the UN Security Council were disturbed by Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, and determined policies that included coercive diplomacy, going to alliances, and ultimately declaring war to discourage Iraq from taking this step. In this context, the UN Security Council invaded Iraq on August 2, 1990, It called for withdrawal from Kuwait, which it declared as its province. When Iraq did not respond to this call, it took a decision on August 6, 1990 prohibiting international trade with Iraq. In the next stage, the UN Security Council stated that it would end this occupation by resorting to military force against Iraq if it did not withdraw from Kuwait by January 15,

1991.Considering the development of the process, it can be seen that the international public, which perceives the invasion of Iraq as a threat, prefers deterrent and coercive behaviors against the invasion of Iraq. He first used the threat as a tool to deter Iraq and push it to retreat, and since January 16, 1991, he has used the military forces as a tool. The war that started in mid-January continued until the ceasefire on March 3, 1992. Considering the government policies of the Gulf War, the preferred behaviors and the tools used to implement these policies, it is considered that it constitutes an important example of the use of hard force (Sander, 2005: 524).

While hard power mostly represents policies such as pressure, coercion and military power, soft power mostly follows government policies based on diplomatic methods. Considering that soft power is about bringing other actors to the desired line without forcing or threatening them, it turns out that the most appropriate method to achieve this goal may be diplomatic ways based on international law. The behaviors to be exhibited through diplomatic means are to gain the admiration of other actors by creating attraction or to create an agenda that can affect the thought of that actor. The methods used for this purpose are the political values adopted in the country, such as democracy, human rights, respect for the rule of law, cultural elements that have the capacity to affect people from other cultures, and institutions that will contribute to the positive perception and image of the country.

The relationship between soft power and hard power is not an addictive relationship. Therefore, it does not mean that the one who does not have hard power has no value in having soft power. As a matter of fact, the question that Stalin used to underestimate his power was "How many divisions does the Pope have?" is a good example of this misconception. However, while the Soviet Union, one of the two superpowers in the world with its hard power, which it led for a period, disintegrated in the last period of the 20th century, the Papacy still preserves its existence and power (Nye, 2005: 18).

The use and control of soft power supplies is more laborious than the use and control of hard power supplies. As with hard power sources, it is not possible for governments to fully control soft power sources. Although it has a say in stages such as the determination of foreign policy, the control of governments on issues such as the formation of culture -especially in democratic administrations- is limited. Public diplomacy activities to be implemented by governments are important in mobilizing soft power, but those who have a

say in this field are mostly independent of the government. Universities, foundations and many Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) established for different purposes are the main actors involved in this process. In addition, while getting results with hard power tools takes place in a shorter time, this is not the case in soft power applications. The consequences of soft power do not occur directly and can lead to very different effects, so it is relatively difficult to observe. Since it takes more time to achieve the result compared to hard power, when this power is lost, it takes a long time to recover and causes new costs. Although it is possible to make a change in areas such as foreign policy practices in a shorter time and to repair the disruptions when the loss of power occurs, it is not possible to say the same for the process of formation of culture. Therefore, when considered as a whole, it is understood that soft power needs a longer period of time both at the point of operation and at the point of production compared to hard power (Nye, 2005: 18-26).

Although it is thought that there is a clear distinction in terms of resources in the classification of power as hard and soft, the situation is actually different from this. Military power is one of the leading types of hard power, but in some cases it can also support soft power. What matters here is how and for what hard power is used. The military power, which has the support of the international public and is used on legitimate grounds, can lead to an increase in the soft power of the country in question, especially from the point of view of its allies. In connection with this, the great military power possessed by one country can also have an attractive effect on other countries. Because people love and admire power. Nye illustrates this situation using Osama Bin Laden's statements. Based on Laden's statement that "when people see a strong horse and a weak horse, they love the strong horse by nature," people do not play on the oppressed, they pity them ". The fact that a country uses its own military personnel for the training of the military personnel of other countries is one of the behaviors that increase its soft power.Similarly, military cooperation activities established between countries are also contributing factors in this field. In addition, military operations that serve other countries for humanitarian purposes in natural disasters such as floods, tsunamis and earthquakes are also important actions that produce soft power (Nye, 2017: 167- 168).

This also applies to economic power, which is one of the elements of hard power. While economic tools including financial sanctions and incentives lead to hard power, the sense of admiration caused by a successful and developed economic structure can also make

a significant contribution to soft power (Nye, 2007: 165-166). However, it is not clear which part of economic relations produces hard power and which part produces soft power. For example, there are different views on what is the main source of motivation in Türkiye's European Union (EU) adventure, which has been going on for about fifty years. It is a matter of debate whether Türkiye's admiration for the system of this organization or the economic advantages of membership are at the forefront of the changes it has made in its legal order within the framework of its request for EU membership. This situation shows that the elements of military and economic power cannot be identified with a type of power in an absolute sense, and the problems about which type of power and to what extent the resources contribute will not contain definite answers (Nye, 2008a: 11).

It is assumed that there is a difference between hard power and soft power in terms of measuring power, that soft power cannot be measured because it consists mainly of abstract elements, and that hard power can be measured. This idea seems logical in terms of resources, but when behaviors are taken into account, the difference emerges. It is possible to reveal the economic and military power, which is a source of hard power, with numbers and to make comparisons with other countries. However, it is not right to express the same situation for values and culture, which are sources of soft power. In fact, this approach is misleading. What determines the size of power in a power relationship is the effect it creates on the other side. When the issue is approached from this point of view, it is possible to measure the effect of soft power. This measurement is carried out through periodic surveys in the target countries and interviews with certain groups (Nye, 2017: 95).

Considering the resources and tools used, soft power has a more humane appearance than hard power. However, Nye does not think exactly like this (Nye, 2007: 169). He states that soft power is a descriptive concept rather than a normative one. Likewise, he emphasizes that it is not another form of liberalism or idealism, but one of the types of power (Nye, 2011: 82). From this point of view, he states that soft power, like other types of power, can be used for good or bad purposes. According to him, there is not much difference between taking a person's money by force and persuading him to donate by attributing sanctity to himself. The first of these represents hard power, while the second is soft power and, after all, both are stealing. The difference is in the methods used. In history, names such as Hitler, Mao and Stalin have benefited from soft power, but this power has not been very useful for humanity (Nye, 2008a: 12). Again, one of the actors with soft power today is terrorist

organizations. The nature of the methods they will use to increase their soft power does not make sense on a human scale - as the result is to serve terrorism.

1.6. Public Diplomacy

A standard definition has not yet been made in which the concept of "public opinion" is generally accepted. Historically, this concept starts from the statement that man is a social animal and is defined in a multi-layered thought structure that develops from Plato and Aristotle to Durkheim, from Habermes and Giddens and feeds on different mosaics. Public opinion, which sometimes stands out as a part of the norm of separation of state and civil society, and sometimes as the core of the methodization practice of social scientists, enters the calendar of communication scientists as a medium in which the media and its effects are investigated. Political scientists even consider this concept as part of their propaganda work. For this reason, when the concept of public opinion is mentioned, no consensus has emerged (Aymaz, 2012: 235).

The subjecting of public opinion to the examination and perception of foreign policy started to be important mainly from the beginning of the 20th century; the process accelerated with the democratization and politicization of states. In this context, public opinion has no meaning in states where democracy is not established. In democratic countries, people can displace political thoughts, political parties or leaders that are not in accordance with their wishes and ideas by election, and of course, in these countries, people can bring what they deem appropriate to the administration by election. In countries where the field of political action is high and not restricted, the influence and reaction of the public can be seen in different ways, even at other times. However, despite the development of democracy, the interest of the people in foreign politics is not compared to domestic politics (Arı, 2008: 209).

Generally speaking, public diplomacy is the art of expressing the characteristics, expectations, policies and practices of a state according to the perception of the interlocutors. In a sense, it covers the stages of reproduction, processing and development of what is. In essence, public diplomacy is a set of activities aimed at ensuring that what is not what is understood and supported (Dedeoğlu, 2014: 252).

With the globalization of neo-liberalism in the post-Cold War period and the increasing international importance of democratization, the impact of local and international public opinion on decision-making processes has been inevitable. The potential of people to influence the processes of what they know and how has led states to develop strategies in public diplomacy (İskit, 2018: 359). In short, public diplomacy deals with the impact of public attitudes on the formation and execution of foreign policies. This plays an important role in shaping a country's image, perception and external relations. It covers the dimensions of international relations beyond traditional diplomacy, the formation of public opinion by governments in other countries, the interaction of private groups and interests in a country, the reporting of foreign relations and their impact on policy (Cull, 2009: 19).

While negotiations behind closed doors are essential in classical diplomacy, public diplomacy essentially operates in the form of open diplomacy. Traditional diplomacy is one of the most important tools for the maintenance of international relations and the peaceful resolution of problems and conflicts between countries through official bodies and civil servants (Sak, 2014: 10). In contrast, in public diplomacy, the target is the non-governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and people of the relevant country, rather than governments and state institutions.

Although public diplomacy was first seen in America with an increasing tendency after World War II, it has been intensively preferred in other countries affected by the Cold War to achieve the goals of propaganda, perception management, directing foreigners and conducting the foreign policies of countries (Köksoy, 2014: 213). As a matter of fact, many countries in our age see how effective public diplomacy is in directing people's thoughts and carry out very different studies in this field (Şahin and Asl, 2020: 157).

In any case, today, states increasingly expect their diplomats to be in contact with the people of the countries they are in, to make speeches in the institutions and universities where they are located, and to develop good relations with public representatives (İskit, 2015: 361). Because public officials do not have the freedom to choose the time to serve their country or to determine the duties that await them (Kissinger, 2000: 763).

However, how and at what stage public diplomacy can be carried out varies according to the regime of the host state. In closed societies, it may not be welcomed to go beyond the state and try to contact the society directly, as well as cause diplomatic tensions.

Cultural diplomacy from diplomatic activities in open and free societies is largely considered legal. However, even in such societies, it is necessary to observe certain sensitivities and limits. Namely, the fact that an ambassador in France publicly defends an opinion that contradicts the government's policy may provoke a reaction. Here, it is seen that the state where public diplomacy is most easily exercised is the USA (Scythian, 2015: 361).

The public diplomacy channels of the states are the relevant units within the ministries. Especially in politics, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the embassies and consulates working under this ministry are state units that work intensively in the formation of public diplomacy (Bostancı, 2012: 104). In a conjuncture where states play a leading role and mutual relations are taken as a basis, public diplomacy is generally carried out on two main planes: from the state to the people and from the people to the people. On the first plane, the state uses communication and interaction strategies towards its own citizens and the peoples of other countries, while on the second plane, there are efforts to increase dialogue and understanding directly between peoples. The main thing in both planes is to ensure mutual communication and interaction (Dedeoğlu, 2014: 252).

The sign of the acceleration of the soft power regularly carried out by the Ministries of Foreign Affairs in international relations is sought in the transparency of diplomatic practice and transnational associations. In a sense, the new public diplomacy is rapidly moving towards becoming one of the main elements of the changing and transforming international relations discipline rather than being a technical tool of foreign policy (Sancar, 2012: 25).

Public diplomacy generally gains prominence with the efforts of a state to be a channel for expressing national goals, ideals, politics and culture and to influence the public opinions of different states. Although the importance of this interaction and communication on the peoples is not denied, the reservations that make public diplomacy different from traditional diplomatic studies remain a matter of debate (İskit, 2015: 358).

However, in 1963, Edward R. Murrow took public diplomacy out of the sight of foreign governments and put it in a place targeting NGOs and civilians; and evaluated it as a set of interactions that reveal various personal views as well as state views. British public diplomacy expert Mark Leonard, on the other hand, states that those who are skeptical of the concept of public diplomacy and see it only as an euphemism for propaganda are wrong

(Nye, 2020: 153). According to classical diplomacy, it is seen that public diplomacy is spread over a wider area in terms of stakeholder and scope. With the effect of globalization, it is seen that it is effective in areas such as media, culture, education, art and sports. Likewise, public diplomacy has led to awareness of demands such as human rights and transparent management and increased soft power practices (Gönenç, 2018: 191).

1.7. Humanitarian Diplomacy

In the discipline of International Relations, ethical issues are directly or indirectly included in the context of mainstream and alternative theories: just war theory, together with the wealth created by the distribution of power on a global level, arguments are established for issues such as nature, future generations and objects, cultural differences, women's and children's rights. Humanitarianism, as a doctrine, also represents a Western-centered ideology. According to the British school, the "international community" provides aid and charity to countries and societies that are affected by wars and disasters or have development problems for various reasons, as an expression of common purpose and solidarity at the global level. However, mostly the "compassionate international community" imposes its humanitarianism, which it blends with its own values, on societies affected by conflicts and disasters with a neoliberal perspective (Özerdem, 2016). In recent years, humanitarianism can also be claimed as a legitimate reason for military intervention (liberal interventionism) by the owners of the neoliberal order, as in Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya (Özerdem, 2016).

Using the theories of realism and liberalism in international politics both at the individual level and at the state-society level will provide a useful approach to motivation and decision mechanisms in humanitarian diplomacy studies. Furthermore, it would be even more enlightening to look at humanitarian interventions in light of the overall course of the global political system and other important systemic parameters. According to the realist theory, people who are decision makers always act with the motivation of having power and ambition. Humanitarian aid comes in the same way and can be understood within the framework of the main motivation of recruitment. In other words, if states will provide humanitarian aid to other states and societies in their bilateral relations or through international organizations, there is only one explanatory parameter: the expectation of gain and benefit. Foreign aid can also be explained by the fact that the donor country has some expectations from the recipient country. These expectations and interests, geopolitical

realities, military bases or expectations of obtaining commercial concessions can be considered as concessions that must be made for the existing alliance relations to be permanent (Apodaca, 2017).

Classical liberal theory is one of the founding philosophies of modern politics and social structure. Liberal political theory was the philosophy behind the collapse of the feudal social order and the emergence of a new urban society based on capitalist market relations. Liberalism is also notable for its division of labor and distinction between the public and private spheres, along with its ideals of freedom and equality. In liberal theory, individual freedoms and the harmonious and peace-loving structures of human communities are important. In the liberal perspective, humanitarian aid itself is seen as an ethical responsibility, along with cooperation and bilateral gain scenarios. Michael Barnett argues that states may have moral obligations beyond their sovereign borders. It also underlines the concepts of humanitarian government and humanitarian governance (Kınık and Aslan, 2020).

Liberal institutionalism (institutional liberalism or neoliberalism) within the discipline of international relations is a theory of international relations that recognizes that international cooperation between states is viable and sustainable, and that such cooperation can alleviate the negative aspects of conflict and competition. Liberal institutionalism advocates the importance of global governance and the design of international organizations as a way of coordinating international relations. Institutionalism emphasizes the role played by common goals in the international system and the ability of international organizations to enable states to cooperate.

One point underlined by liberal institutionalist scholars about humanitarian aid and its theoretical dimension is that international organizations and multilateral aid are a relatively more effective and inexpensive method. Such aid has a much higher level of transparency and accountability, and is often valued for less politically biased distribution. Multilateral assistance is more need-oriented. On the other hand, states that conceive of foreign aid as a foreign policy tool based on their own interests generally prefer bilateral foreign aid due to their strategic goals. This is in line with the realist perspective; in bilateral aid, the donor country retains control of the distributed funds and determines who is preferred for aid under which conditions. Donors do not prefer to channel their assistance

and relinquish control through a multilateral agency unless they have significant voting rights in the decision-making mechanisms of the international organization.

Researchers in the liberal wing of the discipline of international relations talk about a kind of ethical responsibility because foreign aid is aimed at reducing global inequalities. "Cosmopolitan morality" is the view that defends the thesis that all the world's society has common moral values, collective economic interests and common social relations, based on the principle that all people are like a single family belonging to the same community. Therefore, an individual or group in need anywhere in the world should actually be seen as a common problem of the same human family (Brown et al., 2014). In line with cosmopolitan moral principles, one principle that actors should pay attention to in humanitarian work is the principle of "do good and do no harm".

Social construction theorists, on the other hand, point to the need to consider the dynamics of identity, values and norms in constant change with a holistic perspective in order to understand the picture of interests and mutual relations of the global society. Along with the critical geopolitical approach, social constructivist approaches promise to examine many global phenomena with different perspectives and a dynamic set of analytical tools and to present explanatory factors (Ciğer Çalışkan, 2016).

It is also necessary to mention the norms and institutional change processes in which liberal and constructivist theories are in a joint effort to explain. In most humanitarian activities, the relationship between ethical principles and norms that motivate human behavior can be seen without a compelling condition. Finally, we can talk about some important arguments and basic principles presented by the English School, where liberalism and realism are blended. The most important basic argument of the British School is the order(liness) that exists to a relatively certain extent in world politics where there is no central government. Important scholars such as Hedley Bull and Martin Wight talk about the motivations of sovereign states, which exist in the global order, to establish certain limits and brake mechanisms on the use of force (Wheeler, 1992). States, because of their common interest in imposing restrictions on the use of force, have developed conciliation environments and the arts of conciliation that make possible the existence and functioning of the common mind, called the "international community".

There are certain normative principles in Türkiye's humanitarian diplomacy initiatives and priority areas in the execution phase. For example, state building and capacity building are the primary objectives in humanitarian aid to the LDC group. Especially in Afghanistan and Somalia, priority is given to the reconstruction of the broken state authority.

2. IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION

2.1. The Concept and Definition of Identity

The first lines of Zygmunt Bauman's (2020) published book of interviews on identity begin as follows:

According to an old tradition of Charles University in Prague, the national anthem of the country to which the recipient of the honorary doctorate belongs is played during the award ceremony. When it was my turn to honor in this way, I was asked to choose between the British national anthem and the Polish national anthem, and I struggled to find an answer.

These lines reveal how difficult it can sometimes be to define yourself, to have to define yourself. The individual will feel the need to define himself/herself when he/she is "someone else". Being someone else and asking "Who are you, who are you?" to address the individual with the question "Who am I, who am I from?" pushes him/her to ask himself/herself questions. At this point, we encounter the concept of identity. As Altunoğlu (2009) stated, identity is the address of the individual. This address carries traces of the society, nation and community in which the individual is involved.

"The concept of identity is derived from the Latin words "-idem-" meaning "same" and the French words "-identie-" meaning "sameness" and "emerges as a social phenomenon as a natural result of the human being being a social being" (Aslan, 2009: 3). The Turkish Language Association (TDK, bt), on the other hand, defines its identity as "the whole of the conditions that enable someone to be a certain person with human-specific symptoms, qualities and characteristics as a social entity". When the etymology of the concept of identity is examined, it is seen that the concepts of "sameness" and "being the same" are emphasized.

In The Oxford English Dictionary, two meanings of identity are mentioned; the first is based on the sameness of objects and the second is based on the difference of objects (Jenkins, 2004, cited in Aka, 2010). Citizen (2003), on the other hand, draws particular attention to sameness in relation to identity with the following words: "Identity is a definition and expresses the sameness/similarities of the thing subject to recognition, which, of course, primarily refers to the sameness/similarities of human beings or human communities with

others" (p. 242). Therefore, identity is the expression of the sameness and similarities of individuals and societies. However, although identity is the emergence of similarities in society and the individual, it should not be ignored that it is a concept that includes differences.

The concept of identity, which does not belong to a single field, is an important phenomenon that has been embraced by many disciplines. According to Yalman (2009), identity is “the most sensitive subject of sociology, anthropology, psychology-social science and spiritual science studies” (p. 38). Various definitions have been made on the concept of identity addressed by sociologists, social psychologists, literati, and anthropologists (Kurnaz, 2013). When these definitions are examined, it is seen that identity is approached from different perspectives. Different perspectives are proof that different meanings are attributed. When the relevant classifications and classifications are examined, it can be seen that the identity is "Who am I?", "Who are we?", "What culture and nation do we belong to?" we can see that it expands within the framework of the questions. How different disciplines examine identity is tried to be discussed in detail in other parts of the study.

Identity in the most general sense is "who am I?" can be seen as the answer to the question (Morsünbül & Tümen, 2008). In different periods of an individual's life, "Who am I?" he/she directs his/her questions to himself/herself and the answer he/she gives constitutes his The answers given in terms of determining the identity find different meanings in each individual. For some, the identity is shaped within the framework of the belief they have, while for others, the identity is shaped within the framework of the ethnicity to which they belong. Such a framework formation arises from the difference in the way one perceives the world and therefore oneself. Kaypakoğlu (1997) explains the concept of identity by the fact that people acquire the necessary energy for the struggle for life and that people attach more importance to themselves than others.

Sarup (1996) explains the concept of identity with two types of approaches. We can consider these approaches as static approach and dynamic approach. While the static approach of identity emphasizes consistent formations such as race, gender, and class, the dynamic approach prioritizes the constructible feature of identity. Bauman (2020) expresses the same idea with a different conceptualization. In his book, Bauman, who likens identities to bubbles floating in the air, mentions that some of the identities are chosen by the individual

himself, while others are inflated and thrown by those around him. While those balloons thrown at us are our primary identities, those chosen by us are our secondary identities. While identities such as race and gender that we acquire with birth express our primary identities, identities such as being a teacher, mother and father that we later acquire with our own efforts are our secondary identities. At this point, what draws individuals and societies to the search for identity and identity conflict is that perhaps our secondary identities remain under the shadow of primary identities and only those shadows are visible.

Based on Sarup (1996) and Bauman (2020), it can be stated that some identities are innate and some are built. In this context, identity is shaped by a number of factors such as biological, psychological, cultural, social and historical influences. For example, being a man or a woman may be an innate identity trait, but being a feminist indicates a built-in dimension of identity. Similarly, while a person's race is seen as a given (innate) aspect of his identity, the importance and meaning attributed to that identity are often socially constructed; it may vary in the context of different cultures, classes, historical periods, or even different periods of the person (such as youth, old age). Elements of identity, such as one's political affiliation, religious beliefs, or personal values, also often take the form of a combination of both given and constructed factors.

The concept of identity manifests itself in various ways in the individual, which can be explained by the multidimensionality of identity. It is usual to have more than one identity at the same time. At the same time, many identity elements such as teachers, women, Muslims and students can be gathered in the individual. Again, being a teacher can be called an element of common identity by some individuals in the society. However, being a constructivist, essentialist or behaviorist teacher can gain a new identity from a subjective perspective.

Identity has continued to develop until today by taking various forms in historical time. While individuality came to the fore in identity, especially in the modern period we are in, adapting to the society experienced in traditional periods was relatively more important. While it is more difficult to change identity in traditional societies, identity has become more variable and fragile in modern periods (Özdil, 2017). While identity clan has gained meaning as lineage-stick belonging in traditional societies, identity has become meaningful by comparing it with the other in modern societies (Karasu Avcı, 2020). In this

context, it can be concluded that identity is a concept that changes and is built over time. Identity elements adopted may vary over time. Therefore, it is also a product of the time period in the identity.

When we look at the environment and time period in which he was born, it is seen that the concept we call identity expresses itself as and on what basis, and that the only feature that distinguishes itself from others changes and takes different forms.

We can give the best example of this with Maalouf's article:

> …Let's not leave Sarajevo. Let's stay there in our thoughts for an imaginary survey. Let's examine a man in his fifties on the street. Coming to 1980, this man would say: "I am Yugoslav!", proudly and heartlessly; when asked more closely, he would state that he lived in the Autonomous Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and, by the way, came from a family with a Muslim tradition. Twelve years later, in the most violent days of the war, the same man would reply, without hesitation and repressed: "I am a Muslim!" Perhaps he would even have left a beard in accordance with the rules of sharia. He added that he did not like being reminded that he was a Bosniak and that he had once proudly emphasized that he was Yugoslav. Today, if we turn our man on the street, he will say that he is first a Bosniak and then a Muslim; he will also say that he regularly goes to mosques, but he will not stop saying that his country is part of Europe and that he hopes to join the European Union one day. If we met the same person in the same place twenty years later, how would they describe themselves? Which of his/her belongings would he/she put at the top? Is he European? Muslim? Bosniak? Is it something else? Maybe the Balkans? (Maalouf, 2012: 17).

The identity, which plays an active role in the development of the sense of belonging, also includes an exclusion. Who am I? The answer to the question not only defines itself, but also the boundaries, differences and similarities drawn between it and another by defining itself. Identity allows others to be noticed beyond self-knowledge and knowing (İbret and Karasu Avcı, 2020).

While the individual creates his/her identity, he/she feeds on the past of the society he/she is in and this process continues to exist in the background. The relevant situation

makes us realize that identity has a social dimension as well as an individual dimension. Bakıroğlu (2013) states that identity has a fluid structure shaped by social, economic and political pressure. Identity is the reflection of the individual's own characteristics and the characteristics attributed to the individual by the social environment (İbret and Karasu Avcı 2020).

Identity is also a matter of recall, retention, memory. The phenomenon we call identity is value judgments, experiences, belief, gender, age, status, educational status, social position, professional position, how we are perceived by others (Kuşat, 2003). Identity, which is a kind of adjective in stating who the person is, requires the individual to recognize himself/herself, define him/herself and distinguish him/her from the other. Meanwhile, he thinks that there is a border between himself and others (the other), in other words, self-definition, which can be considered as being aware of his own existence, takes place in the form of self-definition by recognizing and considering the other (Gündoğan, 2007).

The concept of identity is not an ancient concept historically. While the concept of identity, which was first discussed by psychology and then social psychology in the 1940s, was generally evaluated from an individual-centered perspective, it was realized that it was effective in their social roles in the formation of identity since the 1980s, and then it started to be considered as an area of study within the scope of sociology, social anthropology and political sciences (Süner, 2006).

2.2. Identity Types

The concept of identity, which is a concept unique to humans, is discussed in different dimensions. The fact that there are more than one questions that need to be answered in the definitions made by the individual in the context of himself and his collective consciousness means the answers given in different dimensions. The answers in these different dimensions correspond to different types of identities.

The answers given by the individual about who he/she is are shaped by the society in which he/she lives. In this context, his/her worldview changes these answers along with elements such as his/her belief, the nation he/she is involved in, and the language family to which he/she belongs (Karasu Avcı, 2018). "Who are you?", "Who are you?" some as a Frenchman, some as a Muslim, some as a teacher, some as a mother or father. The answers

given to the relevant question also indicate the dominant identity in the individual. These examples emphasize the types of identity.

2.3. Identity Formation Processes

Identity, which is a sign of feature and quality (Aşkın, 2007), is a concept related to issues covering the characteristics of individuals and societies. It can be said that the formation of identity is not an instantaneous process in general, but an active process that is built throughout the lives of the individual or collective consciousness. According to Güvenç (2009), "although the basic personality that determines our behaviors remains the same throughout life, identities are variable; they can change continuously throughout life and be multi-layered. Individual identities described in response to the question 'who are you' are also varied, varying from today to tomorrow, from person to person, from me to others " (p. 33).

Identity formation is a task that needs to be acquired in terms of development as it refers to a process. Man is born into the shadow of individual, social and physical values and the duties and responsibilities that need to be acquired. This duty, responsibility and value vary from society to society, and these changes play an active role in the formation of identity and the differentiation of identities.

Aşkın (2007) mentions the subjectivist and objectivist approach to the formation of identity in his study. According to the subjectivist approach, identity shows a consistent structure and undergoes little change throughout life. This approach ignores the external environment and change in the formation of identity. The objectivist approach, on the other hand, includes the internal dynamics of the organism as well as its external environment in the formation of identity, and according to this approach, identity is formed as a result of interaction and communication.

Structural functionists and interpretive sociologists, on the other hand, have interpreted the formation of identity centrally from the point of view of the individual. While structural functionists ignore the individual in the formation of identity and see it as a simple organism that plays only the role assigned by society, interpretive sociologists see the individual as an organism that constitutes society and ensures the continuity of society (Metin, 2011).

To say that only the individual plays a role in the formation of identity, which is a dynamic phenomenon that has changed the face in the historical process, has survived to the present day and goes beyond us, and to treat the individual independently of the society in which he/she lives, will push us to a wrong conclusion. Identity is a concept related to how the individual is perceived by others as well as self-knowledge. Identity is formed as a result of the common interactions of individual and social structure (Bayri, 2008). The identity that makes sense with the other has a history as old as human history. The process of building identity is a phenomenon that continues throughout the life of the individual in connection with social life (Karasu Avcı, 2018). Identity, which is a dynamic phenomenon, includes the differences that distinguish individuals and communities from others as well as our common cultural values and relationships. Society, which is a living organism, cannot exist without the other. At this point, the important thing in creating other understandings is to ensure the emergence of a perception that does not create conflict in society (Şıvgın, 2009). The way to do this is undoubtedly through the education of societies.

Atak (2011) states that identity formation is affected by different variables over time. Although the society in which they live offers these variables to the individual during the identity building process, the individual cannot make decisions independently of the judgments made by the society while eliminating these options (Karasu Avcı, 2018). The filter acquired by the individual during the evaluation process is processed by the society. Even the characteristics we bring with birth are shaped by society (Kağıtçıbaşı, 1996).

Identity, which is built in a relational way, is a notion that is formed as a result of the efforts, goals and preferences that need to be invented rather than a formation that needs to be discovered and that needs to be fought for the protection of those preferences. All identities are a construction product, says Nuri Bilgin (2007). This construction period is invented with the relations between individuals and societies. While individual identities are formed by interpersonal relations, it can be said that social identities, which we can call the interpersonal expression of identity, are formed as a result of social relations.

Belongings that make up the identity phenomenon that distinguishes individuals from others and makes them unique are not given to the individual at once. Belongings are formed as a result of their lives. The social environment and culture in which the individual lives are very effective in identity building. In this context, thinking about societies in general makes

it easier for us to get some ideas about the identity analysis of individuals belonging to that society. Of course, this situation is not unilateral. Identity characteristics of individuals will also help to obtain identity tests belonging to the society to which they belong.

The degree of importance of elements such as religion, race, sect, language, which play a "leading role" in the construction of identity that includes classification, discrimination, grouping, and exclusion functions, may vary according to the period and time. It is seen that these leading roles, which sometimes rise on the basis of religion, sometimes on the basis of language, and sometimes on the basis of race, are diversifying and increasing today. In the event that there is an intervention in any of the belongings that are shaped and built around more than one belonging, the entire identity status is affected by this (Kurnaz, 2013).

Some of the factors that are effective in the construction of identity in case of need are relatively prominent compared to others. It is seen that the factor that determines the belonging that comes to the fore for the individual takes shape and changes according to different situations and times. At this point, it would be useful to consider that none of the belongings that play a leading role in identity formation is absolutely dominant. Amin Maalouf "Among people whose beliefs feel threatened, religious belonging seems to summarize all their identities, while their mother tongues and ethnic groups, which are threatened, then fight fiercely with their co-religionists" (2020: 18). He summarizes the situation with his lines.

Identity is a natural, political and dynamic formation that has been with us throughout our lives. Identity, which is more than a card that we carry in our wallet and shows that we are connected to a country, is a discovery and construction process (Gözübüyük, 2014). Kılıçbay (2013) expresses the gender bestowed upon us at birth by casting genetic factors such as skin color and race into an ideological pattern within the framework of some values.

Identity rises on the basis of different factors such as religion, language, family, social environment and profession. Although the degree of importance of these factors varies in each individual, none of them alone is meaningless. In line with the needs of individuals, one of the relevant factors can outstrip the others. Although it is possible to find such factors and belongings that play an active role in the identity building of individuals in a large

number of people, it is impossible to find the same similar composition in two different people (Kurnaz, 2013).

2.4. Cultural Identity Building

2.4.1. The Concept of Cultural Identity

The concept of identity is defined as a set of characteristics that indicate human qualities, reflect the sense of self and distinguish it from others, and it is stated that this identity formation progresses in relation to culture. In this context, the concept of cultural identity is used to define the identity of the culture to which a person or group belongs. Although each culture has its own unique identity, cultural identity refers to the identity of people who share this common culture (Akyüz and Batman, 2017). Cultural identity is explained as a group with cultural elements such as race, nation, ethnicity, religion and gender and the individual defining himself/herself or feeling a sense of belonging to that group (Çetinkaya, 2014/2017).

Within the cultural identity, people share phenomena such as common history, common culture, common language, etc. together. These identities are formed in the historical process and undergo various changes over time (Ayaz, 2015). Cultural identities in a society reflect the changes of common history as well as cultural codes that provide stable, unchanging, meaning frames that exist under these changes (Hall, 1994). Societies think and behave depending on their cultural belonging. The society defines the phenomena such as celebrations, mournings, holidays, etc. according to its cultural codes and these phenomena are shared by that society. Cultural codes, on the other hand, change and transform over time (Mora, 2008).

Each existing culture is unique and different from other cultures. These differences constitute the identity of that culture (Kösoğlu, 1997). The fact that a certain element of a community, for example, maintains a social custom specific to their own lives, is a reflection of their cultural identity (Birkök, 1994). Cultural identity is stated as a concept that reflects the past and extends to the future. Because cultural identity reaches the present day with a beginning and formation process in the past and changes over time. Common values, customs and traditions in society, common features such as mother tongue, religion,

literature, music, cuisine and national day constitute cultural identity and continue to exist with the sharing of these elements by people (Ateş, 2011).

Identity includes the individual's values, ideas, feelings and personal goals, while cultural identity refers to the way the individual belongs to the social environment. This belonging includes elements such as religion, language, race and ethnic group and affects cultural habits such as music, holiday, food and reading. It is seen that societies have carried their existence to the present day thanks to their cultural identities for centuries. Although the values that make up societies are based on a deep-rooted past, they continue their existence and dynamism by adapting to changing times (Bilgin and Oksal, 2018).

2.4.2. Cultural Identity Formation Processes

A cultural environment is essential for the formation of identity (Akdemir, 2004). Communication with the society in which the individual lives is effective in the formation of his/her cultural identity (Ayaz, 2015). Cultural elements in the living society constitute the cultural identity. Although these elements are not fixed, they may change over time depending on the conditions and processes. In this context, cultural elements such as meals, language, religion, customs, historical unity, clothing style, and homeland are among the factors that build the cultural identities of individuals (Tacoğlu et al., 2012). In traditional societies, identities are formed as community-centered and mostly do not change. However, modern societies can also develop together with the intellectual structure (Akça, 2005).

The elements that constitute cultural identity vary according to time and conditions, and individuals can redefine themselves in this process (Tacoğlu et al., 2012). The history, geography, belief system, architecture and artistic activities of a region are important factors in the formation of cultural identity. (A. Uğurlu and S. Uğurlu, 2006). Different reasons can be effective in the formation of cultural identity; The increase in the world population, the solidarity of the communities sharing common history and culture, the development of technology and mass communication are some of these reasons. At the same time, the strong impact of globalization on societies includes the formation of cultural identities (Nar, 2019).

The dimensions of the identity shared and valued by the local culture are an important factor in the relationship between cultural identity and tourism (Akyüz, 2021). In this context, the dimensions of cultural identity are included in McIntosh, Hinch and Ingram's

(2002) study titled "Cultural Identity and Tourism". In the study, dimensions were created by examining the three attractions of the Maori, who are indigenous people of New Zealand.

2.5. Building Individual Identity

Identity, defined as socio-political labeling, which is the answer to the questions about who the individual, group and organization are within the social structure, is a concept that refers to the external appearance of the entity rather than its essence. Identity has a structure that can be built by the other with one eye from the outside. Identity is a concept that performs the function of identifying and labeling others simultaneously with the function of identifying the individual. There may be more than one identity on the individual. Their hierarchy is the problem rather than the multiplicity of these identities. It is necessary to pay attention to the hierarchy between the identities given by the society and the individual identities. Identity does not have a fixed structure. It is rebuilt by force. The hierarchy can always change (Aydın, 2014: 212-213). Identity is a phenomenon that can be produced and built by the individual himself or by the other. Each new definition, each new identity reshapes the individual's behavior.

It is a situation that is parallel to the individual's feeling of power, defining and creating himself/herself in a group. This group can be religion, gender, nationality. It makes the individual feel powerful not to build his/her identity personally, but to build it through those who are like him/her. The simplest way to build identity is for the individual to reject, humiliate and despise the groups and identities that are opposite or outside himself. For example, men build their gender identity through their rejection of feminine characteristics. When the individual feels the need to define himself/herself through a certain point, every thought other than that point is equipped with negative concepts that he/she keeps away from his/her own definition (Crıspın, 2018: 78-79). Not every identity emerges from the construction process loaded with positive meanings. On the contrary, the identity that the individual defines as positive and qualifies as superior may be the identity that the other rejects. It is part of identity building that individuals place themselves in a separate category from other individuals. Among societies, among groups, among individuals, the emphasis on identity before one's name draws attention. Through these emphasizations, an attitude is exhibited towards the person and the group.

With the increase in the emphasis on identity in society, individuals have made a habit of introducing themselves through their identities, which they think are important according to time and space, without the need to define themselves as human beings. In this way, a definition through identities feeds discrimination and marginalization (Crıspın, 2018: 88). The concept of identity, which also contributes to the construction of the other, can be understood from the frequency of identity definitions in society that it is an important tool in the presentation of individuals' selves.

There are two factors that are considered important in identity construction. Biases and stereotypes. Preliminary information about the individual, labels and stamps about the group help to identify that group or that individual. The individual who is a member of a particular group, the individual who is a member of that group, directly adopts or is assumed to have adopted all the labels of that group. Even if it does not adopt it, it is not evaluated by the other side with a meaning other than the meaning in the group. While the other group is built as a whole of negative meanings through stereotypes, the group to which it belongs is built as a whole of positive meanings. The individual gains collective identity awareness at the same time as the group to which he/she belongs (Bilgin, 2014: 156). Collective identity consciousness is part of the construction of identity. The individual is also aware that he/she will be exposed to generalizations when he/she defines himself/herself not through his/her personal identities but through the group to which he/she belongs. With collective identity, the individual accepts the group's attitude towards any subject as well as the group's requirements and expectations from the members of the group. Even if he/she has not adopted them, he/she is acted and evaluated by the other-external groups on the assumption that he/she has adopted them. Stigmatization of the group and mass by evaluating any mistake on a group basis, not on an individual basis, is one of the common situations. To clarify the situation with a simple example, it can show many identities as the reason for the theft of the thief X person. It is believed that the individual steals because of his/her many identities such as gender, race, neighborhood, color, etc. Since the individual knows that he is believed in this way, he/she will steal, and he/she is aware that his/her identities will be stamped only because of his/her own individual error. There is a mutual construction between individuals and identities. The individual does not mind choosing situations that he/she would not personally prefer because they are expected from the group to which he/she belongs. He is aware that the other will not find it strange. For example, the masculine individual, who is exposed to the discourse of "likes and beats" and who dominates this

generalization attributed to his gender, is aware that he will not be excluded when he exhibits this behavior attributed to the identity of the other, even if he is not inclined to use violence. Identity is thus the product of a cycle constructed by the interaction of the other and the individual.

2.6. Building Social Identity

Social identity covers the part of the identities of the individual given by the society. All identities other than biologically given identities are social identities. Social identity is the result of a construction, production. Collective acceptance of the identity produced by the individual and re-adoption by the individual is the process of building social identity. According to Berger's definition of the socialization process, the first stage is the acquisition of information by the individual, and the next stage is the transfer of the information provided by the individual to daily life and practices. The next stage is the individual's inclusion in the ready-made social relations network offered to him/her. Berger and Luckmann discussed socialization by dividing it into two different dimensions. According to Berger and Luckmann, who distinguish between primary and secondary socialization, primary socialization corresponds to the socialization of infants and children. Secondary socialization corresponds to all socializations that take place in the continuation of primary socialization. The primary socialization, which has a great impact and power on secondary socialization, has the capacity to direct the life of the individual (Akın, 2011: 76-77). Social acceptances of gender have been acquired through essential socialization and will be the determinant of most roles and responsibilities that the individual will acquire throughout his/her life. It is what the individual has acquired during the primary and secondary socialization process that guides all kinds of social identity.

The concept of socialization is an important factor for identity construction. The social rules and roles that we call norms are transferred to individuals through a number of socialization agents (family, media, school, politics). Individuals internalize these transfers by taking them as models. Gender identity is only one of the outcomes of such a process. The individual's self-identification as female or male is the result of some encouragement and acceptance. When uniform definitions and identities are given to individuals by the society, similar individual identities are built. Just as the same information is given to all students in schools and individuals with similar mindsets are raised, the boy is brought to

life as a mini-model of his father. When he/she comes to the world, the individuals he/she will model in parallel with his/her gender are already waiting (Connell, 2019b: 278-284). According to Parsons, the socialization of the child is similar to the civilization of a barbarian. The birth of the baby is the beginning of the process of becoming a social being and will try to create awareness of where and how to behave during this process. The process of adaptation to the social environment is supported by roles, values and norms. Functionalists expect individuals to adopt these supports and experience successful socialization. Adaptation and integration are important factors in terms of socialization (Akın, 2011: 90). The masculine and female individual build their identity through this harmony and integration or through disharmony. The construction of identity is a product that emerges as a result of the socialization of the individual and defines the individual. The identity acquired by the boy is an identity given to him by the society. He gets the answer to the question of how to be a man, first in the family and its surroundings, then in school and other institutions. It becomes an answer authority for individuals who internalize these answers and ask the same question. Social identity is constructed as a result of such a cycle. Although the example given is the construction of gender identity, the same applies to all other social identities. The identity of the individual is built by social conditioning. When considered on the basis of gender, the discourses that the female is weak and the weak masculine is strong are social conditioning. From the moment the masculine is born, many conditioning is instilled under the mold of you are a man. Contribution is made to identity building by preventing a number of human-specific behaviors (expressing emotions, crying). Likewise, the female is raised with conditions in line with the mold that does not suit you (Atabek, 2018: 155).

2.7. Identity and Foreign Policy Interaction

Among Wendt's pioneers in the analysis of identity and foreign policy interaction, the social construction approach has been frequently used in the discipline of international relations since the 1990s. The basic premise of the Wendtian social construction approach is the effect of the elements used by "I" and "other" in self-definition on foreign policy.

Wendt (2003: 95-140) states that after long explanations and propositions about identity, states have an identity just like people and this identity directs the course of international relations. The identity of the states, on the other hand, consists of elements such

as beliefs, myths and culture that are based on the historical process and have spread for a long time.

The attitudes of states in their foreign policies can also be interpreted as a manifestation of "collective" common meaning. This is the identity that is directed from collective people to society and from society to people. On the other hand, in the interaction between identity and foreign policy, the phenomenon of identity can take place as a dependent or independent variable (Akıllı, 2013: 9). Therefore, one of the two can be a predecessor or a successor to the other. The correlation between identity and foreign policy can be expressed as follows: While identity is a vehicle for the actor to define himself/herself and assert his/her goals, needs and interests, foreign policy is a symbol of manifestation and interests in the orientation of identity.

The concept of identity has been a phenomenon that has been studied in fields such as anthropology, sociology, psychology and philosophy and analyzed by each science or discipline from its own point of view. Wendt (2003: 224) expresses the concept of identity in a philosophical sense as the ‘thing’ that makes‘ thing ’a' thing '. In other words, it is a catalyst that gives quality to any phenomenon that does not have a certain meaning and quality at the beginning and transforms it into a meaningful concept/structure.

As stated earlier, identity, which is the subject of social psychology, has individual, social psychological, psychosocial and collective dimensions. When considered in terms of international relations, the collective dimension of identity gains weight. Because collective identity includes the sense of belonging in the context of singularity and dissimilarity, which are the exclusive characteristics of certain societies, it is natural for states to turn to foreign policies through these factors (Bilgin, 2007: 13). When collective identity is considered as an integrated state of national identity, it is expected that there will be an appearance of this "nationhood" in the international arena. In other respects, identity is an output that states are expected to act accordingly, based on the fact that it is a tool carrying the heritage of nations (Smith, 1999: 147-150).

In the interaction of states with identity and foreign policy, Barnett (1993) mentions a two-way role, positional and preferential. Spatial roles are relatively mandatory roles that they have to comply with in terms of adaptation, participation and status to the structures in the international system. As these roles have limiting effects, the field of each role can

expand or be restricted compared to its "others". Preferential roles mean that states can create their own areas of action according to their foreign policy goals. These roles are shaped by factors such as historical, cultural and social (Barnett, 1993: 273-275). As a matter of fact, identity-based social approaches, which are relatively neglected in the discipline of international relations, attach great importance to identity. The constructivist approach tries to explain the attitudes of states in international relations based on identity. States consider the concept of identity, which they see as the basis of their legitimacy, as the starting point of their modes of action, assume that international relations are a social field, and therefore it is argued that identity is guiding (Bilgin, 2007: 53; Wendt, 2003: 5556).

At this point, the interaction between identity and foreign policy emerges. Because states want to operate in foreign policy based on historical, cultural and collective identities (Arı, 2004: 48). However, these desires may vary between "positionality" from "others" and "preference" from within (Wendt 2003: 224). Although the collective identity of the Macedonian state, which comes from its historical and cultural background, guides the objectives in foreign policy, these objectives are subject to the obstacles of "others". Akıllı (2013), by accepting identity as an organic form, argues that this form can spread to the state, and therefore the link between identity and foreign policy is also organic.

It is stated that social norms should have the qualities of "locality" and "specificity" in order to affect foreign policy through the identity channel. In locality, the collective identity definition and perceptions of the individuals who make up the social system are in question. In specificity, on the other hand, the weight and degree of impact of the definitions made and their power to direct behaviors are mentioned (Türk, 2014: 41). Accordingly, in the relationship of collective identity with foreign policy, it must first be fed locally and then this situation must have a certain degree of influence.

While rationalist theory is above identities, in terms of social construction, identities are in a continuous movement from individual to state, from state to individual. The strong bond between them stems from this and creates the identity-system relationship. Three systems can be mentioned in this relationship. These solutions are as follows:

The first is the Hobbesian anarchic order, which is used to describe a situation of "turmoil" in which there is no leader, authority or administration. Anarchy is used to explain the history and systemic structure of international relations in the British School. The general

definition of the anarchic order consists of the absence of a central authority that the international system accepts and the whole of the political problems raised by the states connected to it. The reason for this is attributed to the supranational nature of international relations (Yalvaç, 2011: 72). In the Hobbesian anarchic order, relations develop through elements such as competition and hostility. The important thing is to maintain power and interests. For this, it is to build one's own security on the insecurity of the other and to resort to power and confrontational attitude in foreign relations (Yalvaç, 2011: 77).

The second is the Lockean anarchic order, which asserts the importance of common interests, interests, cooperation and interstate organizations. Locke argues that people are at peace in the natural state. It assumes that being different inside does not prevent gathering around common values and goals outside. It is accepted that states should be based on soft power, not militarist, in guaranteeing their interests, sovereignty and security (Oğuzlu, 2012: 206-209).

The third is the Kantian anarchic order, which is based on states seeing each other as friends and establishing relations through common interests and interests in foreign policy. As domestic and foreign policies are intertwined, states perceive and accept each other through identity and common interests. Transparency and relationships are maintained in the form of persuasion and acceptance (Oğuzlu, 2012: 206-209).

As can be seen, the phenomenon of identity has a great and important place in the international system in every case. Because states benefit from the identities they carry when defining their interests and goals. In this utilization process, they perform their roles by exhibiting one or more of the behaviors listed above. Identities consist of both internal and external structures, as well as the characters of the relationships of these structures vary.

In the process leading to identity formation, actors cannot formulate their identities until they understand their needs, interests, and who they are. In order to do this, they must first identify themselves. The agents/basic structures that are the source of identity initially carry only the “me” or “ego” motive and this has no meaning. The “me” or “ego” alone becomes an unbuilt identity. In order to build the identity, "others" are needed. In other words, there is a need for the "other" in order to talk about an identity phenomenon in the international arena. From this point of view, it can be said that identity is positioned relative to others, and the dynamics coming from within the society are antecedent but not essential.

The fact that the majority of the society belongs to an X religion does not make a state an X State. If this state defines itself as the X state and other states accept it, the said state acquires the identity of the State of Religion X. For this, there is a need for a long time and an agreed social process (Wendt, 1999: 224-225).

Identity has two main faces, and since the first is the ideas of the ego and the second is the ideas and opinions of the others, there is a mutual interaction between "I" and "other". While "I" positions itself relative to the other, "the other" positions itself relative to the self position and therefore one needs the other. In order to look at it from a slightly broader perspective, it is possible to examine identities personally in three main groups: collective, role and genre (Wendt, 1999: 224-229):

- Personal or collective identities are based on material understanding. These are of automatic genetic nature and can be collected in the form of human traditions or traditions from the past.
- Species identities are people's labels arising from the qualities and characters of states. Although these can be considered cultural and historical consequences, Wendt claims that these actors are “idiosyncratic.”
- Role identities arise from the relationship with “others.” Species identities rise before society, while role identities emerge from relationships with others. No one or any state can establish its own role identity on its own.

Collective identities constitute a definition or positioning between "ego" and "others". The situation between them becomes blurred over time, and collective identities are formed when they come together with all types of identities. Norms and institutions form the identities of actors as a structure, and the Caste system is a good example of this. The person who is a member of the caste system acts in accordance with the restrictions of the caste class. The person starts to act according to the norms of this class and the class he/she is in gives the person an identity. In this way, the person determines his/her position and the sum of these determinations constitutes the society and thus the identity of the society is revealed (Bınarcı, 2014: 17).

According to Hudson (205), identity and culture shape intrinsic motivations and imperatives that “need to be considered and appear important in the international balance of power in foreign policy-making.” Today, the role and importance of identity and culture in

foreign policy are increasing. The reason for this is that the value of an actor can now be measured according to the status of its soft power and can show this soft power as a passing coin. At this point, the author argues that identity is not fixed with traditions, it is redefined by each generation and rearranged according to changing social and political conditions, and emphasizes changing social and political conditions. Discourse and interaction in society are the main mechanism and driving force of identity, and within this framework, the results of all of this social discourse emerge as culture. Therefore, concepts such as "culture wars", "culture change" and "culture effect" are mentioned (Hudson, 2005: 10-11).

Huntington, who emphasized the cultural field in the post-Cold War period, sees the concept of civilization and civilization as a cultural identity that distinguishes people from other species in his work titled "Clash of Civilizations". According to the author, nation states are the main actors in the events in the world in the historical process. The source of the reactions of nation states to the events is power and wealth in the historical process, and common values or differences and cultural preferences shape the reactions (Huntington, 2015: 15). However, the structure of relations in the world order is "shaped by the civilization identities of the countries" (Huntington, 2015: 27). Humanity has existed with its identities throughout the history of civilizations. Many historians, anthropologists, sociologists, philosophers and political scientists focus on their identities while defining and interpreting these civilizations, analyzing their reasons for existence, their emergence, their rise, their relations with each other, their successes, weaknesses and collapses. On the contrary, the peoples of 12 known civilizations in the world, the communities that make up these peoples, and the identities of the individuals that make up these communities have constantly distinguished themselves from others, existed accordingly, and developed their relationships accordingly (Huntington, 2015: 51-53). Therefore, contrary to the historical process stretching back thousands of years, it is understood that it is not possible for states to be independent of the identity device in their foreign policies.

When we look at the issue of identity, which spreads from the individual side to the corporate side, from the point of view of states, the concept gains a new and different dimension. Although the state identity problematic ranks high on the research agenda of the discipline of international relations, it becomes an important feature of the constructivist/constructivist approach and discourse. The issue of state identity is included in international relations and rationalist theories or considered as a secondary element. It is

seen that the constructive approach to this issue has shown interest and made analyzes. In the Wendtist constructivist approach, the answer to the question of "how states choose between multiple identities" is sought and evaluations are made accordingly. In the Wendtist approach, the relationship between state identity and individual identity, culture and norms is another problematic situation (Şahin, 2013: 43-44).

On the other hand, the constructivist approach emerges as a challenge to mainstream theories (Machiavellian or Hobbesian Realism (realism), Grotian rationalism (rationalism) and Kantian revolutionism (revolutionaryism)). In general, with the constructivist approach, it can be argued that it is a suitable option for rational election theory and the concept of state identity. Wendt (1999) divides identities into three main classes as personal, social and collective, and positions the state identity in the type of collective identity in terms of status. Wendt (1994) expresses constructivism in the context of state identity as a structural theory of the international system with three basic claims. These allegations are:

1. The main units of analysis of international policy theory are states.
2. The key structures and relations in the system of states are intersubjective rather than material.
3. Instead of being given to the system externally by domestic politics or human nature, state interests and identities are largely built by these social structures (Wendt, 1994: 385).

In his article on the triad of language, culture and national identity, Hobsbawm (1996) argues that identities are a framework tool that provides actors with a sense of who they are, what interests they have, their ability to determine their own place, predict the behavior of other actors, interpret what their interests are, and push them forward (Hobsbawm, 1996: 1065-1071-1073). State identity becomes a part of national identity and culture with socially shared beliefs. The main place of culture and identity in the state identity is the use of force (hard/soft) in international relations (Alexandrov, 2003: 35).

State identity is a structure that cannot be clearly and immediately characterized as it is in individuals or societies. Because positionality and preferentiality in international relations vary according to the functioning of the system. According to the framing and limiting effects of the system, preferentiality develops according to identity dynamics (Barnett, 1993: 273-275). Scottish author William McIlvanney (1999) explains the national

and state identity as follows; "Having a national and state identity is like having an old insurance policy. There is one somewhere, but you are not sure where it is ” (Manuscript Centra, 2008: 1249). There are debates in the literature about what state identity is. Wendt (1994) states that the corporate identity of the state is an area of interest consisting of four basic norms. These are:

1. Physical security, including differentiations from other actors,
2. Ontological security or predictability in relations with the world that generates interest for stable social identities,
3. Development beyond survival by force, which mediates recognition by others as an actor,
4. Development to meet human needs for a better life and collective memory between states for this,

Identity-based norms of states may not always be visible and easily understood. It emerges and is put forward in certain situations and developments. In the first stage, a new form of state emerges when it has to rationally comply with cultural norms or is forced to do so. As in Hobbesian anarchy, it can be extremely negative in the form of "kill or be killed". In the second stage, there may be a neoliberal advanced version that is positive, moderate and supportive in cases of self-interest. Cooperation with international institutions, such as pacts. The third stage appears to emerge when a state observes cultural norms based on the constructivist hypothesis and perceived as legitimate. Legitimacy, on the other hand, is in accordance with its own identity (Wendt 1999: 250).

State identity has a defensive and positioning function in the absence of authority in the international arena. Since the rules of law are valid in the ordinary operation of the system, there is no need to assert the phenomenon of identity. Because the main function of state identity is put forward when it is out of routine. However, state identities are a mechanism that is mostly used in issues such as education, culture and sovereignty rather than global situations such as economic and technical. "Humanization of the state" can be used as the most concise expression describing the state identity (Fearon, 1999: 36-37; Sarı Ertem, 2012: 198-201-204).

In terms of its emergence, state identities and interests can sometimes be shaped according to the characteristics of the local society and the internal system (liberal,

democratic, etc.), and sometimes according to the characteristics of the international society (hegemon, balancer, etc.). In this respect, state identities can be formed according to their internal, external or both characteristics. However, as stated in the basic proposition of the structuralist approach, identities can change in the context of time, conditions, effects and interest. As a matter of fact, on the intersubjective basis of social identities, there is a life course based on cooperation or conflict. Therefore, it is natural that state identities also have a share in this change. When the state identity is considered in a collective context, the nature of change can be understood more clearly. The important thing is not whether the self and the other are normatively integrated, but the fact that the social structures they embody penetrate deeply into self-concepts. During the Cold War, it is seen that the United States and the USSR exhibited a collective social structure with certain identities. These concretize themselves and others according to their role positions in the social structure in the "national security worldviews" they define (Wendt, 1994: 386).

The nature of national identity (socialist, communist, liberal, capitalist, etc.) creates an effect from the inside out. Accordingly, the most concrete and powerful example of the effect of national identity on foreign policy and the international system is the Cold War period. Because in this period, the source point of the capitalist-communist separation comes from the identities of the nations, and the struggle for interest and influence follows.

However, when we look at the examples of the USA and the USSR, the debate about which of the identities affects and shapes the other is opened. Did the state or national identity or national identity affect the state identity? question arises.

To this question, Berger answers that it is not easy to distinguish between state identity and national identity. According to the author, state identity and national identity are often seen as equal and intertwined in international relations. National identities overlap with state identity to a great extent, if not always. Different theoretical approaches and researches between the two concepts are the fields of study of sub-disciplines in political science and international relations. Those who consider identity as "national" are academics in domestic politics, nationalism and ethnic issues, and academics in the field of international relations and foreign policy emphasize the external dimension of identity (Berger, 1996: 338-343, Alexandrov, 2003: 37; Wagner, 2005: 144-145). During the Cold War years, it is seen that the Soviets, which were in fact a union of many states, exhibited an unprecedented

development in military production, education and technology and an effort to prevail over the others. The producer or driving factor of this effort is the Soviet identity and commitment to the Soviet identity. As a matter of fact, although the states that make up the Union have separate social characteristics and local identities, they put the Soviet Identity at the top and position themselves under a single identity against the outside world (Hopf, 2002: 148-150).

The concept of state identity is one of the basic concepts commonly used by constructivist approaches such as norms, ideas and culture. Although there is no consensus on what state identity is, with a simple approach; it can be considered as the characterizations that a state asserts itself separately from others. Based on these qualifications, states can direct their foreign policies. As a matter of fact, the pioneers of the constructivist approach in this regard (eg. Wendt, 1992; 1994; 1999), see "national culture" as a source of state identity. In terms of state identity, "culture" is more than paternal habits and is defined as "knowledge shared as a national society". The expression "information" in the definition is accepted as a "belief" that allows an "actor" to believe that he/she exists and that he/she is real. Therefore, the "actor" is also accepted as the state (Alexandrov, 2003: 35).

According to Demirtaş, it offers an important way for identity interaction with different countries and for these countries to be accepted and respected as part of the existing international system. State identity can become an important tool that policymakers use to realize their foreign policy goals during the policy making and maintenance phase (Demirtaş 2008: 33).

Campbell, on the other hand, sees the state identity as an inevitable dimension of existence and expresses it as "a structure in which political struggles are staged". According to the author, general classifications that divide the relations between the self and the other reveal the difference between "foreign policy", which is associated with the state and a traditional phenomenon, and "domestic policy". In this respect, identity has a protective and inclusive role in foreign policy, while collective identity has an integrative role in the interior (Campbell,

1998: 226-229). From this point of view, as Berger (1996) and Wendt (1994-1999) emphasize, both concepts are in a close relationship of inclusivity, intertwining and closeness.

Although it is an agreed proposition in the literature that identities affect foreign policy in general, there are disagreements on its effect, direction and continuity. The source point of these disagreements is in the context of the relativity, changeability and limitation of the arguments on which identities are built.

While the identities, existence (goals, interests, etc.) and actions of states shape the structure of the international community, the quality of the international structure also affects state actions. What states want to achieve in terms of goals and actions is to meet their needs and to be in a better position in the international order. In other words, they exhibit a rational behavior and attitude in the action dimension since it is maximizing their “interests”. This attitude is actually a typology of individual personality traits. Because each individual works to maximize his/her own interests. Therefore, it is natural that the attitude of the society consisting of individuals and the state, the representative apparatus of the society, is similar. According to Wendt, this is an effort to reach the interests they create by conceptualizing themselves and others, and identities determine interests (Wendt, 1999: 231).

Without interests in foreign policy, identities have no motivational power. Therefore, identities are actually a "belief" and interests are a "desire" for the state. This situation, which complements each other and creates a movement, explains the continuity and change of foreign policy. Because the phenomenon of identity may change over time, foreign policy may also change depending on this change. Therefore, the rational foreign policy of the state is developing and at this point, it is necessary to analyze the state actions. Rational choice theory formulated as "(desire) + (belief) = (action)" can be used to analyze state actions (Wendt, 1999: 231).

This formulation concretely shows the rational dimension of constructivism in international relations. Because it is thought that there is an ongoing chain and systematic overlay of one driving factor to constructivism, then another, and a gradual achievement of a result, purpose and judgment in the sum of these. Each stage feeds on the previous one and proceeds in this way. Therefore, since constructivism is the subject of fundamental analysis, it can be argued that approaching foreign policy and international relations in the context of identity once again reveals the importance of rational view.

On the other hand, taking the state as the only unit of analysis can lead to the formation of some invisible areas. Symbolizing the community, which is a dominant cultural

feature, with a completely different state identity can lead to a number of internal problems and foreign policy disruptions caused by these problems. This meaning is best seen in the Balkans during the Yugoslav period. Therefore, while it is possible to evaluate and analyze the behaviors of states from a "rational" point of view, it is thought that it is especially useful to reconsider the claim that foreign policy may be discrete from different perspectives. It is seen in the historical process that the identification of national identity and state identity can take place mostly in homogenized countries.

Similarly, Weldes suggests that in order to examine and understand the representations of national interests and foreign policy, it should be handled in two dimensions: "articulation" and "questioning". According to the author, the term "articulation" refers to the process in which meaning is produced from existing cultural raw materials or linguistic sources. "Inquiry", on the other hand, is a dual process in which identities or positions in the subject state are formed. According to the author, national interests and foreign policy are formed in the constructivist sense as follows: The dual processes of articulation and interrogation are of central importance in the creation of the "national interest". Through these processes, visions of the international system, including the definitions of its own state, other states and threats, are created in the identity patterns of the person/persons and the organized society formed by their combination. This supply creates national interests and accordingly directs foreign policy (Weldes, 1996: 284-286, Ünal, 2016: 49).

3. TÜRKİYE 'S IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION AND THE USE OF SOFT POWER IN CENTRAL ASIA: THE INFLUENCE OF RUSSIA AND CHINA

3.1. Türkiye's Soft Power Potential

3.1.1. Türkiye's Soft Power Supplies Historically

Türkiye's foreign policy is shaped by its deep historical roots and the influence of the geographical, cultural and civilizational heritage left by the Ottoman Empire. The impact of heritage strengthens the historical ties established with neighboring regions and forms the basis of the vision of becoming a regional power (Davutoğlu, 2014: 70). Türkiye, the only country in the Islamic world with a long-term parliamentary democracy, acts as a bridge through which cultures from Europe to Asia, from Asia to the Middle East can communicate, reflecting cultural diversity. Rich historical and wide kinship ties in the foreign policy implemented by Türkiye provide various advantages to the Republic of Türkiye. Especially the fact that Turkish originals leave historical and cultural artifacts, unforgettable memories and traces in the wide geography extending from Asia to Europe facilitates the execution of public diplomacy policies.

In recent years, Türkiye has taken an active role in its foreign policy and stands out with its efforts to mediate, solve problems and ensure stability in regional crises. In the Arab Spring and the following period, Türkiye has made its presence felt as an active actor, especially in the Middle East and North Africa (Durakçay and Canveren, 2017: 263).

Beyond its vision of becoming a regional power, Türkiye aims to have more say in the global arena. For this purpose, it takes an active role in international organizations, makes its voice heard on issues on the global agenda and offers solutions. While Türkiye's effectiveness in organizations such as the United Nations and the G20 is increasing, its search for global actorship is also strengthening. In addition, Türkiye has become one of the global pioneers in the amount of humanitarian aid compared to the gross national product with its "humanitarian and entrepreneurial foreign policy" approach. This entrepreneurial approach makes significant contributions to Türkiye's global development agenda

(https://www.mfa.gov.tr/site_media/html/turkiye-yuzyili-nda-turk-dis-politikasi-2024-kitapcik.pdf).

Türkiye's strong position has also had a significant impact on its use of soft power. Although Türkiye's methods and strategies differ in many regions of the world, especially in the Central Asia region, which has a history, culture, religion, and language partnership, it has spread the use of soft power elements through various institutions (Çevik, 2019: 51).

Türkiye's importance to public diplomacy and active foreign policy since the 2000s have significantly increased the country's effectiveness and prestige in the international arena. This is an important step for Türkiye to progress towards becoming a regional and global power. The economic transformation and democratization process that Türkiye went through after 2002 was also reflected in Turkish foreign policy. Türkiye, which adopts an active and strong foreign policy understanding in every region of the world, has been among the top five countries worldwide with 260 diplomatic and consular missions as of 2023 (https://www.mfa.gov.tr/site_media/html/turkiye-yuzyili-nda-turk-dis-politikasi-2024-kitapcik.pdf). Türkiye's public diplomacy plays an important role in maintaining interest and sympathy towards the country. On the other hand, some foreign policy preferences of the government have led to tensions in intergovernmental relations. Despite the decline in relations with countries such as Egypt, Syria, UAE and India, Türkiye's historical and cultural ties in the region have led to a certain sympathy in the society. This can be considered as an indicator of the effectiveness of public diplomacy. It is well known that the implementation of the “soft power” policy requires adequate economic infrastructure and largely financial capacity. Türkiye has a lower potential against countries with strong economies such as Russia, USA and China and a wide range of tools to pursue an effective "soft power" policy in the world and especially in the Central Asian region (Doğan, 2010).

Apart from this, the cultural product that stands out as one of the most successful soft power products that increase Türkiye's global recognition today is Turkish television series. As seen in the theoretical section, soft power refers to the ability of a country to influence other countries without political or military coercion. Cultural products are an important tool in increasing a country's soft power. The leading position in film and series production, which has become one of the most impressive tools in terms of soft power in the world, strengthens the soft power of states in general. Turkish series make a significant contribution

to cultural diplomacy activities and support Türkiye in achieving its foreign policy goals. Today, Türkiye has become the second largest exporter after the USA (Bilgin, 2022: 5). As of 2022, an average of 200 series-films are shot annually in Türkiye. More than 170 Turkish series have been exported to 150 countries and are estimated to have reached more than 500 million viewers on a global scale. These series provided more than $1 billion in revenue to Türkiye (https://www.ekonomim.com/sehirler/hisarciklioglu-sinema-ve-dizi-sektörunun-ihracati-1-milyar-dolari-asti-haberi-717395).

It was emphasized in previous chapters that soft power practices were used by states long before the emergence of the concept of soft power defined by Nye. This also applies to the example of Türkiye. In the soft power literature, the number of studies evaluating Türkiye's soft power policies generally starting after the Cold War is dominant, but Anadolu Agency (AA), one of the first public diplomacy tools, was established in 1920 in order to explain the goals of the National Struggle and the values adopted by Türkiye before the proclamation of the Republic of Türkiye (https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/p/tarihce). During this period, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk took very important steps to introduce the Young Republic of Türkiye to the world in an age when concepts such as public diplomacy, political communication, strategic communication, and soft power were not yet in the literature (Doster, 2018: 1).

Contemporary, enlightened, populist, secular, adopting the equality of women and men pursued by Atatürk, aiming at a multi-party democratic regime, based on reason and science, respecting the sovereignty and internal affairs of other countries, peaceful politics have increased the curiosity towards Atatürk and the Republic of Türkiye (Doster, 2018: 4). In order to introduce this transformation to the world public and to build the image of the new Türkiye, a ship expedition called "Black Sea Ferry Mobile Exhibition" was organized in 1926. Within the scope of the exhibition, a wide range of products from agricultural and industrial products to handicrafts and historical artifacts were exhibited. The Black Sea Ferry, which was specially converted for the mobile exhibition, carried out a three-month voyage containing 161 port stops. Barcelona, Hamburg, Helsinki, London, Marseille, Leningrad and Naples are just a few of these ports. The exhibition attracted great attention in every port and contributed significantly to Türkiye's recognition in the international arena. Beyond being just a product presentation, the exhibition can also be interpreted as an effort to build national identity and gain international prestige (Gülal and Durakçay, 2023: 527).

With the widespread use of radio and television in the world, Türkiye has also stepped into these channels. Established in 1964, the Turkish Radio and Television Corporation (TRT) has been active in the field of international broadcasting since the 1990s as well as operating as the national channel of the country. TRT INT and TRT broadcast Turkish programs on Eurasia channels for Türkiye's neighboring countries and Central Asia (Özden, 2003: 43).

Apart from the aforementioned institutions, Türkiye's other soft power vehicles were established after the Cold War. The Turkish Cooperation and Development Agency (Tika), one of the building blocks of Türkiye's modern soft power, was established in 1992 as a result of the policies of the then President Turgut Özal, especially towards the newly independent states of Central Asia (https://tika.gov.tr/detail-ortak_kultur_mirasimiz_korunucu_tika/). Another important institution of this period, the Turkic World Common Culture and Art Management (TURKSOY), emerged in 1993 with the initiative of the Ministry of Culture of Türkiye and the participation of the ministries of culture of the newly established republics (Sevin, 2017).

After Özal, the efforts to open up, which were stagnant due to the instability in Türkiye, gained momentum again after 2002. For example, it is noteworthy that Tika has carried out 93% of the project, which has exceeded 30 thousand since its establishment, after 2002 (https://tika.gov.tr/tika-2023te-1326-proje-ve-faaliyetle-turkiyenin-dostluk-elini-dunyanin-dort-bir-yanina-uzatti/). After the election of these projects by the people in 2002, the AK Party adopted a multi-dimensional foreign policy approach and applied the elements related to soft power more frequently and widely (Gültekin, 2022: 103). With the efforts of Ahmet Davutoğlu, who was first the chief advisor to the prime minister, then the foreign minister and finally the prime minister of the period, studies in the Middle East, Asia and Africa were concentrated. Davutoğlu tried to carry out a policy based on basic principles such as central country, historical and cultural ties, multidimensional and multilateral relations, strategic depth, freedom-security balance, zero problems with neighbors, valuable loneliness and rhythmic diplomacy.

Ahmet Davutoğlu developed the "Zero Problems with Neighbors" policy in 2014 in line with his work titled "Strategic Depth: Türkiye's International Position". The aforementioned policy constitutes the theoretical framework that will ensure that Türkiye

becomes a global power by establishing close relations with its environment. Thus, the activation of Türkiye's "soft power" policy in the 2000s is the result of Davutoğlu's foreign policy doctrine and the activities of the AK Party (Çevik, 2019: 60).

The institutionalization of Türkiye's public diplomacy in the official state order was first realized in 2010 with the establishment of the Public Diplomacy Coordinatorship (KDK). The KDK, which coordinates public diplomacy activities in Türkiye's foreign policy, carries out strategic communication and promotion activities in cooperation with public institutions and non-governmental organizations (Yıldırım, 2015). Due to the transition to the presidential system in 2018, the KDK was closed and its duties were transferred to the Presidency of Communications (Kılıçaslan, 2020: 68).

Apart from the KDK, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Türkiye carries out its public diplomacy activities within the scope of overseas promotion and cultural affairs and Turkish cultural centers abroad. In summary, today, Türkiye's public diplomacy practices are carried out all over the world through the state and private sector. Türkiye's soft power is primarily carried out by state institutions such as the Prime Ministry Public Diplomacy Coordination Office, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, TİKA, YTB and the Prime Ministry General Directorate of Press and Information. State-to-state relations are carried out with institutions such as the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of National Education, the General Directorate of TRT, the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the General Directorate of Press and Information, the Atatürk Language History Culture Higher Institution, and the Higher Education Institution. In the private sector, soft power activities are carried out by various non-governmental organizations, foundations, non-governmental organizations, research centers, associations and publications (Kalafat, 2004: 463). For example, non-state institutions such as the Religious Foundation, Turkish Red Crescent, TÜSAİD, TOBB, Turkish Airlines contribute to the increase of Türkiye's soft power. The development processes and characteristics of these institutions will be discussed in more detail in the following sections in the example of their policies and activities in Kazakhstan.

3.1.2. Soft Power Sources Today

With the end of the Cold War, there were some changes in the foreign policies of the states and the international conjuncture. Of course, one of the states most affected by these

changes is Türkiye. The developments experienced after the Cold War have led to new directions and searches in foreign policy. Not only external factors but also internal factors had an important effect on the Turkish foreign policy's entering into new searches after the Cold War. The nationalist discourses of the political elites of the period have already caused the trends and discourses in foreign policy to change.

As a result of the very deep and ancient roots of the Republic of Türkiye, thanks to its resources such as history, culture, language, religion and geography, keeping the Islamic faith and Turkish culture alive in a wide area from the Balkans to Europe, Africa to the Middle East, the Caucasus to Central Asia makes it easier to use its soft power. However, it is not possible to say that the Republic of Türkiye can use its power resources in foreign policy in troubled periods such as the 1999 earthquake and the 2001 economic crisis after the 1980 coup in the history of domestic politics.

In the post-Cold War period, the economy continued to improve, imports and exports increased, trade volume expanded, and investors' confidence increased due to developments. Moreover, in the future, technological developments have helped governments to have a significant power with the interaction of globalization.

After the government change as a result of the 2002 general elections and general elections in Türkiye, there have been developments and transformations in domestic and foreign policies. We can collect at three different points why and how Turkish foreign policy has undergone transformations. The first is the dynamism that emerges in the field of orientation and movement in foreign policy. This dynamism has a dimension related to the geostrategic environment that Türkiye finds itself in in the 21st century. The second is Türkiye's interest in new regions of expansion, risk-taking and influence, with the aim of realizing the overarching goals and principles of the new governments after the political change experienced. The third is the tools and mechanisms used to achieve these goals and objectives (Kalın, 2011:8).

As a result of the changes experienced, the above-mentioned points have had a significant impact on a new foreign policy understanding. Before 2002, Turkish Governments used soft power elements, but the more widespread use of AK Party Governments leads to the perception that they are only used by AK Party Governments in society and the academic community.

Although Türkiye should be successful in terms of soft power as a result of its resources, its attitudes and imaginary discourses such as sometimes failing to fulfill the promises and promises given by the governments have been effective in failing to achieve sufficient success in these policies. In addition, in the realist view, weak and unstable neighbors are as much a risk factor as a strong neighbor. Because in the power vacuum in weak and unstable states, the power struggles of radical groups and terrorist organizations can directly or indirectly affect the security of the neighboring state. From this point of view, terrorist incidents in Syria, Iraq and Türkiye and soft power efforts may also be affected as a result of political developments.

In the rankings of the countries with the most successful soft power made by Monocle magazine, Türkiye ranked 23rd in 2011, 20th in 2012, 26th in 2014 and 26th in 2015. However, in 2016, Türkiye fell below the top thirty in the field of soft power due to domestic policy and issues such as developments in Syria and Iraq and terrorist incidents (McClory, 2016: 45). Of course, it should be said that it is difficult to make a definite judgment about whether the journal acts objectively in making these rankings.

In many parts of the world, there are Turkish or Turkish related communities, Muslims and communities that consider themselves as Ottoman descendants. In addition, the fact that the Ottoman Empire spread over a large area and the legacy left by the Ottoman Empire are quite high. Of course, although Turkish, Muslim or Ottoman influences vary from region to region, the places where Türkiye applies or will be easy to apply soft power are from Africa.

It covers a very wide geography from Asia to the Balkans to the Middle East. Elements such as history, language, religion and culture owned by Türkiye are the most important tools in our implementation of soft power in these regions. In addition, since the states or peoples in this region see Türkiye as the heir of the Ottoman Empire and with thoughts such as "model country" and "brother", Türkiye can apply its soft power policies more easily in this region. In this part of the study, we will explain the resources that Türkiye has in detail and summarize the soft power activities in Turkish foreign policy through these resources.

Turkish History & Culture

The history of a country can be an element of attracting culture, and it also plays an important role in the formation of potential resources and national character. Culture is the set of values and practices that have meaning for a society. Culture may differ from society to society. The more universal values a country has, the easier it is to attract the citizens of another country.

The history of the Republic of Türkiye dates back to the Great Hun Empire. A total of 16 Turkish Empires were established throughout history, and the last empire, the Ottoman Empire, ruled from the Middle East to Asia, from the Balkans to Africa and Europe. In today's world system, there are few states that are extensions of such ancient and deep-rooted civilizations. With its art, aesthetics, science, science, architecture, management, state organization and army, the Ottoman Empire was one of the important empires that guided the world. In addition to such a history and culture, the Republic of Türkiye also has a system of values that respect contemporary management understanding, international law and human rights (Çavuş, 2012: 34). It is important for the Republic of Türkiye to have such a history and culture and to follow policies that take them into account, especially in the use of soft power in relations with states in nearby regions.

Although Turkish culture is centered on Central Asian steppe culture, its migrations are influenced by the societies it interacts with and have a culture that includes different cultural characteristics. It is the Ottoman Culture that gives its basic shape to the understanding of Turkish Culture in today's Türkiye and continues its existence in it (Sancak, 2016: 20). The cultural identity formed as a result of the synthesis of Turkish culture, Ottoman and Islamic culture represents Türkiye's soft power. Türkiye's historical past, culture and contemporary management approach, and a structure that has adopted liberal values are also positive factors for its soft power. Türkiye's eastern and western cultures ensure that it stays away from neither Europe nor Asia. The fact that its borders were very wide during the Ottoman period and that it left a certain mark on the people during the dominant period helps Türkiye to maintain its influence in a very wide area today. After the proclamation of the Republic, Türkiye turned to the West. The relations of the Turks with the West also caused interaction. Although Türkiye uses culture as an important tool in many geographies as the successor of the Ottoman Empire, sometimes the perception of the

Ottoman Empire can have an adverse effect. Although the Ottoman Empire was perceived as the enemy of Europe, it was allied with some European countries for balance in the international system. Although the fact that some of the Ottoman lands were on the borders of Europe made him a European, he was also declared an enemy of Europe. This is where today's European or non-European Türkiye debates began.

In the Cold War period and post-Cold War period, Türkiye tried to use its relations with countries where it had no or bad relations due to the current conditions, and its culture and history, which are among the soft power elements, effectively after the developments after the Cold War. Today, these elements are important resources for Türkiye in terms of creating soft power. Undoubtedly, culture and history have been important tools in the opening of the Republic of Türkiye to Central Asia after the collapse of the Soviet Union. This also applies to other regions. The lack of an understanding of colonialism, especially in Turkish culture, and the lack of colonial activities in North Africa during the Ottoman period make it easier for Türkiye to engage in soft power activities in Africa today.

Although the history and culture of Türkiye is important for the implementation of soft power policies, it is not enough on its own. Because other resources such as education, religion, language, foreign policy should also be used. In addition, policies in these areas need to interact with tools such as television, internet, cinema and TV series in order to translate into gains in target societies. Therefore, culture and history interact with Türkiye's soft power resources and tools. Institutions also have important duties in influencing through the cultural channel. Television programs series are very important for the written and visual media to promote, adopt and attract culture.

Turkish series make significant contributions to the spread of Turkish culture in other geographies. Turkish series are appreciated by a wide audience, especially in the Middle East and Eastern Europe. His fascination with Turkish series began with “Gümüş” in 2008. “Silver” has become such a phenomenon that its final episode has been watched by 85 million people in 22 countries. The importance of the series abroad has also affected tourism. In particular, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of tourists from the Arab world. Tourists have started to visit historical places such as mosques, inns, palaces, as well as places where Turkish TV series are shot (Alphan, 2011).

Geopolitical Location and Geography

Although geography is the destiny of a country, it is an important element that affects its domestic policy, foreign policy, tourism, and even culture. Geography is a constant power source of a country. From this point of view, geography is an element used to create both soft power and hard power. As a result of the fact that 96% of its territory consists of Asia and 4% of Europe, it has a homogeneous structure, has close relations with both Asia and Europe and has a valuable geopolitical and geocultural importance. Although Türkiye is at the junction point of four power centers such as the USA, the EU, the Caucasus and the Middle East, it constitutes the southernmost and eastern border of NATO (Çavuş, 2012: 30).

Due to its location, Türkiye has a central position and an important strategic position among the Middle East, Caucasus, Balkans, Africa and Central Asia regions. Türkiye has managed to use its location and geography throughout history. In the Cold War period, it used this advantage alongside the West in NATO and in the new world system in the following period. Due to its position, Türkiye has to take into account the events in its immediate vicinity in the formation of the basic strategies of its foreign policy. In the 1990s, in terms of the accumulation, geographical location and cultural foundations brought by historical reality, Türkiye did not realize that it was an integral part of the Balkans and Caucasus, the Middle East and North Africa basin, which constitutes the parameters of its own mental "self-realization" and is expressed as a close basin, but it started to realize this situation in the future (Şöhret, 2013: 451).

Türkiye has used the geopolitical importance it has realized as a trump card for its own security - especially to benefit from the NATO umbrella - and to use the opportunity of reputation and bargaining since it was established. The end of the Cold War, the changes and developments in the region showed how difficult Türkiye was actually in a difficult geography. However, when Türkiye takes advantage of the opportunities it has, it is located in a geography with advantages.

It would not be wrong to say that Türkiye acts as a bridge between Asia and Europe due to its location. The fact that Türkiye is on the migration routes from its geography and in contact with different civilizations has also helped its culture to be very diverse. It can be said that the fact that it affected the culture of geography indirectly affected Türkiye's implementation of soft power policies.

The fact that the Anatolian geography has hosted various civilizations, that it is surrounded by seas on three sides, that there are natural beauties, that Istanbul, which was the capital during the 16th century, Roman Byzantine and Ottoman periods, is one of the important sources of soft power for its climate to be suitable, to increase its image in the international arena and to be heard. The fact that Türkiye has these resources is very important in terms of attracting tourists to the country and influencing the country's promotion and culture by creating a positive image. However, Türkiye is not recognized only by this image. A negative image is formed due to the events that leave negative marks, the prejudices about Türkiye in many countries of the world, and the lack of good advertising. In order to get rid of this negative image, it is essential to make good promotions on international platforms for Turkish series, public diplomacy institutions, and the definition of Türkiye.

Political Factors

Domestic and foreign policy of a country is one of the important potential sources of soft power (Nye, 2005: 22). One of the most important situations that pave the way for Türkiye to use its soft power is that it is a Muslim country and has a secular democracy. In Davutoğlu's opinion, the strongest reason for the existence of Türkiye's soft power is democracy (Çavuş, 2012: 39).

Considering Türkiye's geographical location and geopolitical elements, it is located at the intersection of both eastern and western cultures and different religions. The fact that Türkiye, which has such a richness, has a democratic consciousness, a secular structure and a liberal economy, and moreover, a large part of its population is Muslim, are important factors that increase Türkiye's soft power (http://unec.edu.az).

It would not be wrong to say that Türkiye, as a Muslim country, has the values I have counted and sets an example for both the countries of the region and other Muslim countries. In the Turkish and Islamic world, there are many works written to guide the state administrators of the period. We generally know them as Politics-name or advice-name. In these works, he reveals the ideal Turkish state in general and the ideal leader who will rule it. The important points in the works that shed light on the rulers of the state throughout history are that they emphasize the establishment of peace and trust, which primarily

constitutes the concept of soft power, does not rely on hard power, and attracts it (Unan, 2009: 283-287). When we look at our history, although we were belligerent in the early periods, the rhetoric and actions of the Turkish states and administrators in the changing world provided significant effects for the Turkish soft power. The fact that it ruled for years in tolerance with its people from different cultures and religions in the Ottoman period and that it had no colonial purpose is a reason for trust in the Republic of Türkiye in many parts of the world today. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's statement "Peace at Home, Peace in the World" aims at the indivisibility of international peace and the peaceful life of every nation in an environment of peace and trust (http://www.ayk.gov.tr).

In the periods after its establishment, the Republic of Türkiye entered into various pacts and organizations in the international arena. Türkiye has supported Cooperation with its neighbors and regional countries. Greece has contributed to multilateral cooperation and regional security by signing the Balkan Entente with Romania and Yugoslavia, and the Sadabat Pact with Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan (Armaoğlu, 2010: 427). Türkiye's entering into such collaborations are important events that increase its reputation and attractiveness both in the region and in the world.

Türkiye is trying to change its bad image caused by some difficult periods in its past. The protection of law, justice, equality, transparency, responsibility, respect for diversity, a virtuous society, religious and moral freedom, dignity and fundamental rights and freedoms in Türkiye are the pillars of Türkiye's new image. In this way, this image of Türkiye, in addition to being attractive for the east and the west, contributes positively to Turkish foreign policy and public diplomacy (Çavuş, 2012: 42).

As a result of Türkiye's geopolitical position and cultural mosaic, İsmail Cem, who served as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye between 1997 and 2002, explained the Türkiye model as a model that "has been able to live together with Islamic tradition, pluralist, democratic institutions, human rights, secular principles and gender equality" (Cem, 2009: 70). After the 2002 General elections, after the Justice and Development Party (AKP) came to power, the process of change continued. 59. We see the change in Türkiye's foreign policy in the speech of Abdullah Gül, the government's Minister of Foreign Affairs, in 2003:

"When we look at the global and regional conjuncture in which our foreign policy has to function, a striking truth is revealed to us with all its clarity. Accordingly, the future of the global order is being reshaped, especially in the region where Türkiye is located. We are at an extremely critical juncture in the international and regional conjuncture we are in and we play an important role in this juncture. It is possible to say that the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001 confronted the current international system with a second break after the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and the collapse of the Soviet Union. The war in our neighbor Iraq is at the center of geopolitical earthquakes and aftershocks that started at this breaking point and have meaning on a global scale. Our government is determined to conduct our foreign policy in accordance with the dynamics of the regional and global conjuncture with a long-term perspective in this period when we are entering an extremely sensitive phase. Türkiye follows a policy based on mutual interest balances, free from prejudices and obsessions, befitting its history and geographical location. This policy must be principled, balanced and realistic... The policies to be followed by Türkiye in this regional and global environment are important not only for our country and region, but perhaps also on a global scale. Türkiye's position, which has become so central, will not only be connected to the geography. Our country, which is a democratic, secular and social state of law, belonging to both the western and Islamic world, constitutes a source of inspiration for all peoples who yearn for modernization. With this position, Türkiye is the only country in the world that can reveal the falsity of the thesis of the clash of civilizations that is brought up again today. " (Boğaziçi University-TÜSİAD Foreign Policy Forum [DPF], 2011:32).

It can be said that Türkiye's membership process to the European Union (EU) has positive effects on its change. Improvements have been made in some of the EU harmonization packages and constitutional regulations in Türkiye, and even torture has been prevented with new practices (Altunışık, 2008: 47). Türkiye's accession process to the EU has helped to change the bad image of Türkiye and to ensure a positive image by closely observing the process experienced by Türkiye by the member countries. In addition, the implementation of values such as human rights and gender equality brought about by the membership process by Türkiye has helped Türkiye to be more active in the international environment.

Türkiye has made significant progress in improving its bad image with the change processes it has experienced. During this period, the AKP brought Türkiye to a more active

position in the international environment with its Ottoman-Islamic culture, liberal values, and economic developments. With the arrival of Ahmet Davutoğlu to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, there has been a change in Türkiye's foreign policy discourses. With Davutoğlu, although there is the impression that universal values stand out, that there is cooperation, that there is a zero-problematic and active foreign policy discourse with the neighbors, it is a kind of continuation of İsmail Cem's discourses (http://www.mfa.gov.tr/).

For the AK Party government, the Palestinian Question is also an important issue in foreign policy. Türkiye took part in the solution of the problem as an active mediator. At the "Gaza: The Peace Model in the Middle East" session held in Davos, Switzerland in 2009, the discussion and "one munite" outburst of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan with Israeli President Shimon Peres on Gaza had a wide repercussion, especially in the Arab press. There were demonstrations in the Gaza Strip, and Khalil Al Haya, one of the Hamas leaders, described President Erdogan as "He is a great leader", "Fatah Sultan Mehmet, who took Istanbul from the Byzantines", and asked the Arab leaders to "learn from President Erdogan how a leader can make history". Al-Haya also described President Erdogan as "the continuation of the Ottoman sultans" and "Abdulhamid" (http://www.radikal.com.tr).

As a result of events such as the expansions in domestic politics towards the recent period, the decipherment of the parallel state structure, the fight against the Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê(PKK) terrorist organization, and the attitude of Türkiye in the popular uprisings in the Middle East, they also had reflections on foreign policy. Especially the developments on Syria have made it difficult to implement Davutoğlu's foreign policy based on "zero problems with neighbors". In addition, tension has arisen in the Russian-Turkish line following the downing of the Russian Warplane, which violated the border. Although this issue posed serious problems, on 27 June, Russian officials calmed down when President Recep Tayyip Erdogan announced in a letter that he had “apologized to the family of the pilot killed because of the downed Russian plane and said that he would do his best to improve Russia-Türkiye relations” (https://www.washingtonpost.com/).

Economic Factors

One of the factors contributing to Türkiye's soft power is the level of development. The level of development is effective in bringing other actors to a certain line by creating

attraction. Within the scope of soft power, economic capacity can be counted among the factors that feed soft power, playing an important role in issues such as foreign aid and attracting foreign investors to the country, trade relations with other countries, and ensuring stability in domestic policy. Türkiye has also used these elements over time. The best examples of this situation are the investment projects that Türkiye contributes economically.

These economic steps, which set an example for Türkiye's soft power, are generally projects carried out with the participation of more than one state in order to achieve a certain political goal. The best examples of these projects are the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Oil (BTC) pipeline and the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway project. With these projects, Türkiye wants to strengthen its economic relations with the Turkish Republics, which it sees as friends and brothers (Çamır, 2009: 96).

One of the biggest factors in increasing Türkiye's soft power is foreign trade. Today, Turkish goods are recognized and demanded in many regions of the world, especially in Russia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Qatar, Moldova, and African countries. In particular, textiles and agricultural products are demanded by many countries. Its exports and Turkish goods in foreign countries constitute an important place for the recognition, recognition and image of Türkiye (Şöhret, 2013: 450).

Having a strong, productive, dynamic economy is undoubtedly an important foreign trade factor for countries. Founded on top of an Ottoman Empire that was defeated in World War I, Türkiye has engaged in reconstruction activities in the economic field as well as in every field. Although liberal policies were tried in the economy, as a result of the global economic crisis in 1929, Türkiye closed down in 1930 and attempted national industrialization by the state (Boratav, 1993: 45). In the following period, Türkiye, whose economy recovered compared to the past, gave up the policy of seclusion and became a member of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank in 1947.

After Türkiye became a member of the IMF and the World Bank, it received consultancy assistance for the first time from the World Bank in 1950 and from the IMF in 1961 in the periods following the loan. Since this period, Türkiye's borrowing process to these organizations has started. Especially after 1980, Türkiye, which provided consultancy support and high amounts of loans from the IMF and the World Bank for the purpose of economic restructuring and reform, was among the countries that provided the highest

amount of loans from these institutions in the world before the 2008 global crisis (Ayaz, 2013: http://www.bilgesam.org/).

Türkiye's coup processes in domestic politics have caused economic instability. As a result of the 1960 military coup, the State Planning Organization was established in the new period and a planned program was tried to be started in the economy. In 1961, Türkiye became a member of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The expansion of the economy, which took place after the 1960 coup, began to narrow in the 1970s. First, the oil crisis in 1973 negatively affected Türkiye (Oran, 2002: 663). Secondly, at that time, Türkiye carried out the Cyprus Peace Operation. As a result, Türkiye was subjected to an economic embargo. On top of these, while all countries turned to saving oil in this period, Türkiye subsidized oil and caused an increase in consumption. Therefore, the foreign trade deficit tripled in that period (Orhan, 2011: 113).

Türkiye's economy continued to experience ups and downs due to domestic instabilities. With the January 28 decisions in 1980, Türkiye followed the neoliberal economic policy and opened up to foreign countries. Of course, this decision could not ensure the full strengthening of the Turkish economy. The ups and downs economic situation continued. By 2001, Türkiye's economy was in crisis. Türkiye's debt increased by approximately 29 quadrillion Turkish Liras and the value of the Turkish currency decreased by40%. After the 2001 crisis, the IMF entered a new development period in line with the world economy with structural reforms, whose patented official name is "Türkiye's Transition to a Strong Economy Program" (Orhan, 2011: 117).

Türkiye has survived its troubles, albeit with difficulty. As of 2013, he got rid of his debts to the IMF. With its recovering economy, it is among the top 20 developed countries in the world (http://www.mfa.gov.tr/g-20-tr.tr.mfa). After the difficult periods Türkiye experienced, there were noticeable changes in its economic data in the post-2001 period.

Türkiye, whose economy has improved, has now become a country that provides foreign aid and takes part in bilateral and multiple projects. Türkiye has recently extended a helping hand to people in many parts of the world, especially as a result of the policies it has carried out within the framework of humanitarian aid. These policies are important arguments in the operation of soft power. According to the Global Humanitarian Aid 2016 Report prepared by the UK-based Development Initiatives, Türkiye's humanitarian aid of

USD 3.2 billion accounted for 11percent of the world's aid in the previous year (http://www.globalhumanitarianassistance.org/).

Türkiye has become a helping state, not a helping one. Emergency aid is provided by the state or non-governmental organizations without hesitation in humanitarian aid. As a result of Türkiye's sensitivity in this regard, the World Humanitarian Summit, which was held for the first time in history, took place in Istanbul on 23-24 May 2016 (http://www.aksam.com.tr).

Another issue that Türkiye attaches as much importance to as its foreign aid is economic cooperation and trade with other countries. According to the data of the Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Türkiye, Türkiye has relations with institutions such as the Organization of Economic Cooperation (ECO), the Developing Eight Countries (D-8), the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). Free Trade agreements exist with countries such as Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Morocco, Palestine, South Korea, Georgia, Montenegro, Macedonia, Mauritius, Serbia, Tunisia, Jordan, Israel and Chile (T.R. Ministry of Economy, www.ekonomi.gov.tr)

Although Türkiye has experienced ups and downs in economic processes, today its economy is in a good position compared to the past. It has proven its strength in the international arena with its economic agreements with other countries and cooperation organizations. The helping hand that Türkiye has extended especially in recent years, especially to Syrian refugees, from Africa to Asia, from the Balkans to the Middle East, enables people in this geography to be grateful to Türkiye and to be impressed by Türkiye. These aids are very beneficial in the execution of Türkiye's soft power policies.

Institutions and Organizations

Türkiye has policies towards other countries and peoples with various institutions and organizations. During the AKP period, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was restructured and tried to adapt to the new foreign policy approach and the changing global system. Again in this period, 10 new general directorates were opened within the body of Foreign Affairs. Among these, General Directorate of Foreign Promotion and Cultural Relations, General Directorate of Economic Relations with Neighboring Countries and General Directorate of

Global and Humanitarian Issues are important institutions in the management of soft power (Ekşi, 2014: 178-179).

In addition to the institutions we have listed, there are also leading institutions such as the Public Diplomacy Coordination Office affiliated to the Prime Ministry, the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA) and the Red Crescent. Through these institutions, it carries out various projects in the fields of aid, culture and education in natural disasters. Institutions and organizations owned by Türkiye are the most important tools in carrying out public diplomacy activities.

Coordinating Office of Public Diplomacy

Public diplomacy activities, which increased considerably in the 1990s, led to serious rivalries in the international environment. Türkiye, which has left economic and political instabilities behind, needs an institution to coordinate its activities in order to compete in public diplomacy activities. Therefore, he established the Public Diplomacy Coordination Office with the Prime Ministry Circular published in the Official Gazette dated 30 January 2010 and numbered 27478. (Montenegro, 2016: 209).

The Public Diplomacy Coordination Office is responsible for ensuring coordination between public institutions and civil organizations in order to recognize and know Türkiye correctly and effectively. The recognition of Türkiye in different parts of the world necessitates medium and long-term systematic studies. Public diplomacy activities, which have a central importance in the promotion and perception management of Türkiye and spread to a wide area such as diplomacy, foreign aid, science and technology, economy, higher education, tourism, culture, arts and media, ensure the recognition of Türkiye's new potentials in the world public opinion (http://kdk.gov.tr).

The organizational structure consists of five different units under the chairmanship of a coordinator. These units consist of: Political Communication Unit, Cultural Studies Unit, Project Development Unit, Media Studies Unit and Secretariat. The Coordinatorship conducts public diplomacy panels, foreign policy promotions, youth programs and organizes country meetings in universities in order to recognize public diplomacy. Türkiye abroad. To bring together researchers and experts working on Türkiye abroad with researchers and experts from Türkiye. Meetings in the Country Programs are held abroad and organized

together with the leading think tanks of the visited country. Political Communication Activities constitute the majority of 104 activities carried out by the Coordinatorship. While Political Communication Activities constitute 54% of the total activities, it is seen that the ratio of the number of University Programs and Media-Promotion Studies (23%) is the same. Within the framework of the program, relations between countries are discussed at regional and global level through the eyes of researchers and experts, and ways to improve relations with the exchange of views of different segments are sought. The aim of the Coordination Office in these studies is to provide more and accurate information about Türkiye to the public opinion of foreign countries (http://kdk.gov.tr).

Administration for Turks Living Abroad and Related Communities

As a public institution, the Administration for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB), which was established on April 6, 2010, under the Undersecretariat of the Prime Ministry, is entrusted with the task of coordinating efforts to provide international scholarships to our citizens, kinsmen and related communities abroad and students studying in Türkiye as well as providing relevant services and organizing structural activities in these areas.

YTB, which is affiliated with the Prime Ministry, primarily tries to systematically carry out its relations with Turkish citizens living in various parts of the world and with kin and kinship communities with a common history and culture. In addition, it carries out systematic studies for other peoples. The logo of the corporation consists of a moon and a star that surrounds the world. (Cankurtaran, 2015: 93).

According to the data announced by YTB, 155 thousand candidates from 182 countries applied for "Türkiye Scholarships" in 2015. We can say that 5,000 people were selected from the candidates and they had the opportunity to study at Turkish Universities. In addition, thousands of students have been studying at Turkish universities since the beginning of the scholarships and are likely to achieve successful results in terms of Turkish public diplomacy in the medium and long term. Since 2011, more than 70 countries and nearly 600 projects have been supported and financial support of over 50 million TL has been provided (Montenegro, 2016: 213).

Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (Tika)

The Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (Tika), which is important in the use of soft power, was established as an international technical assistance organization affiliated to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with the decision of the Council of Ministers dated 24 January 1992 in order to respond to the restructuring, adaptation and development needs of the Turkic Republics following the dissolution of the USSR (Demir, 2012: 261). TİKA was attached to the Prime Ministry in the following years. With the law numbered 4668 published in the Official Gazette in 2001, the first task given to him was "to help the development of other countries, especially the republics and related communities where the Turkish language is spoken and the neighboring countries to Türkiye, to develop cooperation with these countries and communities in the economic, commercial, technical, social, cultural and educational fields through projects and programs, to carry out the aid and transactions to be made, to establish the Turkish Cooperation and Development Administration with a legal personality affiliated to the Prime Ministry and to regulate the procedures and principles related to its organization and duties" (Montenegro, 2016: 214).

Türkiye, whose economic data has improved and wants to be an actor regionally and globally since the first years of the 2000s, has experienced a change in foreign policy. In line with this change, TİKA expanded its geography of activity and increased the number of Program Coordination Offices from 12 in 2002 to 25 in 2011 and 33 in 2012. Today, TİKA operates with 56 Program Coordination Offices in 54 countries. There is an effort to create a peace zone at the basis of Türkiye's efforts towards friendly, brotherly and related countries through TİKA. TİKA acts as a cooperation mechanism between public institutions and organizations, universities, non-governmental organizations and the private sector; it brings all these actors together on common ground and records Türkiye's development aid. While our country's development aid was 85 million USD in 2002, this figure increased to 3 billion 913 million USD in 2015. Türkiye is among the most technically cooperating organizations with the countries where we speak the same language today (http://www.tika.gov.tr).

TİKA carries out its activities within the framework of regional, national and special projects. Requests from the countries where cooperation is aimed are presented and prepared for the opinions of institutions and organizations and non-governmental organizations. Projects may differ according to the characteristics and objectives of the technical assistance.

Projects can generally be classified as hardware and material aids, promotional programs, expert aids, training programs and technical aids (Atmaca, 2004: 38).

In the 1992-2002 period, TİKA carried out a total of 2346 projects and activities for Central Asia, with an annual average of 256 projects and activities. TİKA was further strengthened during the AK Party governments and the number of activities for the region increased. In 2006-2007, 1278 projects, large and small, were implemented. In 2013, 404 projects were implemented. A total of 1089 projects were implemented between 2014-2016. According to the regional distribution of Tika's expenditures in 2010, the Caucasus and Central Asia continued to rank first with a share of 36.65%. The main reason for the region to rank first is the "Afghanistan Reconstruction Program", which was supported from 2006 to 2010. Bilateral official development assistance totalled $3,502.4 million in 2014 and $3,845.9 million in 2015. The South and Central Asia region received 353 million dollars in 2014 and 256 million dollars in 2015 (http://www.tika.gov.tr/tr).

Today, Tika continues its aid and support activities in the Balkans, Eastern Europe, Central Asia, Caucasus, Middle East, Africa, East and South Asia, Latin America and Pacific regions. In addition to its aid and support activities, Tika also carries out cooperation activities with various national and international organizations (http://www.tika.gov.tr/).

Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (AFAD)

It has become imperative for Türkiye to gather authority and coordination in a single hand in case of disasters and emergencies. In this direction, the General Directorate of Civil Defense affiliated to the Ministry of Interior, the General Directorate of Disaster Affairs affiliated to the Ministry of Public Works and Settlement, and the General Directorate of Emergency Management of Türkiye affiliated to the Prime Ministry were closed and the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency affiliated to the Prime Ministry was established with the Law No. 5902 enacted in 2009, and the powers and responsibilities were gathered under a single roof. The Presidency, which has carried out many operations not only nationally but also internationally, has not been indifferent to disasters and emergencies in even the most remote geographies of the world, has extended its aid hand from Haiti to Japan, Chile to Myanmar with its personnel and technological equipment, and has

successfully carried out evacuation and humanitarian aid operations in social events in Libya, Tunisia, Egypt and Syria (https://www.afad.gov.tr/).

Although AFAD, which was established in 2009, has a relatively limited budget, it can gain a financial power that will allow it to operate in many regions with additional appropriations. Since its establishment, its financial power has been strengthened. The 2016 Central Administration Budget Law No. 6682 was adopted by the Turkish Grand National Assembly on 9 March 2016 and entered into force through publication in the Official Gazette dated 16 March 2016 and numbered 29655 (bis). A total of 1,052,242,000 TL has been allocated to the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency by the Law (T.R. Prime Ministry Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency, 2016:3).

Although AFAD was established in 2009, it has rapidly intervened in disasters both at home and abroad in a short time. AFAD's contribution is undeniable as Türkiye is among the top 10 countries in the ranking of countries providing humanitarian aid. He has carried out aid activities in many countries such as Pakistan, Somalia, Myanmar, Yemen, Tunisia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Libya, and Syria (Kalaycı and Koca, 2015: 165).

Kızılay

It was founded in 1868 under the name of "Mecruhin ve Mardayı Askimat ve Muavenet Cemiyeti", and was named "Osmanlı Hilaliahmer Cemiyeti" in 14/4/1877, "Türkiye Hilaliahmer Cemiyeti" after the proclamation of the Republic in 1923, "Türkiye Kızılay Cemiyeti" in 1935 and "Türkiye Kızılay Derneği" in 1947. The organization is a voluntary social service organization with a legal personality, not for profit, working for the public interest (http://www.kizilay.org.tr/).

The institutional principles of the Red Crescent are humanity, non-discrimination, impartiality, voluntary service, unity, universality and independence. The Red Crescent represents justice. It delivers its services to everyone in need without discrimination. It carries out its services for all societies by adhering to the Basic Principles and Institutional Values of the International Movement (http://www.kizilay.org.tr/).

We see the aid provided by the Red Crescent in wide geographies. If we look at his help in the international arena:

- In the flood disaster that occurred in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2014
- Turkmen who were displaced as a result of the disturbances in Mosul
- Material support provided to Palestinians from time to time since 2009
- 2012 Assistance to people living in the region in the earthquake in Tabriz, Iran
- We can list the main aids provided to Syrian Refugees (Montenegro, 2016: 227).

Yunus Emre Institution

Yunus Emre Foundation; To introduce Türkiye, Turkish language, history, culture and art; presenting information and documents related to it to the world's utmost; To provide services abroad for those who want to study in the fields of Turkish language, culture and arts; It is a public foundation established with the law numbered 5653 dated 05.05.2007 in order to improve the cultural exchange and friendship of Türkiye with other countries. Yunus Emre Institute, as an organization affiliated to the Foundation, carries out cultural and artistic activities for the promotion of our country as well as teaching Turkish to foreigners in the centers it has established abroad in order to realize the objectives of this Law, and also supports scientific studies (http://www.yee.org.tr/tr/).

The number of Yunus Emre Institute Centers, which was first opened in 2009 in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Tirana, Albania, has expanded to 44 centers in 34 countries. The aim of the Institute is to make a strong and culturally rich image of Türkiye felt in different countries and to introduce Turkish culture by considering regional characteristics and reaching the target audience in the most effective way. In addition, the Institute enables a total of 7,500 students to learn Turkish as an elective foreign language in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Montenegro, Jordan, Morocco, Tokyo and Romania. Again, summer schools are organized by the Institute and enable it to learn the Turkish language (http://www.yee.org.tr/).

International Turkish Cultural Organization (TURKSOY)

"The International Turkic Cultural Organization (TURKSOY), which is the UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) of the Turkic

world, was established in 1993 with the agreement signed by the ministers of culture of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and the Republic of Türkiye. The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), Tatarstan of the Russian Federation (RF), Bashkortostan, Altay, Saha, Tıva, the Republic of Khakas and Gagauzia of Moldova participated in TURKSOY as observer members. Since its establishment, TURKSOY has been working to strengthen the solidarity and brotherhood of Turkish peoples, to transfer the common Turkish culture to future generations and to introduce it to the world. The work of TURKSOY has been carried out under the auspices of the heads of state of the member countries since its establishment. The activities of TURKSOY are determined by the Permanent Council of Culture Ministers of Turkic-speaking countries. Decisions taken at standing council meetings are enforced by the General Secretariat of TURKSOY" (http://www.turksoy.org/tr).

The Main Objectives of TURKSOY are:

To ensure that people of Turkish origin and who speak the Turkish language understand each other better, to protect and revive the culture and art of Turkish-speaking countries and peoples, to teach the principles of national culture to future generations and to provide mutual brotherly contacts (Sevin, 2015: 482).

Nowruz, which is the common tradition of the Turkish world, has been attributed to all humanity thanks to the works of TURKSOY. In addition to the historical celebrations held at the United Nations General Assembly (UNSC) at UNESCO Headquarters, TURKSOY has enthusiastically celebrated the arrival of spring in Germany, Austria and England with the participation of thousands of art lovers. TURKSOY is constantly improving itself and innovating. One of them is the practice of "cultural capitals". In 2017, the Turkestan village of Kazakhstan, where Khoja Ahmet Yesevi lived, was elected as the Cultural Capital of the Turkic World. If we look at the budget of TURKSOY, it is made up of contributions paid by the ministries of culture of the member countries. In addition to these contributions, additional resources are provided for the activities from local governments, universities and various non-governmental organizations (http://www.turksoy.org).

Directorate of Religious Affairs

The Directorate of Religious Affairs was established by Law No. 429 dated March 3, 1924. The Directorate of Religious Affairs, which has switched to the current structure of the Organization with the Law No. 6002 dated July 1, 2010, operates in many countries. Religious Affairs also acts in cooperation with other public diplomacy institutions in its activities abroad. Diyanet, one of the institutions that contribute the most to Türkiye's public diplomacy activities, is actively involved in the construction of places of worship such as sacrifice abroad, student education in the field of theology, the translation of various religious publications into foreign languages, and mosques and masjids abroad (https://diyanet.gov.tr/tr/icerik/kurulus-ve-tarihce).

3.2. Türkiye's Identity Formation and Soft Power Strategies

The 21st century is a period of rapid change in economic, political, technological and social fields. While the political developments in the early 1990s led to the formation of a different international system, the phenomenon of globalization, which started to be expressed at the beginning of this period, transformed the classical understanding of diplomacy and a different understanding of diplomacy emerged with different actors. Türkiye was widely recognized as a "model country" for the republics in Central Asia and the Caucasus, which gained their independence after the dissolution of the USSR. This recognition of Türkiye as a model country to others stemmed primarily from the fact that Türkiye was a country that had adopted a free market economy and was governed by a Western, democratic, and secular political system (Demiray, 2009:102).

Political values constitute an essential source of soft power. Türkiye's political values contribute greatly to Türkiye's image as a model country. Following its independence, Türkiye was presented as a model country to the republics in Central Asia and the Caucasus. Notably, some Western states, such as the United States of America (USA), have recognized Türkiye as the most convenient model for the establishment of a structure compatible with their interests in the region. Needless to say, while presenting Türkiye as a model, the secular structure of Türkiye was heavily emphasized. Thus, the emergence of elements such as radical religious groups or radical nationalists in the emergence of a new structure in these regions after the collapse of the Soviet Union would be avoided (Gürler, 2013: 107).

Like every state, Türkiye follows different policies to achieve its political and economic goals. When we look at the political history of Türkiye, we can see that it uses both its hard power and its soft power. Türkiye's soft power resources help carry out Türkiye's soft power strategies in a wide area. It is necessary to have strong economic data in order to mobilize soft power sources. Due to the problems Türkiye experienced in its domestic politics from 1990 to 2002, it cannot be said that it fully carried out the desired policies. The improvement of the economy in the post-2002 period has enabled Türkiye to open up its foreign policy again. Institutions and organizations play an important role in carrying out Türkiye's foreign policy. Türkiye carries out policies for these institutions and organizations and other countries and peoples, and through these institutions, it carries out economic aid and various projects in the fields of aid, culture and education in natural disasters. During the AKP period, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was restructured and tried to adapt to the new foreign policy approach and the changing global system. Again in this period, 10 new general directorates were opened within the body of Foreign Affairs. Among these, General Directorate of Foreign Promotion and Cultural Relations, General Directorate of Economic Relations with Neighboring Countries and General Directorate of Global and Humanitarian Issues are important institutions in the management of soft power (Ekşi, 2014: 178-179).

The fact that Türkiye has a wide cultural, historical, religious and linguistic geography, as well as its desire to be a center of attraction in the Middle East, Balkans and Caucasus, which is its geographical hinterland, helps to realize soft power and public diplomacy in foreign policy. After the 2002 period, Türkiye's self-confidence increased as a result of the conditions in Türkiye, the region and the international environment, and Ankara started to use soft power instruments in the last fifteen years (Gözen, 2009:110).

After the AK Party came to power, Türkiye pursued policies aimed at having a greater say in the international arena. He carried out these policies by putting soft power at the center. The President, Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs have expressed on various platforms that Türkiye has soft power policies or carries out soft power policies (Sancak, 2015:130).

Türkiye has a structure that harmoniously incorporates its values such as secularism, democracy, modernization and Islam. Moreover, the improvement of its economy has helped

it to gain an important position in its region. Considering the components supporting soft power resources such as culture, education, art, media, film, literature, architecture, higher education, non-governmental organizations, science and technology infrastructure, tourism, economic cooperation platforms and diplomacy, Türkiye has been seen to be ahead of other Muslim states. In this direction, we can say that Türkiye has an impressive power among Muslim states (Anas, 2010:278).

Türkiye's negative image has started to improve in recent years. One of the important indicators showing that Türkiye's reputation has increased is visa exemptions. There has been an increase in the number of countries where citizens of the Republic of Türkiye can travel without a visa (http://kdk.gov.tr). In addition, Turkish Airlines(thy) reaches almost every point in the world with flights to 249 destinations abroad. Increasing the number of aircraft by 259 percent and the number of passengers by 363 percent in the last ten years as of 2013, thy increased the number of countries it flew from 55 to 120 in the same period. However, thy has managed to become the airline that flies to the most countries in the world (http://kdk.gov.tr/).

As Türkiye develops in all areas, the reputation of the Turkish brand in branding also increases. Thy has increased both its own brand value and the reputation of the country with its sponsorship agreements, advertising and marketing campaigns. As a result of its success, thy has made a positive contribution to Türkiye's tourism. There has been an increase in the number of tourists coming to the country (Sancak, 2015: 135).

With globalization, the increasing importance of mass media has undoubtedly caused Türkiye to take steps in this field. The media has also been an important tool in Türkiye's conduct of public diplomacy. With the Turkish Radio and Television Corporation(TRT), they reach other countries, related communities, communities in Central Asia and the Caucasus, Arab viewers in the Middle East and the whole world, and watch Türkiye through the eyes of Türkiye. Türkiye has ensured that these communities broadcast on their channels broadcasting in their own languages, taking into account other communities in their own country. The effort to expand the field of address with TRT-AVAZ and TRT-Turk constitutes the most serious steps that can be taken in the field of public diplomacy. (Başar, 2011: 177).

Türkiye's television broadcasting and Turkish series also have an important share in the increase in interest in Türkiye. Especially Turkish series attract a lot of attention in a very wide area. Turkish series are watched in many areas from Central Asia to the Middle East, from the Balkans to Latin America and the Far East. This is kind of the soft power source of Türkiye and also the result of soft power. Turkish Series have become exportable. This increases the Turkish brand value. Türkiye is the second country in the world to export series after the USA (http://www.ntv.com.tr/).

Religion is also an important element among Türkiye's soft power resources. In order to understand the importance of this element for Türkiye, in a study conducted by the Wise Men Strategic Research Center(BİLGESAM) in the Balkans(Kosovo, Macedonia, Bulgaria, Albania, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro) in 2012, we see that the religion that the individual believes has an effect on the people living in this region's view of Türkiye. While the sympathy of Christians towards Türkiye is around 50%, this rate is around 80% among Muslims. Although there are differences between beliefs, we can say that the perception of Türkiye in the region is generally positive (Bilgiç and Akyürek, 2012: 93).

In addition to its fixed resources, the activities of institutions such as Tika, Turkish Red Crescent, TURKSOY, AFAD, which increase the effectiveness of the AK Party government in the period, have an important share in the positive or negative perception of Türkiye in the world. With its contributions to humanitarian aid, Türkiye has created a positive image in many regions, especially in Central Asia, Africa, the Middle East and the Balkans.

Since its establishment, TİKA has become one of the most important institutions in Türkiye in this field with its projects and activities carried out in many countries, especially in the Central Asian Republics. When we look at the activity reports of Tika only in 2016, the studio construction works of the radio were completed within the scope of the project carried out in Afghanistan, under the command of Kabul International Airport, for the construction of a mosque and a mausoleum-ı Şerif orphanage and dormitory building, and the establishment of a radio in Azerbaijan in cooperation with the Azerbaijan Presidential State Agency for Citizens' Services and Social Innovations (ASAN Hizmet). The project of renewal of the technical infrastructure of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Albania was

carried out. In addition, he has carried out projects in the fields of health, social, cultural, and education in many countries, especially Georgia, Mongolia, Kyrgyzstan, Montenegro, Kosovo, and Bosnia and Herzegovina (http://www.tika.gov.tr).

The Turkish Red Crescent is one of the most important institutions of Türkiye in humanitarian aid. It carries out projects in many countries in need, from Kyrgyzstan to Sudan, from Sri Lanka to Syria, in areas such as housing, schools, community centers, places of worship, construction of public facilities, provision and support of livelihoods, health, education, social assistance, agriculture and irrigation. The Turkish Red Crescent has intervened in natural and man-made disasters in 78 different countries in the last 10 years and has extended a helping hand to 137 countries since its establishment (http://www.kizilay.org.tr).

Organizations such as YTB, TÜRKSOY, Yunus Emre Institutes also play an important role in carrying out Türkiye's soft power activities. These organizations help the correct recognition of Turkish and Islamic culture in the countries where they are located. As a result of the activities of these organizations in the regions, the number of those who came to Türkiye to receive education has increased with the positive development of Turkish perception and the education scholarships provided.

Educational activities are very important for a country's soft power strategies to gain gains in the future. Because by coming to Türkiye, he has the opportunity to examine Türkiye and Turkish culture on site. When students who come to Türkiye go to their own countries in the future, when they take part in important tasks in the fields of politics, economy, education, health and culture of the country, having a positive Turkish image will enable them to have close relations with Türkiye. In addition, as a result of the activities of the above-mentioned institutions, there has been a significant increase in the number of students coming to Türkiye. 87,903 students from 181 countries around the world receive their university education in Türkiye (http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/).

Türkiye's ability to use soft power resources efficiently corresponds especially to the post-2002 period. This situation has been affected by the process that Türkiye has gone through within itself and the developments in the regional and international environment. Türkiye has placed soft power at the center of discourses and strategies in foreign policy in order to erase its bad image in the international environment. The increase in the brand value

of Türkiye in the textile and food sectors, especially thy, and its ranking in the first place in humanitarian aid have contributed to the improvement of its image.

3.3. Türkiye's Identity Creation and Use of Soft Power in Central Asia

3.3.1. Türkiye's Central Asia Policy

Right from its foundation, the Republic of Türkiye has preferred a pro-Western policy in its foreign policy, and the consequences of this policy were experienced during the bipolar system in the new world order that emerged in the aftermath of the Second World War. Having strengthened its relations with the West by becoming a member of the organizations established during the Cold War period, Türkiye naturally aligned its foreign policy with Western interests and policies (Karpat, 2012: 162).

The deterioration of the relations between the West and Türkiye between 1960 and 1980 through the Cyprus problem, Türkiye's exposure to the US arms embargo after the 1974 Cyprus Peace Operation, and its isolation in an environment where the Cold War conditions continued led Türkiye to reconsider its foreign policy and to adopt a multi-dimensional foreign policy approach. Although anti-Western policies were pursued from time to time during this period, Türkiye did not abandon its Western orientation. Nevertheless, the changes in Türkiye's foreign policy became more apparent from the 1980s onwards. As a first step, with the adoption of an open market economy, Türkiye intensified its economic relations with the countries in the region (Gönlübol, 1996: 629). Until the 1990s, Türkiye maintained a distant attitude in its relations with the countries in the region. One of the main reasons for this was that Türkiye wanted to preserve its cooperation with Moscow, which had assisted Türkiye in the War of Independence, despite the conditions of the Second World War and the Cold War. Under the Treaty of Friendship and Brotherhood signed with the Soviet Union in 1921 and still in force, Türkiye promised not to support Turanist movements in exchange for the Soviet guarantee not to spread communism in Türkiye (Yaş, 2013).

In this period, when Russia is in the process of recovering and China has no interest in the region yet, Türkiye's rapid and enthusiastic entry into the region, despite being unprepared, has affected its foreign policy. Türkiye was affected by the European Union's

rejection of Türkiye's membership request in 1989, and as a result, Turkish politicians came to the conclusion that Türkiye's former strategic importance in the West had diminished. During this period, the Turkic Republics, which gained their independence in Central Asia and participated in world politics, created a potential sphere of influence for Türkiye. The power vacuum arising in the region and the opportunities it offers for Türkiye have affected Turkish Foreign Policy from the very beginning. Referring to the importance of concepts such as peace, security and stability, Türkiye has repositioned itself in the new global order within the scope of economic cooperation, regional integration and interdependence. Since Türkiye's democratic and secular identity in the region is a model with a free market economy, the idea that it can unite Central Asia under a Turkish identity has been supported by Western countries and in this respect, it has been encouraged that Russia and Iran will reduce their influence in the region (Aras and Akpınar, 2011). US strategists have also written articles encouraging Türkiye's activities in Central Asia (Özen, 2018).

In the same period, Türkiye's policy makers have undergone a profound transformation in their views on neighboring regions by shaping foreign policy on the basis of democratization, reform, economic and political stability, and economic development (Aras and Akpınar, 2011). During the 1993-1995 period, Türkiye saw that its efforts, which were carried out with great excitement without considering the presence of Russia in the region, but with plans made without sufficient consideration, could not be successful without considering Russia. Since 1995, Türkiye has shaped its foreign policy towards the region by taking Russia into account and has regulated it in a balanced manner without excluding Russia. On the other hand, Türkiye's relations with the Central Asian Turkic states were developed with the expression "The Turkic World from the Adriatic to the Great Wall of China" and thus, it was aimed to ensure the integrity of the Turkic world (Yaş, 2013).

Although Central Asia is mostly described as a geography inhabited by peoples of Turkish origin, the region is one of the most important areas of geopolitics. The most important of the geopolitical theories, Halford John Mackinder's “Heartland” theory, defined the Central Asian region as the most important, most critical geography of geopolitics in the early 20th century. He had conceptualized the slightly wider region, centered on Central Asia, as “Heartland” and declared that this region had a very important geopolitical position. He claimed that in order to dominate the world, it is necessary to dominate this geography, which is very critical in terms of geopolitics. When the history is examined, it is seen that

Asian peoples who dominate Central Asia can dominate all geographies of the world. Interestingly, with the end of the Cold War, the Eurasian region, described as Central Asia or "Heartland", re-emerged as a geopolitically important political geography. Just as a geography of such strategic importance will have an impact on Türkiye, Türkiye will also have an impact on this geography due to its historical and cultural ties. Türkiye is of particular importance for the region. (Özen, 2017)

As a result of the declaration of independence of the Turkish states in the Central Asian region in 1991, Türkiye found itself in international relations full of new opportunities and risks due to its historical, cultural, religious and linguistic ties with this region. Significant changes in the region affected Türkiye the most, and as a result, it started to follow a cautious foreign policy towards establishing new regional cooperations with the regional states (Oksay et al., 2017). Türkiye recognized the independence of Kazakhstan on 16 December 1991. Kazakhstan has become one of the countries that attract the attention of states in international relations, as it has rich natural resources, geopolitical location, a large population, a new and wide market, and connects strategic transition routes in the center of Eurasia (Yılmaz, 2017).

As a result of the developments in the world in Türkiye's foreign policy, new trends have begun to be mentioned. One of these new trends is the effort to engage in new searches against the Trans-Atlantic partnership (Çeviköz, 2018). Türkiye has historically preferred to be in a pro-Western alliance, and even the disintegration of the USSR and the end of the Cold War did not change this preference. However, Türkiye decided to pursue a more independent foreign policy in its region due to the emergence of strong and influential states such as Russia and China in the globalized new world order and the competitive and assertive policies pursued by these states, and especially the policies of the USA and Western states and the instabilities that emerged in the region (Editors note, (2019). Insight Türkiye, 21(4), (https://www.insightTürkiye.com/editors-note-winter2019).

The changes Türkiye is trying to make in its foreign policy are due to its disappointments in its relations with its Western allies and the EU, as well as its search for an alternative (Çeviköz, 2018). During the Cold War years, Türkiye began to pursue new policies towards the countries of the region, and especially the Central Asia and Caucasus region, with which it could not establish very close relations. Especially with the impact of

the EU financial crisis, the search for alternative regionalization in Türkiye's foreign policy has gradually increased (Oksay et al., 2017).

During the terms of their presidents Turgut Özal (1989-1993) and Süleyman Demirel (1993-2000), they were influential in determining Türkiye's policies towards Central Asia (Yaş, 2013). Turgut Özal and Süleyman Demirel made great efforts to improve relations with the Turkish Republics.

Turgut Özal developed a policy called neo-Ottomanism to improve relations with the Turkish Republics, which gained their independence by using Türkiye's religious, ethnic and cultural ties by turning the changes that took place in the international environment in the 1990s into an opportunity. Although these changes in the Central Asia region revealed unknowns and risks for Türkiye, Turgut Özal saw this new situation as a historical opportunity to establish close relations with the region with a common historical background (Diri, 2018: 77).

Özal aimed to establish economic and cultural cooperation with the Turkish states that gained their independence. For this purpose, the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization (BSEC) and the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) were established. While these collaborations were carried out, Russia and Iran, which are influential in the region, were tried not to be disturbed. Because both countries were important foreign trade partners of Türkiye (Diri, 2018: 78).

Turgut Özal has initiated a 4-stage foreign policy for the states in the region in order for the political developments in the international environment, especially in the immediate environment, to be positive for Türkiye and for the coming years to develop as the Turkish century. First, TİKA was established to manage the aid from Türkiye to the countries of the region from a certain center. Since its establishment, TİKA has provided great support to the Turkic Republics in Central Asia in meeting their urgent needs in the fields of nationalization, institutionalization and education. Secondly, it was scholarships that were initiated under the name of the Great Student Project. With this project, it was aimed to train the manpower necessary for the execution and development of relations between Türkiye and these states. Thirdly, it was aimed to establish regional cooperation organizations by making cooperation agreements in order to establish closer relations with these countries. By acting with these goals, the armed forces of the Turkish states in Central Asia were

trained in Türkiye and the Turkish Speaking Heads of State Summit was also held. Fourthly, it was emphasized to make propaganda by using the media. For this purpose, broadcasting has been started in the region through TRT Eurasia since 1992. For this purpose, from other public institutions, for example, the Ministry of National Education published history and literature books and sent them to these countries (Diri, 2018: 79). With Özal's death on April 17, 1993, it was not possible to implement these planned policies at the desired speed.

Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel had extensive bilateral contacts with Central Asian states and developed policies. Demirel, who was elected President on May 16, 1993, followed an intense foreign policy agenda towards Central Asia in this position. In his speech at the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TBMM)in September 1993, Demirel expressed his views on Central Asia policy. He pointed out that Türkiye's importance increased after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and that policies should be developed and implemented in accordance with the conditions of the changing international environment. He stated that Türkiye has no idea of governing Central Asian countries and attaches importance to peaceful cooperation with these countries. Defining the geography in which these states are located as the Turkish geography extending from the Adriatic to the Great Wall of China, he stated that after a hundred years of delay, relations have gradually improved in the cultural, economic, social and political fields. In his speech, Demirel said that the safe and economic transfer of energy resources in the region to the world markets can be provided through Türkiye, and that the cooperation of Türkiye and Russia will contribute to regional development, peace and stability. Demirel wanted to attach importance to the development of relations between Central Asian countries and Türkiye, and asked for cooperation efforts with regional states in economic, cultural and technical fields. It has developed policies within the framework of the principle of non-interference in internal affairs and equality against these states, especially stating the importance it attaches to mutual cooperation in visits to the regional states.

With these statements, Demirel reveals that he attaches importance to the Central Asian Republics. He noted that Türkiye is a model country for the aforementioned states, and that nations with common ancestry should attach importance to acting together. Within the scope of this political thought, it has determined 4 main objectives. The first objective should be to preserve and strengthen the independence of the brotherly republics after their long struggles and to become a status quo that cannot be returned to the old days. For this,

Türkiye should provide all kinds of political, economic and technical support to these states. Objective 2: Optional communication and transportation routes should be prepared for Central Asian states to open up to the world through Türkiye. Objective 3, cooperation mechanisms should be established in the field of education and culture by using the common history and cultural accumulation with the regional states. Objective 3: It is aimed to establish the necessary cooperation in order to bring the rich natural resources in the Central Asia region to international markets through Türkiye and thus to strengthen the independence of the regional states by integrating them into the world economy (Yaş, 2013: 6-7).

In this context, summits have begun to be held to strengthen relations with the Central Asian Turkic Republics and to ensure unity. The summits process started in 1992 and 10 summit meetings were held between the Presidents of Türkiye, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan until 2010, when the Secretariat of the Turkic Council was established. The first summit was held in 1992 in Ankara under the chairmanship of Turgut Özal and the Ankara Declaration was signed at the end of the summit (https://turkicstates.org/tr/zirveler).

In 1994, Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev, who came to Türkiye some time before the beginning of the Summit of Turkic Republics and made contacts, proposed the establishment of an organization called the Organization of Turkic Republics to serve the peace and prosperity of the peoples, and within the scope of this visit, a Friendship and Cooperation Agreement was concluded between Türkiye and Kazakhstan. In addition, within the framework of the visit, the 4th Street was given the name Kazakhstan with a ceremony, and Nazarbayev expressed his satisfaction with this and said that this development strengthened the friendship and brotherhood of the people of the two countries (Yaş, 2013: 8).

In 1995, Demirel made a 3-day visit to Kazakhstan. At the end of the official meetings held between Demirel and Nazarbayev, the Memorandum of Understanding was signed. In the Memorandum of Understanding, it was stated that efforts will be made to strengthen the cooperation between the two countries, that Türkiye will support Kazakhstan's economic and structural reform efforts to the extent possible, and that the circulation of goods, services and capital between the two countries will be encouraged as effectively as

possible. After this visit, Demirel went to Almaty in 1996 to participate in the fifth independence anniversary celebrations. He emphasized that independence is the symbol of Eurasian truth and a unique opportunity given to the Central Asian Republics in a golden tray. In this visit of Demirel, during his visits to Fatih University with Nazarbayev, the name of Fatih University was named as Süleyman Demirel University by Nazarbayev (Yaş, 2013: 9).

Held in Astana in 1998, the 5th After the summit, Nazarbayev paid an official visit to Türkiye. In the meeting, mainly economic relations were discussed. In his statement after the negotiations, Demirel stated that although the trade volume of the two countries reached 267 million dollars, it was decided to increase the volume to 500 million dollars and then to 1 billion dollars. In addition, Demirel reported that Türkiye has made efforts to increase the number of active entrepreneurs in Kazakhstan. He said that with Türkiye's Baku-Ceyhan Pipeline Project, the major energy resources of Central Asia will be safely delivered to international markets (Yaş, 2013: 12).

The first goal that Türkiye tried to achieve in the Central Asian region was to ensure the transition of the countries of the region, which gained their independence and were newly formed, from the systems closed to the old world to a democratic and free market economy. For this purpose, first of all, in order to help the preparation of the constitutions, Tika representatives were opened within the relevant institutions of the countries and a strong scientific team was sent to the relevant countries to support the preparation of the necessary legal regulations. The reorganization of assemblies, central government institutions, local administrations has been ensured and a system based on social representation in local administrations has been established and connections with the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye have been established. In order for this system to function regularly, internships and courses have been given to local administrators at almost every level in Türkiye.

The independence of the relevant countries was first recognized by Türkiye, embassies were opened mutually, financial support was provided for these activities, and the Embassies of the Republic of Türkiye were supported for the representation of these countries before other states. Versatile agreements have been made between the relevant countries and Türkiye in many areas, including economic, commercial, education, transportation, culture, press and technical cooperation. The connections of the countries in

the region with regional and international organizations such as the EU, UN, NATO, OSCE, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the Organization of Economic Cooperation (ECO), and the BSEC were also established (Arık, 2010: 296).

With the coming to power of the Justice and Development Party (AK Party) in the elections held in November 2002 in Türkiye, changes have occurred in Türkiye's foreign policy towards the Central Asian Turkic States and a new era has begun in relations with Central Asia. During the AK Party period, Türkiye developed bilateral and multilateral economic and political relations with Turkish states. The efforts of Özal and Demirel and the efforts to improve relations with Central Asian states were discussed more institutionally with the AK Party Governments.

Türkiye's desire to find new markets and energy sources also has an impact on its strengthening economy in terms of increasing interest in the region. The foreign policy implemented in this period was more realistic, based on mutual common interests, where cultural and economic relations were more dominant, and consisted of policies carried out through bilateral and regional institutions (Sarı, 2017).

In this respect, the AK Party Governments have pursued a multi-dimensional foreign policy in this regard. Accordingly, it has been aimed to ensure the development and progress of the newly independent Turkic states in Central Asia, to provide assistance to their state structures by strengthening their independence, to build their infrastructures, and thus to find solutions to current problems. The Central Asia Policy of the AK Party Governments aimed to develop relations based on mutual benefit and respect on the basis of sovereign equality, instead of giving advice, being a model, and showing leadership and "brotherhood" as in the 1990s.

Central Asia offered opportunities for Türkiye in terms of opening new horizons and areas in terms of Turkish foreign policy and realizing its energy interests. While AK Party Governments followed a path based on mutual cooperation and interest in foreign policy in the early periods, they thought that this would spread to political relations in the future. It was aimed to gain new markets by increasing its economic influence in the region, thus reviving the country's economy by developing foreign trade. In this context, the AK Party has tried to carry out integration and cooperation activities with Central Asian states to increase its effectiveness through international organizations that have significant effects

within the framework of soft power policy. With these activities, Türkiye aims to keep its relations with Central Asian states active through international organizations (Ekşi, 2010).

3.3.2. Visits between Türkiye's Central Asian Countries

This section covers Türkiye's relations with the Central Asian Turkic Republics. For this purpose, the countries were discussed one by one, and first general information about those countries was given, and then information about Türkiye's various activities in the relevant countries was tried to be given. This study covers Türkiye's relations with the Central Asian Turkic Republics until 2014.

Kazakhstan

Kazakhs were known as‘ Kyrgyz ‘by Russians and Europeans until 1925. In addition, the term ‘Kyrgyz’ was not only used for Kazakhs, the term was also used by Westerners for the Siberian steppes and the peoples of Turkish origin living in this geography. This terminology used by Russian and Western scientists has also influenced scientists in Türkiye. This contradiction is clearly seen in the studies published in Türkiye until 1931 (Isakov, 2010: 102).

Kazakhstan is a very large country with 2,724,900 km2 and has a population of 17 million and is seen as rich among Central Asian states with 217 billion dollars of GNP (http://www.mfa.gov.tr/kazakistankunyesi.tr.mfa).

Türkiye is the first country to recognize the independence of Kazakhstan. The common historical, cultural and spiritual ties between Türkiye and Kazakhstan have formed the basis for the rapid development of our relations. With the numerous agreements and protocols signed with Kazakhstan after its independence, the principles of our relations and cooperation in various fields have been regulated. In parallel with the level of political relations between our country and Kazakhstan, Kazakhstan has become one of the most important political and economic partners of our country in the region. Our bilateral trade volume reached a total of $3.9 billion in 2013, including our exports of $1.04 billion and our imports of $2.9 billion. The total value of investments made by Turkish companies in Kazakhstan since 1993 is around 2 billion USD. Over 500 TurkKazak joint ventures operate in Kazakhstan, and the number of companies with 100% Turkish capital is around 160. In

Kazakhstan, it is seen that Turkish entrepreneurs stand out especially in the food sector, pharmaceutical-chemical industry, construction, hotel management and manufacturing. The activities of Turkish companies in the contracting sector in Kazakhstan are also increasing day by day. The total value of the projects undertaken by Turkish construction companies in Kazakhstan is around 17.5 billion USD. The investments of Kazakh companies in Türkiye in recent years, especially in the oil and tourism sectors, have reached 350 million dollars. (http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkiye-kazakistansiyasi-iliskileri_.tr.mfa).

According to the census conducted in 1989 before Kazakhstan gained its independence, only 39.7% of the 16.464 million people in the country were Kazakhs, 37.8% were Russians, 5.8% were Germans, and 5.4% were Ukrainians. According to 2013 data, the distribution of the main ethnic groups in the total population is 65.2% for Kazakhs, 21.8% for Russians, 3% for Uzbeks, 1.8% for Ukrainians, 1.4% for Uyghurs, 1.2% for Tatars, 1.1% for Germans, and 0.6% for Turks. The rate of Kazakhs in Kazakhstan increased from 39.7% to 65.2% between the years 19892013, and other Turkish peoples other than Tatars also increased both numerically and in terms of their rates in the population (Demirtepe and Yılmaz, 2013: 113-114).

In Kazakhstan, 414 projects worth a total of $19.3 billion have been undertaken by Turkish contractors to date. The amount of international direct investment from Kazakhstan to Türkiye is $681 million. As of June 2015, there are 482 Kazakh capital companies in our country. Joint Economic Commission (KEK) 8th The Term Meeting was held in Astana on 2426 April 2014 under the co-chairmanship of Minister of Economy Mr. Nihat Zeybekci and Deputy Prime Minister of Kazakhstan and Minister of Industry and New Technologies Mr. Aset İsekeşev. The use of a total of 240 million USD loan, 56 million USD for trade financing and 184 million USD for investment projects, opened by Türk Eximbank to Kazakhstan, has been completed. The total amount of bilateral official development aid that Türkiye has provided to Kazakhstan since 2004 has exceeded $522 million. Türkiye is the first destination for Kazakh tourists with a share of over 50%. In 2013, 425 thousand visitors came to our country from Kazakhstan. In 2014, 438 thousand Kazakhstan citizens visited our country. In the same period, 74 thousand of our citizens visited Kazakhstan (http://www.mfa.gov.tr/kazakistancumhuriyeti-ekonomisi.tr.mfa). Export revenues, especially oil and petroleum products, have a great impact on the macroeconomics of Kazakhstan.

According to the data of the United Nations, the countries that Kazakhstan exports the most as of 2012 are EU countries with 40% of its total exports, China with 20.5% and Russia with 9.7%. The main products imported by Kazakhstan are machinery and transportation equipment, transportation vehicles, boron and air transportation vehicles. According to the data of the United Nations, the countries where Kazakhstan imports the most as of 2012 are EU countries with 40% of its total imports, China with 20.5% and Russia with 9.7% (Demirtepe and Yılmaz, 2013: 107-108). In a speech, Kazakh deputy Burhanov stated the following (Burhanov, 2014: 52):

"As for our future, our vision, President N. Nazarbayev specifically stated that Kazakhstan is an integral part of the Turkic World in his "Kazakhstan Strategy 2050" Address to the Nation in December 2012. In this context, I would like to emphasize that in-depth analyses of contemporary global processes around the world show that difficult times await us in the future. This applies not only to Kazakhstan, but also to the whole world, especially the Turkish states. In such a difficult environment, we should focus on the difficult problems that await us in the future. In particular, President Nazarbayev mentioned 10 threats facing the world. The delay in eliminating these threats will undoubtedly lead to the emergence of social, ethnic, religious and other conflicts. At the same time, the President of Kazakhstan emphasized in his speech that no state can face these threats alone. Today, we are witnessing the formation of a lump of instability in the region extending from North Africa to North-East Asia, to the borders of Turkic States and Turkic peoples. This shows once again that we should make maximum use of the power of Turkish peoples and states to counter today's threats. We must also take our relations outside the human and cultural spheres. The 250 million Turkic World, which extends from the Mediterranean Sea to the Arctic Ocean, can and should combine its power to solve current problems such as energy, geo-strategy, economy, regional security, etc. In addition, in the "Kazakhstan Strategy 2050" Address to the Nation, definitive solutions were expressed along with the problems facing the world. Remedies: active economic and trade diplomacy, rapid international cooperation in the humanitarian and educational-science fields. Kazakhstan is aware of its responsibility in maintaining security and stability in the Central Asian region, where 4 of the 6 Turkic States are located. In addition, we believe that the active participation of brotherly Türkiye and Azerbaijan, as well as Tatarstan, Bashkortostan and Yakutia from the Turkish family, etc. in the process will make the best contribution to the resolution of instability and conflict in Central Asia ".

Uzbekistan

Uzbekistan is in a key position for regional peace and stability with its historical and cultural accumulation, strategic location, natural resources and a population of about 30 million people, which make up half of the Central Asian population. Uzbekistan is the largest country in Central Asia with an area of 447,400 km2 and a GDP of 60 billion dollars. A Central Asia policy that does not include Uzbekistan should not be expected to be inclusive (http://www.mfa.gov.tr/ozbekistankunyesi.tr.mfa).

Uzbekistan, which is located in the strategic center of Central Asia, is an important region that the powers that want to control the Central Asia and Eurasia region must control first. Uzbekistan has a higher population than the other states in the region combined. In addition, the fact that there is a total of 3.5 million Uzbek population in the surrounding countries reinforces its demographic superiority in the region. This demographic superiority is one of the main pillars of Uzbekistan's regional leadership claims. Uzbekistan is the only country in Central Asia with common borders with all states. It is also located at the nodal point of the main transportation routes in Eurasia.

Considering the history of Uzbekistan, Öz-bek Khan was the 9th head of the Golden Horde Khanate founded by Batu Khan, one of the descendants of Genghis Khan. Uzbekistan, which was formed in this way, became the target of the Russian Tsarist armies in the south with the invasion of Turkestan in 1852. After the wars that continued between 1885 and 1910, the Russians completely occupied Uzbekistan. In 1916, there was a great uprising against the Russians in Turkestan, as a result of this uprising, 673 thousand Turks lost their lives, 168 thousand Turks were deported to Siberia, and 300 thousand Turks had to flee to nearby East Turkestan. Although the regime changed in Russia after the Communist revolution of 1917, not much changed for the Turks; the Russians declared that they established the Autonomous Soviet Republic of Turkestan in 1918 and started to attack them in 1919 under the command of Russian General Frunze. Although Enver Pasha, one of the Ottoman commanders, came here and fought against the Russians, he also achieved partial successes and the Russians established full control over these lands in 1924 (Akdiş, 2015).

Türkiye's establishment of relations with Uzbekistan has also taken place quite quickly. The official visit of the President of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov to Türkiye in December 1991 has an important place in the beginning of bilateral relations. The first

relationships established in a sense of brotherhood have been replaced by mutual solidarity and cooperation over time. This trust in Türkiye in the political field has also manifested itself in the economic field. As a matter of fact, in his book "Uzbekistan: Independent and the Way of Progress", Kerimov draws attention to the importance of Türkiye in the transition to a free market economy and states that "Türkiye's experience in implementing economic reforms is extremely interesting for us". Kerimov repeated these views during his visit to Türkiye in 1991 and stated that they took Türkiye as an example during the transition to a free market economy. However, the fact that Karimov's opponent Muhammet Salih came to Türkiye and continued his activities there damaged the good relations established between the two countries. The Government of Uzbekistan recalled the ambassador of Ankara, citing this incident. Again, when Kerimov recalled all Uzbek students studying in Türkiye and closed all Turkish schools in Uzbekistan, Ankara's regional policy suffered another blow. This coldness experienced in the political field between countries has also made itself felt in the field of economic and commercial relations (Erdoğan and Çolakoğlu, 2015: 706).

Türkiye became the first country to recognize the independence of Uzbekistan on December 16, 1991, and diplomatic relations were established between the two countries on March 4, 1992. In order to form the legal basis of the relations, more than 100 bilateral agreements and protocols were signed with this country and many high-level mutual visits were carried out. Our bilateral trade volume with Uzbekistan amounted to 1.379 billion dollars in 2013. Currently, there are a total of 700 Turkish capital companies, 100 of which are representatives, operating in the textile, contracting, food, hospitality, construction materials and plastic, pharmaceutical and service sectors in the country. In our country, there are 114 companies with Uzbek capital (http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkiye-ozbekistancumhuriyeti-siyasi-iliskileri.tr.mfa).

There are about 520 Turkish capital companies operating in various sectors in Uzbekistan, especially in the textile industry and contracting, and these companies provide employment for approximately 50,000 people. The investment amount of Turkish companies in Uzbekistan is around 1 billion USD. In our country, there are 114 companies with Uzbek capital. To date, numerous programs and projects in the fields of economic, commercial, technical, educational, social and cultural cooperation have been carried out by Tika in Uzbekistan. The total amount of official development aid that Türkiye has provided to Uzbekistan since 2004 is 75 million dollars. Türkiye is one of the most preferred

destinations for Uzbek tourists. The number of citizens of Uzbekistan who have visited our country in the last three years has increased by 20% annually. While the number of visitors to our country from Uzbekistan was around 130 thousand in 2013, the number of Uzbek tourists increased to 143 thousand in 2014. In the same period, 13 thousand of our citizens visited Uzbekistan (http://www.mfa.gov.tr/ozbekistancumhuriyeti-ekonomisi.tr.mfa).

Uzbekistan has very rich underground resources. Gold, natural gas, aluminum, tungsten, coal, marble deposits are in the front row. According to 1991 data, 41 billion m^3 of natural gas is produced annually. Uzbekistan ranks high in the world with its annual production of 80 tons of gold. Copper reserves are assumed to be 800 million tons. Coal production is 6 million tons per year (Türkmen, 2008: 47).

In recent years, the share of the Republic of Uzbekistan in world gold production has exceeded 3%. Production increased 1.4-fold compared to 1992. As a result, Uzbekistan ranks 9th in the world in gold production and 2nd among the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries. It is ranked first (Pırnazarov and Movlanov, 2012: 197).

Overcoming the stagnation in bilateral relations largely depends on the change in President Kerimov's distrust of our country. Economic relations are progressing in their own medium. Our military relations and our relations in the fields of culture and education have been affected by political relations. However, the Uzbek people's sympathy for Türkiye continues. Uzbekistan continues to be given the message that the problems are overcome and that dialogue channels are open.

In addition to all these situations, Uzbekistan perceived Türkiye as a competitor while creating its own national identity after independence, and did not look very favorably on the western-style democracy and free market economy advocated by Türkiye. Again, by incorporating historical cities such as Tashkent, Bukhara and Samarkand, he tended to see himself as the "real" successor or heir of Central Asian Turkish Civilization. The belief that some religious groups in Uzbekistan were supported by Turkish-origin sects also caused the Uzbek authorities to approach Türkiye with suspicion. There were also concrete problems in the relations between the two countries. In particular, the fact that Türkiye granted asylum to Muhammad Saleh and some Uzbek opponents, who rivaled Kerimov in the presidential elections, caused a fierce reaction from the Uzbek administration. In fact, in the summer of 1994, the Uzbek government recalled its ambassador, closed most of the Turkish schools in

the country, and withdrew most of its students studying in Türkiye. On the other hand, Türkiye accused the Uzbek government of suppressing the opposition (Arı, 2010:429).

Kyrgyzstan

The first emigration of Russians to Kyrgyzstan was between 1867-1897. The main goal of the Tsarist Government was to connect the newly seized lands to the center politically and militarily. The Russian Government declared that it would grant privileges to Russian peasants who settled here. The second wave of migration occurred during World War II. W Many industrial establishments in Russia and Ukraine were transferred to Kyrgyzstan. The factory workers who came stayed here after the war. However, even before the SCCB collapsed, in 1989, the Parliament of Kyrgyzstan adopted Kyrgyz as the only official language. Discussions about the official language have also increased nationalism in the country. Issues such as the emergence of a new historical perspective with the collapse of the USSR, the increase of nationalist movements, and the accusation that Russia was pursuing imperialist policy disturbed the Russians in Kyrgyzstan and forced them to emigrate. Since 1991, Kyrgyzstan has been the country that has lost the most Russian population among Central Asian countries, after Tajikistan. However, after 1995, Kyrgyzstan understood that the Russians leaving the country would have negative consequences not only economically but also politically, and that it would not be possible to gain Russia's help without protecting the rights of Russians within the country. One of the reasons that led Kyrgyzstan to pursue pro-Russian policy is the very low level of economic aid that other countries provide to Kyrgyzstan. Therefore, on the one hand, Kyrgyzstan tried to improve its relations with Russia, and on the other hand, it reduced the pressure on Russians in the country (Kamalov, 2011: 56).

Kyrgyzstan has a population of about 6 million people and a surface area of 199,951 km², with a GDP of $7 billion as of 2013. 72.4% of the population is Kyrgyz, 14.4% is Uzbek and 6.6% is Russian. (http://www.mfa.gov.tr/kirgizistankunyesi.tr.mfa).

Türkiye became the first country to recognize the independence of the Kyrgyz Republic on 16 December 1991 and diplomatic relations were established between our countries on 29 January 1992. Embassies were opened in Bishkek and Ankara mutually in 1992. More than 100 various agreements and cooperation documents have been signed

between our country and the Kyrgyz Republic in the fields of education, culture, trade and economic cooperation, transportation, communication and military. With the "Eternal Friendship and Cooperation Agreement" signed by the Presidents of the two countries in 1997, "Türkiye and Kyrgyzstan: Together Century"are the documents that form the basis of our friendly and brotherly relations (http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkiyekirgizistan-cumhuriyeti-siyasi-iliskileri.tr.mfa).

When the Soviet Union disintegrated, Kyrgyzstan's industrial sector was developed. The machinery industry produced cars, electronic calculators, workbenches, presetast machines, electric motors, and electric lamps. Mercury, antimony, gold, coal, other mines and oil deposits were operated and a large hydroenergy system was used. The building industry, building materials, furniture, fabric, textile products as garments, shoes were produced and put on the market. In Kyrgyzstan, which has a largely agricultural economic structure, industry has developed, especially in the fields of light industry and microelectronics. Major industries are concentrated in metallurgy, petroleum, natural gas, electronics, non-ferrous metals, electric motors, food process, canning, leather products, walnut furniture, coal mining, canned meat and sugar refineries. Construction, transportation, communication and trade also have an important place as the basic elements of the economy (Kalambekova, 1996: 8).

In Kyrgyzstan, which has been governed by the Presidential system like other Central Asian states since its independence, President Bakiyev was dismissed with the popular movement that started in April 2010 and a political transition process was initiated under the leadership of opposition leader Roza Otunbayeva, which envisaged the preparation of a new constitution and the transition to a parliamentary system. As a matter of fact, with the new constitution adopted on June 7, 2010, the parliamentary system was adopted. Prime Minister Almazbek Atambayev won the Presidential elections held on October 30, 2011 within the framework of the political transition process with a 62.52% vote rate in the first round and assumed the Presidency with the handover ceremony held on December 1, 2011, in which our President participated. Thus, Kyrgyzstan became the first and only Central Asian Republic where the Presidential office changed hands with democratic elections (http://www.mfa.gov.tr/kirgizistan-siyasigorunumu.tr.mfa).

Around 300 Turkish capital companies operating in various sectors contribute greatly to the Kyrgyz economy with their capital of $304 million and provide employment to more than 5,000 Kyrgyz citizens. On the other hand, as of June 2015, 149 companies with Kyrgyz capital operate in our country. Turkish contracting companies have undertaken 65 projects worth $689 million in Kyrgyzstan so far. On December 25-27, 2014, in Bishkek, Türkiye-Kyrgyzstan Joint Economic Commission (KEK) 8th The Term Meeting was held. The last meeting of the Joint Land Transportation Commission (KUKK) between Kyrgyzstan and us was held in Ankara on 2-3 December 2014. Within the scope of the "Agreement on Cooperation between Türkiye and Kyrgyzstan in the Fields of Health and Medical Sciences", During the Kyrgyzstan-Türkiye Common Health Week, Turkish physicians examined 623 patients and performed surgery on 92 patients. The total amount of official bilateral development aid that Türkiye has provided to Kyrgyzstan in the context of economic/commercial, health, education, social and cultural cooperation programs since 2004 is 855 million USD. In 2014, 82 thousand Kyrgyz visited our country. In the same period, 37 thousand of our citizens visited Kyrgyzstan (http://www.mfa.gov.tr/).

Türkiye recognized the independence of Tajikistan on 16 December 1991. Diplomatic relations were established between the two countries on 29 January 1992. Our Embassy was opened on August 4, 1992, and the Embassy of Tajikistan in Ankara was opened on October 16, 1995. Our Embassy continued its duty during the civil war in Tajikistan in 19921997. Following the dissolution of the USSR, our bilateral relations with Tajikistan, which was evaluated within the scope of our country's developing relations with the Central Asian Republics, are dominated by friendship and cooperation. A strong will exists on both sides to further enhance cooperation in all areas between Türkiye and Tajikistan. We have a special relationship with Tajikistan, where we share the heritage of a culture that draws strength from great thinkers and valuable universal figures, especially Mevlana Celaleddin-i Rumi. The historical and cultural ties between our peoples and our mutual sincere feelings form the basis of our relations (http://www.mfa.gov.tr/).

After gaining its independence, a tragic civil war took place in Tajikistan between 1992-1997. The conflict environment continued until 1997, despite the peace negotiations and ceasefire agreements initiated under the supervision of the UN in 1994 with the participation of the Russian Federation (RF), Iran and other countries in the region, and finally the "Inter-Tajik General Peace Agreement" was signed in Moscow on 27 June 1997.

In the Constitution of Tajikistan, which entered into force on November 6, 1994, Tajikistan is defined as a democratic and secular state of law. The country is governed by the Presidency system (http://www.mfa.gov.tr/).

Türkiye-Tajikistan Joint Economic Commission (KEK) 7th Period Meeting was held on 19-23 April 2009 in Dushanbe, Term Meeting was held in Ankara on 29-30 November 2012. Direct Turkish investments in Tajikistan reached $50 million. There are 35 Turkish capital companies in Tajikistan. In our country, 9 companies with registered Tajik capital in the amount of 1.1 million Dollars operate. According to Turkish Contractors Association data, Turkish contracting firms have undertaken 36 projects worth USD 545 million in Tajikistan so far. Tajikistan has received bilateral financial support and unrequited aid in the amount of approximately $90 million in total, including the Turkish Eximbank loan, Tika ($48 million) and the aid of our other organizations. TİKA carried out 21 projects in Tajikistan in 2014 with a total amount exceeding $700,000. The number of visitors from Tajikistan to our country in 2013 is 27 thousand. The number of Tajik citizens who came to our country in 2014 is 35 thousand. In the same period, 14 thousand of our citizens visited Tajikistan (http://www.mfa.gov.tr/).

Tajikistan, which has a strategic relationship with Russia and has recently attracted the increasing interest of China and Iran, sees Türkiye as a balancing factor against these countries. Türkiye is seen as a "big country" by the Tajik authorities; given our interest in other Central Asian republics and the intensity/diversity of our relations, there is an understanding that they have been neglected by Türkiye under senior Tajik rule. It emphasizes that common cultural proximity will close the language gap.

Turkmenistan gained its independence on October 27, 1991 after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and Saparmurat Niyazov, who later took the surname "Turkmenbashi", assumed the Presidency. An important development in the first years of its independence was the recognition of Turkmenistan's status as a "Permanent Neutral Country" with a decision taken at the UN General Assembly on 12 December 1995. In Turkmenistan, neutrality is considered one of the most important principles of the state, and foreign policy is determined on the basis of this status. For this reason, Turkmenistan does not participate in security and military alliances, does not allow the establishment of foreign military bases on its territory or the use of its territory by foreign military forces, and avoids policies that it

thinks will damage its neutrality status. After the death of Turkmenbashi on 21 December 2006, Gurbangulu Berdimuhamedov, the most senior Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the period, was elected as the second President of Turkmenistan with the elections held on 11 February 2007. The last elections in Turkmenistan were held on 12 February 2012 (http://www.mfa.gov.tr).

Türkiye is the first country to recognize the independence of Turkmenistan and the first to open an Embassy in Ashgabat. Our country supports the neutrality status of Turkmenistan. There are balanced, mutually respectful and cooperative special relations between the two brotherly countries and peoples who share the common history, language, religion and culture, on the basis of "One Nation, Two States". Cooperation between the two countries follows a positive course in all areas, especially foreign policy, trade and economy, culture and education. Türkiye-Turkmenistan relations continued to develop rapidly after 2007 by gaining a new momentum, and there was an intense high-level visit traffic. Since 2007, our President has visited Turkmenistan six times, our Prime Minister has visited Turkmenistan three times, and Turkmenistan President Berdimuhamedov has visited our country five times, two in 2012. Most recently, our President paid a visit to Turkmenistan on 26-27 April 2014. The trade volume between Türkiye and Turkmenistan is also increasing rapidly. Our bilateral trade volume, which was approximately 1.8 billion USD in 2012, was realized as 2.614 billion USD in 2013. Turkish businessmen have been contributing to the development of Turkmenistan since the first days of independence. Around 600 Turkish companies are registered in Turkmenistan. In recent years, Turkmenistan has become the country where Turkish contracting companies have undertaken the most projects in Central Asia. Since the independence of Turkmenistan, the number of projects undertaken by Turkish contracting companies has been over 1400 and the total project amount is 40.8 billion USD. Apart from the construction sector, another area where Turkish companies operate intensively is the textile sector (http://www.mfa.gov.tr/).

Our contracting companies operating in Turkmenistan undertook projects worth $4.9 billion in 2012 and $10.6 billion in 2013. The number of projects undertaken by Turkish contracting companies in Turkmenistan to date is over 1400 and the total project amount is 47 billion USD. In Turkmenistan, where more than 600 Turkish companies are registered, various projects are carried out by our companies in areas such as energy, textile, infrastructure, especially contracting services. The total Turkish investment in Turkmenistan

is $413 million. There are 210 companies with Turkmen capital operating in our country. The total amount of bilateral official development aid that Türkiye has provided to Turkmenistan since 2004 is approximately 166 million dollars. While the number of Turkmen visitors to our country was around 150 thousand in 2013, this number increased by 20% to 180 thousand in 2014. In the same period, more than 50 thousand of our citizens visited Turkmenistan (http://www.mfa.gov.tr/).

3.3.3. Türkiye-Central Asia Relations in the Context of Soft Power Use and Identity Construction

When we examine Türkiye's policies towards the Central Asia region, we see that soft power elements are used on its basis. The fact that we have issues such as common culture, history, religion and language with the peoples of Central Asia has been a very important tool in the beginning of relations with the Central Asian states that have gained their independence. In this part of the study, Türkiye's Central Asian policies in the context of soft power will be explained separately under the headings of education, culture, economy-social, religion and foreign policy.

Education

In addition to the cultural tools of public diplomacy and the mobilization of soft power resources, an important tool is educational activities. When we say educational activities, student exchange activities come first. In addition, international congresses and conferences where academicians can publish their scientific studies are also important educational activities (Karadağ, 2016:96).

It is necessary to divide the education carried out in Central Asia or in the Turkic world in general into two as formal and non-formal education. As non-formal education, we can count the Turkish Education Centers of the Ministry of National Education, the Turkish courses opened by the teachers sent by TİKA, the Turkish courses opened by the Turkish Teaching Center(TÖMER) and the Turkish courses opened by the Turkish World Research Foundation at the Turkish World Cultural Centers and the teaching of Turkish Saz and Turkish Folklore. These training centers are located in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan (Yazgan, 2003: 19).

The goals of education policy, which is one of the most important tools in Turkish cultural foreign policy, are to build bridges between Türkiye and the Central Asian Republics, to raise generations who know and sympathize with Turkish culture in Central Asia, to reinforce the sense of brotherhood and to create qualified manpower trained for the Turkish world (Akçalı and Demir, 2012: 12). The existence of universities established in Central Asia in partnership with Türkiye is an important tool for the development of relations and the realization of the above-mentioned goals. From this point of view, Akhmet Yassawi University has a very important place in the relations between Kazakhstan and Türkiye. Before the SB was dissolved, the foundation was laid by the President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev in 1991 in order to restore Turkestan to its historical mission; In 1993, with the bilateral agreement between Türkiye and the Republic of Kazakhstan, it gained its current structure and welcomed students under the name of "Hoca Ahmet Yesevi International Turkish-Kazakh University" (Kiş, 2011:15).

Apart from Kazakhstan, there are also Turkish schools and universities in Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan in the region. There are many Turkish schools affiliated to our Ministry of National Education in Turkmenistan. International Turkmen-Turkish University has been providing education since 1994 (Person, 2011:34). The legal infrastructure of the cooperation between Türkiye and Kyrgyzstan in the field of education is constituted by the "Cooperation Agreement between the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Türkiye and the Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic in the Field of Education and Science", which was signed on 28 June 1996 and replaced all agreements and protocols concluded in this field before this date. Türkiye Kyrgyzstan Manas University, which is one of the higher education institutions in Kyrgyzstan and considered as Türkiye's largest state investment, was established with a cooperation agreement signed in 1995 between Türkiye and Kyrgyzstan and started to operate in the same year. Approximately 3000 students study at Türkiye-Kyrgyzstan Manas University in Bishkek. There are Turkish-Kazakh Anatolian High School, Bishkek Primary School and Turkish Language Teaching Center operating under the Ministry of National Education in the country. In addition to these, there are also investments of Turkish private entrepreneurs leaving Türkiye in the field of education (Turkish Embassy in Bishkek).

Student exchange programs are perhaps the most important point of educational activities. Because the student who leaves his/her country to complete his/her higher

education lives in the country where he/she will receive education for a long time and learns the tradition and cultural structure of that country. During the time spent in that country, the positive impressions and effects of the students will increase their sympathy for that country and their nation over time. One of the countries that use educational activities as an element of soft power is Türkiye. While the number of international students studying in Türkiye was 5,378 in 1983, this number reached 55,000 in 2014 and 81,499 in 2015-2016 academic year. Among the 81,499 international students studying in our country, the number of students from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan is 14,180 as of 2016 (CoHE, https://istatistik.yok.gov.tr) .

Another tool that has as much impact as the partner universities in the fields of education is student scholarships. Since the 1992/93 academic year, it has started to provide scholarships for students from Central Asian countries and other former USSR geography within the scope of the Great Student Project. Students who come to Türkiye for education are given Turkish education in Turkish learning centers in various universities for one year (Ergin and Türk, 2010: 36). The Republic of Türkiye conducts a large scholarship program under the name of Türkiye Scholarships, which is also benefited by students in Central Asian countries. In addition, scholarship opportunities are provided by foundations such as the Turkish World Research Foundation and the Turkish Religious Foundation (http://www.mfa.gov.tr/).

While there are no serious problems with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan in educational activities between Türkiye and the Central Asian Republics, there are occasional problems with activities with Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. In fact, when we look at the number of students coming to Türkiye from the Central Asia region, the number of students coming from these two countries is quite low. There are various reasons for the low number of incoming students. It is stated that there is such a problem because the Tajiks are different from the Turks in terms of language. The situation in Uzbekistan is political. Since the mid-1990s, the diplomatic crisis between Türkiye and Uzbekistan has not only remained in the political sphere, but has also spread to other areas, especially education. After the emergence of the crisis in the mid-1990s, it was claimed that the students who came to Türkiye from Uzbekistan were tried to be influenced by the Uzbek opposition leader. The Uzbek government recalled all students studying in Türkiye at that time (Ergin and Türk, 2010:38). Another reason why Uzbeks recalled their students is the concern of the sects

whose influence increased in Türkiye during the Prosperity-Road period to hook Uzbek students. In summary, Kerimov believed that Turks did not pay enough attention to the security of foreign students (Berberoğlu, 1999: 122-23). Although there was a problem between Uzbekistan and Türkiye, the number of students who went from Türkiye to Uzbekistan was more than the number of students who went to Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Türkiye tries to balance its relations with the country in question by sending more students to countries that do not cooperate in the field of education for various reasons (Ergin and Türk, 2010: 40).

Türkiye's educational activities in the Turkish world can be interpreted as missionary activities in the outside world, especially by Westerners. In fact, it is said that we have raised "agent schools" and "slave intellectuals separated from their own cultures". In the face of these claims, Turan Yazgan revealed the differences between the educational activities carried out by Türkiye and the missionary activities claimed by the Westerners. First, the language of the Turkish world is Turkish, although dialects and dialects are different. Secondly, with minor exceptions, almost all of the Turkic world is Muslim. Third, we do not have the potential to establish political or economic superiority in the region. These three differences clearly show that there is no attempt to integrate a different language or religion into the region. In addition, it does not have an understanding of colonialism in terms of the values that Türkiye currently has (Yazgan, 2003: 15).

Culture

It is known that the Turks of Türkiye came from Central Asia. Naturally, the homeland of the Turks is Central Asia. The peoples of Central Asia and the Turks of Türkiye meet in a common ethnic structure. Therefore, this structure is called the "Turkish World". The propositions that establish a connection between the Turks of Türkiye and the peoples of Central Asia at the level of identity are also generally accepted by the official authorities of the state, Turkish political elites and the media with academic circles. In addition to national identity, language is also an important point in Türkiye's view of Central Asia. It is stated that the spoken language in the Central Asian region is Turkish, regardless of the differences in dialect and dialect. We can say that the common culture is the basis of our reasons for turning to the Central Asian Republics, which gained their independence in the

early 1990s. Central Asian leaders also drew attention to the cultural ties between Türkiye and the region and encouraged Türkiye's orientation to the region (Çaman, 2013:130-1).

Cultural resources have been decisive in Türkiye's orientation to the Central Asia region. The common ground with the peoples of Central Asia on issues such as linguistic, religious, historical and cultural issues caused Türkiye's foreign policy towards the region to be shaped through culture. The main purpose of addressing culture in Turkish foreign policy is to establish cultural unity by ensuring and improving communication between Türkiye and the Turkic world (Efegil, 2006: 277).

Language is an important issue to ensure communication between Türkiye and Turks in other regions. He has conducted studies on language for Türkiye. In studies in the field of culture, daily newspapers and television channels called printed press or printed media and visual media or visual media are important cultural tools (Karadağ, 2016: 88-9). In this direction, Turkish state television opened TRTAvrasya (now TRT-AVAZ) channel. The channel has been broadcasting to the Central Asian region since 1992. TRT-Eurasia, which broadcasts in Turkish in Türkiye, could not reach the desired level of viewing due to communication problems and could not compete (with local channels and Russian televisions). However, today, Türkiye has become competitive by improving itself in this field (Ersanlı, 1998: 229).

Professional organizations such as the Union of Turkish-Speaking News Agencies, the Union of Turkish World Writers, the Turkish World Writers' Congress, the Turkic World Education, Science and Culture Organization, the International Turkic Language Conferences, the Alphabet and Spelling Conference were established and played an important role in cultural relations (Çaman, 2013: 187).

In the early 1990s, he undertook important projects in institutions such as TİKA, TURKSOY, which played an active role in foreign policy as well as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and carried out activities in fields such as culture, education, language, and religion. One of them was in the field of language. It is aimed to develop a common written language in the Turkish World. A study was carried out by TİKA under the name of the Common Writing Language Project, but this was not continued. In addition, Alphabet and Spelling Conferences, Common Writing Language Symposium is one of the activities organized in this context. In order for the projects and communication to be healthier, TURKSOY was

established in order to institutionalize the cultural relations between the Turkic World and Türkiye under a common umbrella organization (Efegil, 2006: 279).

TİKA undertook important tasks in Central Asia in the 1990s and made significant contributions to Turkish foreign policy in the projects it developed. Ambassador Umut Arık, the President of Tika in the first years of its establishment, mentions the goal of making Turkish the language of the United Nations, which is spoken by nearly 200 million people, and shows how great goals have been set in the cultural field in the Turkic World, especially in Central Asia (Arık, 1995:166). Of course, there was a belief that the common alphabet and written language should be created primarily in order to create unity in the field of language. Although Türkiye proposed the adoption of the common Latin alphabet, they created their own unique alphabet by taking into account the voice differences in their language. Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, one of the Central Asian Republics, created their own Latin alphabets. Kazakhstan's president Nursultan Nazarbayev announced in an article for the Egemen Kazakhstan newspaper that he had instructed the administration to begin graphic preparations for the transition to the Latin alphabet. In addition, negotiations are held in Kyrgyzstan for the transition to the Latin alphabet (https://tr.sputniknews.com/).

Turkish, which is the starting point of the Turkish identity, which is the common identity of the Central Asian peoples and the Turks of Türkiye, has been divided into *sub-identities* over time by dividing the *language-based Turkish integrative identity* during the Tsarist Russia and the USSR period. For this reason, a language policy has been placed at the center of foreign culture policy. Türkiye aims to "ensure Turkish unity" at the identity level. The aim of the common language policy is to bring the "Turkish dialects" closer to each other by reducing the differences between them and thus to reach the common Turkish. However, there is no step that Central Asian leaders are convinced in this regard (Çaman, 2013:154).

Central Asian lands are of great importance in terms of Turkish history. Since the 1990s, projects for the protection and restoration of historical buildings belonging to the Turks have been undertaken by other institutions, especially TİKA. TİKA initiated a comprehensive study to identify Turkish monuments in the region and collected these studies under the name of Excavation and Restoration Projects. The projects of identifying and restoring the historical Turkish structures in the region have started since 1997. This step

taken by Türkiye was also welcomed by the Central Asian Republics. This shows us how strong the historical and cultural ties are between Türkiye and the Central Asian Republics (Bahar, 2016: 281). In this context, the surviving works of people and events that have an important place in Türkiye's history have also been allowed to emerge again. This is also an indication that Türkiye's interest in these regions has started to increase. Orkhon Monuments, one of the first examples of Turkish history and Turkish, were renovated and reopened to visitors in the Sultan Sancar Tomb in Turkmenistan (Kardaş and Erdağ, 2012: 174).

Türkiye also uses the power of the media, which is one of the soft power tools in the field of culture. As mentioned above, it could not compete with local and Russian channels in the early periods. Developing its work in this field, Türkiye continues its broadcasts for the Turkish noble and Turkish speaking audience through TRT Avaz. The main purpose of this channel is to disseminate Turkish in the Turkish Republics, to create a common language and to ensure communication. In addition, it is aimed to allocate the bond between the peoples by processing the common Turkish culture and values through the channel of cultural projects and activities carried out by Türkiye in Central Asia (Kılıç, 2015: 383).

Soft power, cultural values, and public diplomacy were often influential in his relations with the Central Asian Republics. Since Türkiye knows this, it has attached importance to public diplomacy tools. The fact that TİKA has carried out numerous projects in many fields since the first years of independence has undoubtedly positively affected Turkish foreign policy. Türkiye, which is not limited to Tika, played an important role in the establishment of TURKSOY, also called the UNESCO of its region, in order to develop friendly relations with the Central Asian Republics in order to protect and promote Turkish culture. Türkiye has always been the driving force of TURKSOY. The spread of the Turkish language, which is seen as the basis of the common culture, has also been taken as its main objectives by TURKSOY. Again, it is one of the main goals of the region to protect and revitalize Turkish culture and art and to ensure the transfer of national culture to future generations. With this awareness, TURKSOY, which acts in Central Asia as well as in the Turkic World, realizes its main goals with activities in many fields. We can list these activities as *organizing Permanent Council meetings, Turkish World Capital, Commemoration events, Scientific Meetings, artist meetings, various publications, festivals and stage events* (Sevin, 2015: 482-5).

It is important for the Turkic World to carry out these activities in terms of understanding the importance of common culture. A series of events were organized in 2013 when Eskişehir was chosen as the Capital of the Turkic World. In this period, Nowruz events, the herald of spring for the Turkic World, were celebrated, and Central Asian artists took the stage at the events. With these events, Turkish folklore and arts were performed, and valuable Turkish elders were commemorated with various commemorations. In addition, inspired by the Eurovision Song Contest in 2013, it was decided to organize a Turkvision Song Contest. The aim of the competition is to develop the common music culture, language and art together with the participants from the Turkish-speaking countries. The competition was then decided to be held annually in the cultural capital as part of the Capital of Culture project (http://www.ntv.com.tr).

When the activities in the field of culture are examined in general, they are basically based on a common language. We see that İsmail Gaspıralı has adopted the principle of unity in language, idea and work. Because the Turkish political elites believe that identity, which is built on a common language, can also be a unity in other areas. The biggest task in this field falls to institutions such as TİKA, TÜRKSOY, Yunus Emre Institute, TRT. These organizations, which put the policies of the Republic of Türkiye into practice in the field, have undoubtedly made significant contributions to Turkish Foreign Policy in this field. These institutions have carried out numerous projects in the use of the Turkish language, culture and tradition as a means of communication with the peoples of Central Asia.

Economy and Social

Since the Central Asian Republics, which gained their independence in 1991, were unprepared for the establishment and maintenance of economic relations with Türkiye, economic relations were tried to be carried out in a difficult way (Kabasakal, 2001: 37). After 1991, Türkiye signed many bilateral agreements with the Central Asian Republics. Although these agreements are politically weighted, they are also economically serious. As a result of the studies carried out within the framework of the agreements and protocols, investments have started to be made by companies from Türkiye in different fields such as manufacturing, construction and telecommunications in the Central Asian Republics (Erdoğan and Çolakoğlu, 2007:709).

The fact that the countries of the region, which gained their independence, started to gain the restructuring processes only after the 1995s with the help of Türkiye and achieved a visible stability in the economies by preparing the necessary institutional infrastructure also increased the speed of development of relations. At that time, Türkiye provided the loans needed by Central Asian countries through Eximbank. As in all matters, TİKA has great responsibilities in this regard. Coordinating the aid provided is one of its most important functions. In the early 1990s, great work fell on the Turkish Postal and Telegraph Organization(PTT) as well as Tika. Because another important problem in the region, which established its economic infrastructure, was not being able to communicate with the world. Therefore, Turkish PTT has formed the infrastructure of communication and communication in the region where telephone communication is very limited and problematic, with almost no fax devices. Turkish PTT has created networks connecting all capitals of the region with international lines and provided satellite connections to all of these countries (Usul, 2013: 48).

Türkiye's periodic tendencies in foreign policy are also reflected in its economic relations with the Central Asian Republics. Türkiye's trade volume with the countries of the region, which was 275 million dollars in 1992 when they gained their independence, more than doubled to 649 million dollars in 1993. This rise made itself felt until 1997. In 1997, we can say that the trade volume decreased due to Türkiye's focus on full EU membership and the subsequent economic problems (Erdoğan and Çolakoğlu, 2007:710).

The results of the AK Party government's economic policy in the post-2002 period were also reflected in the economic data. While exports with the countries in the region were $613,103,693 and imports were $557,686,059 in 2003, exports were $3,553,934,431, imports were $2,659,360,779 in 2015, exports were $2,859,054,263 and imports were $2,489,003,514 in 2016 (TUIK, 2017. http://www.tuik.gov.tr/).

During the period from independence to the 2000s, Türkiye invested and provided aid to all of the Central Asian Republics. Social aids and projects have been carried out in a wide area such as building schools, creating telecommunication infrastructure, bringing printers, drilling water wells, training teachers, doctors and diplomats. Platforms and organizations have been established both nationwide and civil society-wide to ensure communication between Central Asian Turks and Turkish Turks. TURKSOY's initiatives

such as Turkish Conventions, World Turkish Youth Union, Turkish World Women Union, Dialogue Eurasia Platform, Eurasia Writers Union, Union of Turkish World Municipalities are also important. In the early 1990s, Turkish companies also undertook important tasks. Mass housing projects, road constructions, infrastructure investments, especially these renovation projects, which were carried out at the fastest pace, attracted attention at that time. In addition, services were provided to the countries in the region, which had difficulties in production, with the entrepreneurship of Turkish exporters (Usul, 2013: 48).

The 2000s, on the other hand, represent the institutionalization and strengthening of these relations established in economic, political and socio-cultural fields. In the first years of independence, Türkiye's rhetoric began to take place, albeit partially, with the granting of conditions. Because when Türkiye's economic data started to improve and its interest in the region increased again, planned and programmed action was taken this time in order not to fall back on the mistakes made in the early 1990s. As stated in the previous chapters, after the AK Party came to power, it established its foreign policy towards Central Asia on the basis of economy and emphasized cooperation in other areas by emphasizing the development of trade. One of these areas is energy sources. The Central Asian region has rich underground resources. The energy transmission lines projects developed for the transportation of these underground resources to the west, which are seen as a dream, have also been successful with the efforts of Türkiye. The actual collaborations showed their results. Turkish contractors and businessmen have shown that they can meet the demands in these countries to a great extent. In this context, Turkish Petroleum Corporation (TPAO), as the national company of Türkiye, has also shown that it is ready to play a role in production activities in Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan. With the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) crude oil pipeline, Blue Stream and Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum (BTE) natural gas pipelines, Türkiye has become an important part of the energy corridor in Central Asia (Yazar, 2011: 55).

The contribution of Türk Eximbank has been important in the renewal of the infrastructure in the Central Asia region since the 1990s. Project loans provided by Eximbank are concentrated in three main areas. The first of these emerges in the field of services such as tourism and contracting. In this direction, activities such as building hotels, trade and shopping centers, improving airports, and establishing telecommunication systems stand out. The second area is the production of consumer goods. Investments have been made in food, clothing and electrical appliances manufacturing industries. The third

financing area is industrial investments. Eximbank's loans have a significant share in the construction or repair of refineries, integrated facilities, and production facilities (Dikkaya, 1999: 4).

Türkiye aims to increase and diversify the area of cooperation with these countries through mechanisms such as reciprocal high-level visits, mixed economic commissions, land transport mixed commissions, business councils and high-level strategic cooperation councils. In the region, the total investments of 2099 Turkish-owned companies in the region, 600 in Kazakhstan, 512 in Uzbekistan, 300 in Kyrgyzstan, 600 in Turkmenistan and 80 in Tajikistan, exceeded 3.5 billion dollars. The total value of the projects carried out by Turkish contracting companies in the region is 62 billion dollars (T.R. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2017).

Collaborations in the economic field have also led to the formation of collaborations and interactions in other fields. Improving the infrastructure of the region in many areas with economic aid has also increased the attractiveness of Türkiye's power. For this reason, positive responses have been given to Türkiye's initiatives in social and cultural fields. The negative image formed due to the statements and attitudes of the Turkish political elites in the early 1990s was corrected by establishing Türkiye's regional politics based on economy and using soft power tools such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Culture, Tika, TURKSOY, YTB, Yunus Emre Institutes. In image correction activities, economic projects, TRT publications, Turkish series and films, student exchange programs were supported by the contributions of universities. The positive Turkish image in Central Asian peoples has enabled it to interact with Türkiye in a new field. This area is tourism. In general, although the tourism activities between the Central Asian Republics and Türkiye are not at the desired rate, it is seen that there is a movement. The number of tourists from Central Asia was 795,853 in 2013, 878,339 in 2014, 861,691 in 2015, and 653,925 in 2016 (Tursab, 2017). The reasons for the decrease in tourists coming after 2015 can be cited as the internal security problems experienced in Türkiye and the plane crisis with Russia in 2015.

If we look at the reasons why the peoples of Central Asia chose Türkiye for tourism, the cultural proximity between the Turks of Türkiye and the peoples of Central Asia is one of the most important reasons why Türkiye was chosen for tourism. The fact that Türkiye's tourism structure is cheaper than other similar tourist destinations is another important factor.

At the same time, citizens of the Central Asian Republic have the right to enter Türkiye without a visa. The proximity to the people of Central Asia in Türkiye is also an important reason for preference (Kıngır et al., 2015: 294).

After their independence, the Central Asian Republics had a difficult period due to the unpreparedness of their economic infrastructure and the deficiencies in other areas. Türkiye has helped to some extent the integration of these countries into the world by providing economic support and providing the necessary institutional infrastructure and communication infrastructure to the countries of the region where it recognizes their independence. With the loans provided through Eximbank, it was tried to provide the economic infrastructures of the countries by providing financing in various fields. Collaborations established in the early 2000s led to institutionalization. The economically based regional policy has also shown its impact in other areas. It has enabled it to develop in areas such as energy, socio-cultural, tourism and trade. Türkiye's soft power resources strengthen Türkiye's image in other areas by taking power from the economic basis.

Religion

While Türkiye has shaped its foreign policy according to economic, political and cultural fields, religious diplomacy has generally not been sufficiently examined. After the process of change in foreign policy in the 2000s, religious diplomacy has become an important part of Turkish foreign policy. Although Türkiye is distant from state religion issues from time to time, it has seen religion as a useful resource that can be mobilized for *state purposes* and continues to see it today (Koçer, 2006: 144).

Türkiye's religious diplomacy was not only carried out at the state level. Like the Turkish Religious Foundation, foundations and associations also play an important role. The Turkish state conducts its religious diplomacy through the Directorate of Religious Affairs of Türkiye (DIB). After 1980, the duty of the Diyanet was not limited to Türkiye, it started to take duties and responsibilities in every region that is Turkish and Muslim outside the national borders. Today, it is the largest Muslim religious organization in the world in terms of domestic and international duties with its 100,000 employees and budget (Özkan, 2015:140).

After 1980, Türkiye carried out activities for Muslims in different parts of the world through DIB and ensured that the image of Türkiye was in a positive direction. One of these regions is the Central Asian region. In the Central Asian region, Islam was kept under isolation with atheistic religious policies during the Tsarist Russia period and during the USSR period. Of course, the most troubled period was Soviet Russia, which was dominated by communism. The Moscow administration tried to reduce the unifying structure of Islam among the peoples of Central Asia by implementing practices aimed at religious institutions, traditions and beliefs in Central Asia. In this context, important mosques were closed and even clergymen were arrested. During the Soviet era, Islam suffered its greatest wounds in the region during the Stalin and Khrushchev periods. 25% of official mosques were closed between 1958-1964 during the Khrushchev period (Yazıcı 2003: 50).

Although there was a tendency towards Islam in Central Asia in the post-independence period, problems such as the presence of radical religious groups, lack of resources and lack of officials still continued. According to a Kyrgyz scholar, clergymen were generally uneducated, only a certain number of people understood the hadiths and commands and could interpret the hadiths (Gunn 2003: 390). Of course, since the first years of independence, radical elements such as Wahhabi groups, Hizb ut Tahrir and the Fetullah's Terrorist Organization and terrorist organizations have tried to benefit from these deficiencies, but the existing regimes have created control mechanisms against these elements that pose a threat to them. The regional leaders chose the state-Islam relations in the Republic of Türkiye as a model to bring Islam under state control. In this direction, they established the Organization of Religious Affairs. Thus, an important step has been taken to keep religion under control and to teach it correctly. After their independence, Türkiye also helped the Central Asian Republics in various fields and helped to solve the problem mentioned in the field of religion. DIB sent books and imams to the Central Asian Republics. In addition, students from the Central Asian Republics came to Türkiye to receive religious education (Bal 2000:8).

3.5. Türkiye's Association with Central Asian Nations and its Soft Power Instruments in the Area

3.5.1. TIKA

An period of transformative prospects and corresponding demands for Türkiye's foreign policy was brought about by the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the following rise of the New Turkish Republics. Amidst these changing circumstances, the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA) emerged as a significant player to take advantage of the opportunity. It was formerly known as the Turkish Cooperation and Development Agency when it was founded. On October 24, 2011, Decree Law No. 656 changed its name. TİKA has become a force to be reckoned with, actively involved in a wide range of fields that include education, healthcare, culture, art, history, archaeology, and even classical diplomacy. TİKA, which operated under the auspices of Technical aid Activity, took on a multifarious role at first but ultimately narrowed its focus, assigning some tasks to recently established organizations and emphasizing technical aid. TİKA, with its broad outlook and steadfast dedication to promoting advancement, personifies Türkiye's commitment to global collaboration and serves as evidence of its proactive efforts to create a more promising future for everybody.

TİKA is in charge of the Prime Ministry's international aid program. Following Prime Minister TIKA's separation from government ministries in 1999 due to its legal entity status in 2001, Türkiye emerged as a leading soft power organization for policy coordination, allowing it to act differently from State bureaucracy institutions. Furthermore, TİKA is responsible for keeping track of foreign aid and facilitating inter-institutional collaboration and coordination to ensure that TİKA is effectively used in accordance with foreign policy goals and mandates. As a result, TİKA has additional authority to locate and allocate funds for international help (E. Denizhan 2010). TİKA is divided into eight service units, including the Central Asia and Caucasus Department and the Office of Legal Counselor. Kazakhstan Astana, Kyrgyzstan Bishkek, Mongolia Ulaanbaatar, Uzbekistan Tashkent, Turkmenistan Ashgabat, Tajikistan Dushanbe, Afghanistan Kabul, Mezar-i Sharif, and Herat are only a few of the Central Asian nations where TIKA has offices (TİKA 2008).

To promote understanding and cooperation between local governments, the first Turkish Republics Local Governments Congress was held from June 16–18, 1998. This historic meeting served as a physical representation of the decision made at the 4th Turkish Republics Summit Meeting in Tashkent in October 1996, which recognized the need of idea sharing among local government organizations. TIKA was instrumental in pushing forward a number of initiatives, including the creation of the Turkic States of Union and the execution of resolutions reached at this congress. The creation of a comprehensive scheme to advance the insurance industry in the Turkish Republics was one noteworthy endeavor. The focus of this project was to investigate opportunities for cooperation with managers connected to the insurance industry in Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan. The goal of forging closer bonds and promoting development among the Turkic countries served as the impetus for these coordinated efforts. (2009, Republics). To announce its actions, TİKA has created a journal named Eurasia File. Following the 156th issue of July 2002, Eurasia File ceased to exist and was renamed TİKA Turkish World Journal. Beginning with issue number one, the new bulletin was known by this name for five issues until continuing under the name Eurasia Journal with the publication of its sixth issue in January 2004. Undoubtedly, the shifting power dynamics in the Turkish government were impacted by the expansion of TİKA's covering area. One may argue that the activity center of TİKA, which primarily serves the Turkish republics, has expanded to include Africa and the Middle East as a result of the process that began during this time. In Central Asia, Türkiye's present rise in international prominence and organization through TIKA and an agency was less necessary. These explanations helped to explain Türkiye's shift toward the Middle East and Africa. The Turcology Project was TİKA's most significant regionally-focused study on cultural collaboration.

TİKA has established 18 new departments of turcology and improved the infrastructure of the ones that already existed in Kosovo, 14 other nations, and 3 autonomous republics. The Timur Great Timurid Empire constructed the mausoleum of Khoja Ahmed Yasawi in 1389. The Republic of Türkiye took over the complex's restoration, which began in 1993 as a result of a deal reached between the states and Kazakhstan. The mausoleum was designated as a world heritage site after renovations were completed with TİKA competence during Öner Kabasakal's presidency. (H. Murat Terzi Ocak 2013) In 1993, TİKA launched its first Program Coordination Office in Bishkek, and its second office in Ashgabat. Ayhan Nuri Yimaz, one of the writers and experts brought from Türkiye, has conducted studies in

the areas of local institutions and has worked for the new system to the country's integration. During this period, the office of Kyrgyzstan has spent a great deal of time on this article and many other life projects. Since their opening, these offices have completed 86 projects. The legal position of the TIKA office was established by the agreement on TIKA's activities in the Kyrgyz Republic 05.09.2006 PVO, which was signed by the governments of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Türkiye. The Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency, or TIKA, has been carrying out successful initiatives in Kyrgyzstan since 1992. These programs cover a broad variety of areas, such as communication, cultural cooperation, emergency relief, and humanitarian aid. The progress and welfare of the nation have been greatly impacted by these initiatives. 117 of the total projects have improved healthcare; 166 have improved educational facilities; 180 have focused on various infrastructure and related services; 40 have water supply and hygiene; 40 have production-related initiatives; and 180 have economic infrastructure and services. Furthermore, fourteen projects have been officially recognized as emergency response and humanitarian aid initiatives, indicating TIKA's dedication to provide prompt support in times of need. By means of its extensive project portfolio, TIKA has been instrumental in promoting advancement, enhancing quality of life, and fortifying bilateral relations between Türkiye and Kyrgyzstan (TİKA.org 2018).

On October 25, 2017, Türkiye and the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan signed an Operations Agreement determining the legal position of TIKA as the Coordination Agency of the Republic of Uzbekistan and Turkish International Cooperation. TİKA has provided training demonstrations in various domains. One of these categories is health. TIKA has helped hospitals by giving them supplies like medical equipment. Apart from these services, TIKA also offered medical professionals training. For instance, on 18.11.2002 and 01.12.2002, cardiologists and surgeons at Gazi University trained physicians from Uzbekistan. Similar prospects exist in other regions as in Türkiye. A contract of understanding signed in 1995 established TİKA Dushanbe Program Coordinator, but the civil conflict forced it to cease operations in 1996. With the signing of the five-year "Technical Cooperation Protocol" in 2000, it resumed operations. With a ceremony, TIKA gave harvesting machines to Tajikistan's Minister of Agriculture, Tursunboy Rahmatov. In addition to preventing issues like unemployment, these activities support the growth of the agricultural sector in the area.

Obtaining potable water in certain parts of Central Asia is crucial, yet not as challenging as it is in Africa. On March 16, 1993, the Government of the Republic of Turkmenistan and the Government of the Republic of Türkiye signed the Development Cooperation Agreement. The mausoleum of the Seljuk Sultan Sencer in Merv, Turkmenistan, was renovated by the TİKA. Minister of State Beşir Atalay attended the tomb's November 14, 2004 opening. This was actually a hint of things to come for TIKA, which focuses mostly on technical education and projects. In the years that followed, many more of these cultural restoration projects were carried out, mostly in the Balkans. Additionally, 23 countries sent 79 scientists to the International Sultan Sencer Symposium. Probably the most extensive Sultan Sencer symposium to date, this one was arranged with the help of TİKA. Sultan Sencer's expression of the most significant emblem of the two nations' shared history gave this action far more significance in terms of its consequences. The effect of soft power in Central Asian nations can be strengthened by utilizing a variety of historical characters. Without a doubt, Türkiye will make use of these in the future.

The development assistance initiatives of TIKA have been crucial in enhancing Türkiye's reputation overseas. The primary goals of TIKA's development assistance initiatives are to give developing nations financial and technical support. TIKA has carried on projects in a number of fields, including infrastructure, agriculture, education, and health. In addition to fostering goodwill toward Türkiye, these projects have improved the lives of those in the recipient nations (Akıllı, 2019).

Africa, the Balkans, and Central Asia have seen the most results from TIKA's development assistance initiatives. For example, TIKA has carried out projects to develop schools and hospitals in Kosovo, roads and bridges in Kyrgyzstan, and clean water supplies for communities in Somalia and Burkina Faso. These initiatives have improved Türkiye's soft power in these areas and contributed to the development of favorable opinions of Türkiye in these nations (Akıllı, 2019).

Moreover, Turkish culture has been greatly aided by TIKA's development assistance projects outside. Throughout the world, TIKA has supported a wide range of cultural events, including music concerts, film festivals, and art exhibitions. According to Akıllı and Çelenk (2019), these events have served as a venue for Turkish artists and intellectuals to engage with peers from other nations, while also showcasing Turkish culture and art.

TIKA has been instrumental in advancing Turkish language awareness outside in addition to its promotion of Turkish culture. In many nations, especially in Central Asia, where the Turkish language has historical and cultural significance, TIKA has set up Turkish language schools and institutes. The Turkish language and culture have benefited from the promotion of these language schools and centers, which has increased Türkiye's impact in these areas.

The development assistance initiatives of TIKA have been crucial in elevating Türkiye's standing internationally and advancing its soft power. TIKA has contributed to the development of goodwill toward Türkiye by aiding underdeveloped nations and advancing Turkish language and culture. But TIKA has a number of obstacles to overcome when putting its plans into action. For instance, TIKA's ability to carry out projects successfully has been hampered by a shortage of personnel and resources. Furthermore, TIKA's initiatives have occasionally come under fire for being opaque and unaccountable (Akıllı and Çelenk, 2019).

3.5.2. The International Turkish Cultural Organization (TÜRKSOY)

TÜRKSOY was founded by an agreement between the ministers of culture of Turkmenistan and Türkiye in 1993 with the goals of strengthening Turkish unity and brotherhood, preserving Turkish culture for future generations, and introducing Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan to the world (TURKSOY 2010). The agency currently has eight observer members in addition to its founding members. The presence of members from non-independent states is significant. It might be interpreted as a sign that this organization is capable of building relationships with individuals as well as with the state. Another crucial element is relationships with groups that, while not part of a Turkish State, are situated along the Turkishness axis historically and culturally.

Its initial name throughout the founding process was Turkish Culture and Arts Associated Management. It is given the name International Turkish Cultural Organization after reaching consensus. Düsen Kaseinov has represented Kazakhstan as the General Secretary of TÜRKSOY since 2008. TÜRKSOY organizes regular activities such as painting meetings, opera days, and literary congresses to promote the sharing of experiences between Turkish scientists and artists.

The promotion and international celebration of Nevruz, a shared holiday of the Turkish world, has been one of TÜRKSOY's most remarkable accomplishments. The group actively participates in initiatives to support Turkish culture and fortify ties within the Turkish community. Selecting the memorial years for significant figures in Turkish history who worked in the fields of art, science, culture, etc., is one of the customs. In honor of the individuals chosen for the memorial year, symposiums, scientific gatherings, and creative gatherings are planned; textual and visual materials are also provided. The relationships between people who speak Turkish and the growth of Turkish culture and art will both benefit from these activities. The implementation of the Turkish World Cultural Capitals is one of TÜRKSOY's other noteworthy initiatives. In the chosen cities of the Turkish World, memorial programs, city-specific events, concerts, theater productions, exhibitions, etc. are produced. Its goal is to let people socialize and get to know one another from all around the Turkic World. Cities' cultural and artistic life is enhanced by this project's vibrant additions. In 2018, Kastamonu was chosen to be the capital of culture. (Anadolu Agency, 2018) A survey of the locations selected to represent the Turkish World as its Capital of Culture reveals that the choices are precise and span a large geographic area. While TÜRKSOY operations mostly focus on fresh research, some studies are also conducted by incorporating Turkish culture perspective into already completed cultural studies. The Türkvizyon song contest is the best illustration of this. In 2012, Türkiye made the decision to leave the Eurovision song contest, while Turkish-speaking states were still able to participate thanks to the TRT's organization holding an international song contest. One could argue that this was intended as a response to and alternative to the Eurovision song contest. In actuality, these contests took place in Eskişehir, which was named the Turkish World Culture Capital in 2013 and began to take place as part of the Cultural Capitals' events (Sevin 2015).

TÜRKSOY, a well-known institution devoted to the arts and culture, leads outstanding projects that go beyond national boundaries. One of TÜRKSOY's noteworthy undertakings is the curation of special initiatives that honor the diverse range of arts and culture. For example, it conducted the world premiere of Mersin Uzeyir Hajibeyov's enthralling opera Koroglu, whose entrancing melodies captivated audiences in six countries. In a revolutionary achievement, TÜRKSOY brought Mukan Tölebayev's captivating opera "Birju and Sara" to Türkiye's esteemed opera repertoire, leaving a lasting impression on the country's cultural landscape. Additionally, the group coordinated the magnificent rendition of Adnan Saygun's Yunus Emre Oratorio, which assembled a chorus of gifted musicians

from nine nations, including Türkiye and the United States, for an astounding display of harmony and unity. These significant cross-cultural interactions are a prime example of TÜRKSOY's constant dedication to promoting appreciation and understanding of other cultures. Through the smooth integration of international cooperation with artistic brilliance, TÜRKSOY breaks down barriers, improves lives, and highlights the rich cultural histories of the member countries. By means of these initiatives, TÜRKSOY fosters an international forum for artistic discourse, intercultural communication, and the development of a more profound appreciation for the arts among various populations. Asılyazıcı, Hayati (2014). At the European Choral Games, TÜRKSOY Youth Chamber Orchestra took home three gold medals. Among TÜRKSOY's notable musical achievements are the TÜRKSOY Youth Chamber Orchestra and TÜRKSOY Folk Instrument Orchestra, which were established to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Turkish Republics' independence. Participants in these orchestras and choruses are from Central Asian nations. Under the name Türksoy Publications, TÜRKSOY founded a publishing house where a large number of writers and poets from the Turkish Republics of Central Asia published their works together with academic research on historical and cultural topics. He writes about his efforts and features news from the Turkish world in a periodical magazine called "TÜRKSOY: International Turkish Culture Organization Turkish World Culture and Art Magazine." Together with numerous international organizations like the Turkic Council, 108 Turkish Academies, 109 Turkish Culture and Heritage Foundation, and ISESCO 112, TÜRKSOY collaborates with numerous municipalities, universities, and NGOs organizations. Even though the institution's focus is mostly on culture and the arts, political unrest occasionally has an impact on it. The pressure exerted by the Russian government to sever ties between TÜRKSOY member countries and the institution during the aircraft issue with Russia is the most evident illustration of this.

Türkiye's heightened attention to the area and its attempts to use sports diplomacy to showcase its cultural and political power. Every two years, the Nomad Games showcase classic Central Asian sports including eagle hunting, traditional wrestling, and horseback archery. In 2018, the Third Nomad Games were held in Türkiye, with participation from more than 1,500 athletes representing 80 countries. The occasion was a huge success, bringing attention to Türkiye's initiatives in Central Asia to strengthen its soft power. (Türkiye uses Nomad Games to increase soft power in Central Asia, Ertan, 2022). Türkiye's involvement in the region stems from its strategic objectives, which encompass enhancing

its political and economic connections with Central Asian nations. The Nomad Games have developed into a significant venue for advancing Türkiye's cultural legacy and bolstering ties with the area.

Türkiye's broader regional influence plan heavily relies on its strategic pursuit of soft power in Central Asia. Türkiye's significant investments in Central Asian nations, which include loans and economic assistance, demonstrate the country's dedication to promoting prosperity and sustainable development in the area. In parallel, Türkiye has been working hard to strengthen its educational and cultural ties to Central Asia by setting up Turkish language schools and cultural institutions, which has helped to build stronger ties.

However, Türkiye faces significant obstacles in its efforts to strengthen its soft power in Central Asia. Notably, the existence of rival regional powers like China and Russia complicates Türkiye's efforts and may give rise to rivalry sentiments. The endeavor to spread Türkiye's soft power across the area, as evidenced by the captivating Nomad Games and other cultural and athletic events, has been highly successful. But maneuvering across the complex geopolitical terrain of Central Asia requires shrewd diplomacy, especially as Türkiye strives to impart its priceless knowledge and advise these nations based on its own experience there. Significantly, Turkic cultural institutions such as the Turkic Council and Türksoy have become essential agents in advancing cultural diplomacy and strengthening the soft power of the Turkic people. Through the promotion of cultural interaction, conversation, and the amplification of the common heritage across Turkic nations, these groups successfully convey a cohesive message that transcends national boundaries. Their efforts also play a major role in strengthening the Turkic world's soft power, enabling the strengthening of linkages across communities and creating a feeling of shared identity.

The use of cultural resources to advance a nation's interests and reputation abroad is known as cultural diplomacy. Cultural diplomacy has played a crucial role in augmenting the soft power of the Turkic region. TÜRKSOY is an international organization that was founded in 1993 with the goal of advancing Turkic art and culture. In order to promote Turkic culture and art, TÜRKSOY has put in place a number of initiatives, including the planning of cultural events including festivals, concerts, and exhibitions (Akıllı, 2019).

A regional intergovernmental organization, the Turkic Council was founded in 2009 with the goal of strengthening political and economic cooperation among Turkic-speaking

nations. Among its member states, the Turkic Council has also played a significant role in advancing cultural diplomacy. The group has carried out a number of initiatives to support Turkic art and culture, such as setting up cultural hubs and planning events. Reciprocity is the foundation of the transactional character of cultural diplomacy in the Turkic world. Thus, it is believed that member states can advance their political and economic objectives by using cultural diplomacy as a tool. To encourage political and economic cooperation among member states, TÜRKSOY and the Turkic Council have established cultural diplomacy projects (Akıllı, 2019).

For example, TÜRKSOY has collaborated with the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA) to carry out a number of cultural diplomacy initiatives. The aims of these projects have been to strengthen economic cooperation among member states and to promote Turkic culture and art. In order to advance Turkic art and culture internationally, TÜRKSOY has also collaborated with other international institutions like UNESCO. In a similar vein, the Turkic Council has carried out a number of cultural diplomacy initiatives to advance political and economic cooperation among its member nations. In addition to organizing cultural events including festivals, concerts, and exhibitions, the organization has built cultural centers in each of its member nations. These initiatives have aided in advancing Turkish art and culture as well as member states' political and economic relations. (Akıllı, 2019). But there have also been a number of difficulties with the transactional character of cultural diplomacy in the Turkic region. Concerns have been raised, for example, over the member states' uneven benefit sharing. A number of member states have expressed disapproval of Türkiye's hegemony in cultural diplomacy initiatives and have demanded increased involvement and representation in these initiatives (Akıllı, 2019).

TÜRKSOY and the Turkic Council have been instrumental in advancing cultural diplomacy and strengthening the Turkic world's soft power. Based on the principle of reciprocity, transactional cultural diplomacy has played a significant role in fostering political and economic cooperation amongst member states in the area. But there are issues that need to be resolved, like the uneven dispersion of advantages among the member states. To increase the region's influence in the international society, the Turkic world must keep funding cultural diplomacy initiatives (Akıllı, 2019).

3.5.3. The Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB)

On April 6, 2010, the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities was established. Turkish nationals residing overseas make up the Presidency's initial research group. The Presidency is responsible for organizing research conducted domestically or overseas and creating plans for Turkish nationals who have relocated overseas for a variety of reasons over the years. In order to make the services provided effective and efficient, the Presidency of Turks Abroad and Relative Communities (YTB) has taken on the task of coordinating the various services provided by various institutions for various groups of citizens and relatives in accordance with this fundamental goal. The other area of study under the Presidency is forming international student bodies by extending invitations to them to come and study in Türkiye. It has taken on responsibilities that are thought suitable for seeking scholarships in Türkiye in order to ascertain the guidelines for managing an effective educational process and after international students learn alongside one another, such as maintaining the relationship. As non-governmental organizations, three other areas are supported and integrated as the last working area of the Presidency. They give Turkish citizens the opportunity to take an active role in society and keep their connections with Türkiye in all spheres of life, supporting their endeavors to be successful. In accordance with the particular requirements and priority areas specified in financial support programs, the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB Presidency) conscientiously provides assistance to a wide range of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) throughout different nations and regions. An astounding 73 states and areas have received funding as a consequence of this extensive commitment. As of 2014, the YTB Presidency had allocated 217,950,000 Turkish Lira to Kyrgyzstan, 130,815.000 Turkish Lira to Kazakhstan, and 192,000.000 Turkish Lira to the wider Central Asian region, demonstrating its commitment to the cause. The YTB Presidency actively fosters connections and works to enhance communities through these focused initiatives, encouraging cooperation and strengthening the ties that bind Türkiye with its broad worldwide network (YTB 2015).

A nation's culture, political ideals, foreign policy, level of education, media, and promotional initiatives constitute its public diplomacy resources. The "İpekyolu Cities Poetry Line Project" is one of the Central Asian-focused initiatives that YTB is supporting. The initiative seeks to unite scholars, cultural figures, poets, writers, and artists from Silk Road nations including Iran, Uzbekistan, East Turkestan, and China (East Turkestan). The

goal of the study was to print 100 poetry volumes and 1000 CDs (YTB 2015). The 4th International Turkish World Economy Form was another group that received sponsorship from YTB. The forum was held in collaboration with Hitit University with the aim of bringing together Turkish scientists to generate knowledge and ideas, as well as to support the growth and tactics of Turkish communities across the board (YTB 2015). The 3rd Turkish World International Culture Congress: Dede Korkut and the Turkish World Project, led by the Turkish World Research Institute at Ege University, are comparable initiatives. (YTB 2015). International Students Social Sciences Congresses are one of YTB's scientific events.

This congress sought to improve the academic standing of foreign students studying Turkish and to provide Türkiye Academy with the means to pursue extensive research in the field of Social Sciences and Turkish culture through the support of foreign students from diverse backgrounds and civilizations. 99 applications were received for the First Congress in Türkiye, which took place on May 16–17, 2015, at Hacettepe University. This included collaboration with 70 other universities and 29 universities from abroad that sent international students representing 37 different nationalities and social science disciplines. Over the course of two days, 100 papers were given in simultaneous sessions as reports from those sessions. Kazakhstan had 50 applications (participants), Kyrgyzstan had 35, Uzbekistan had 19, Tajikistan had 1, and Turkmenistan had 3 applications. These countries were present at the congress (YTB 2015).

In collaboration with Necmettin Erbakan University, the 2nd International Students Social Sciences Congress took place on April 29–30, 2016, and the 3rd International Students Social Sciences Congress took place on December 2-3, 2017 in conjunction with the Scientific Studies Association (İLEM). Nevşehir Hacı Bektaş Veli University will host the 4th International Students Social Sciences Congress, which will take place between November 22 and 24, 2018, in collaboration with İLEM. The "Türkiye-Kazakhstan Ahmet Yesevi from Past to Present Civilization Bridge Project" consists of a number of training sessions and symposiums that have taken place in both Türkiye and Kazakhstan. In 2016, 20 students from Türkiye were admitted to Kazakhstan for summer language programs as part of the project. Nine Ahmet Yesevi University students finished their studies in Türkiye. At Ahmet Yesevi University, a group of sixteen academics arranged a number of symposiums in May 2017. III. The Turkish World University Youth Summer School project aims to raise

awareness of shared history, culture, and civilization. It is organized in partnership with YTB and Ahmet Yesevi University. About 600 students from the Turkish world and related communities participated in seminars and cultural excursion programs held in Turkestan, Kazakhstan, as part of the project's scope. In 2017, 40 students from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Mongolia in Türkiye received vocational training in the Holy Koran from Future Youth Project.

The Alumni YTB initiative is a significant research initiative carried out in Türkiye. The goal of this project is to stay in touch with the Central Asian Republic-based students who finished their training in Türkiye. In this setting, alumni and alumni groups have joined forces to create the event in Türkiye as well as a number of initiatives in their respective nations. The section "Student Exchange Programs and Educational Institutions - Analysis of the Outgoing Process from the Major Student Project (BÖP) to the Presidency of Turks Abroad and Relative Communities (YTB)" has comprehensive information on this topic. YTB should, first and foremost, be reachable. There are just two languages available on the institution's official website: Turkish and English. The languages spoken in the region need to be taken into consideration when thinking about Central Asia. The official regional documents of the institutions are closely linked to their public diplomacy activities, but they are not easily accessible. The institution's official website does not include statistics on the number of children who arrived whereabouts, the percentage of students who attend according to region, or the total amount of money spent on regional costs associated with all of these activities. This complicates looking up and comparing activities. This information is only available as of 2014.

3.5.4. The Yunus Emre Institution

Law No. 5653, which went into effect on May 5, 2007, created the Yunus Emre Institute, a public foundation with a distinct purpose. Its main goal is to bring Türkiye and its rich history, language, culture, and art to the attention of the world. The organization hopes to help the entire planet by disseminating pertinent information and priceless resources. Additionally, it offers its services overseas to people who are interested in learning about Turkish language, culture, and art. The foundation's efforts also include building bridges and promoting cultural exchanges between Türkiye and other countries. The Yunus Emre Institution actively supports the development of respect, understanding, and

collaboration amongst many cultures around the world by promoting these exchanges. (https://www.yee.org.tr/sites/default/files/yayin/yee_2019_v2_31122020.pdf) The Yunus Emre Institute supports Turkish language instruction and Turcology departments by working with educational institutions across the globe in addition to providing instruction in Turkish inside its cultural centers. The cultural institutions, which hold a variety of events to highlight Türkiye's rich history, are essential in fostering Turkish culture and art. To further increase its international awareness, Türkiye's cultural presence is represented in both national and international events. The institute's founding in 2009 was a major turning point in the growth of Turkish language instruction and use. As of right now, the Yunus Emre Institute runs 55 cultural centers in 38 nations. Notably, with its cultural hub situated in Astana, Kazakhstan is the only representative nation among the Central Asian nations. The lack of cultural centers in other Central Asian nations, where people have strong language and cultural ties, can be seen as a lost opportunity, despite the institute's admirable efforts. Nevertheless, the institute keeps up its aggressive promotion of Turkish language and culture, which promotes cross-cultural dialogue and comprehension.

The fact that the Institute is only situated in one of these nations, where sister peoples who are most similar to one another in terms of language and culture exist, could be seen as a weakness. The organization will be a significant step in closing this gap in Central Asia. Its goal is to achieve 100 cultural centers worldwide by 2023. Of them, Kazakhstan is the only Central Asian nation having a location, and Astana is home to the sole cultural center. The fact that the Institute is only situated in one of these nations, where there are individuals who share the same origin language and culture and are in close relationships, could be seen as a weakness. The organization will be a significant step in closing this gap in Central Asia. Its goal is to achieve 100 cultural centers worldwide by 2023. The selection of locations for similar language and cultural institutes is influenced by the influence of the host nation. The lone location of the Yunus Emre Institute is in Astana, Central Kazakhstan. As a component of the ambitious "Kemankeş Project," which is being carried out in collaboration with the Archers Foundation and the Yunus Emre Institute, Türkiye has opened Turkish Archery Courses in Astana, Kazakhstan's energetic capital. Through this initiative, three committed Kazakh educators have received training in Türkiye, which has made it possible for the Alatau Sports Palace to be established. About forty classes have been introduced in its sacred halls, inviting ardent Kazakh students who are eager to learn Turkish archery. For those who finish the program successfully, the climax of these courses offers a highly sought-after

opportunity: the possibility to go on an unforgettable summer school adventure in Türkiye. This all-encompassing experience aims to open up new perspectives, enhance their comprehension of Turkish culture, and create enduring relationships.

The Yunus Emre Institute shown an impressive level of dedication by actively participating in the Kyrgyzstan EXPO Tourism Fair. They grabbed the opportunity to draw attention to their admirable purpose and the priceless cultural assets that Türkiye has to offer with contagious passion. This lively interaction demonstrated the Institute's commitment to promoting international understanding and creating strong ties between Türkiye and Kyrgyzstan. (Yunus Emre İnternet Haberleri yöntemleri 2021). At the Kyrgyzstan EXPO Tourism Fair, Yunus Emre Institute took part and promoted themselves. (Yunus Emre İnternet Haberleri yöntemleri 2021). One could argue that this is the initial phase of the process to establish a center in Kyrgyzstan.

3.5.5. The Presidency of Religious Affairs (TDV)

The indigenous populations of all five of the countries under consideration are Sunni Muslims. Türkiye has a mission in this region in this regard. This purpose is to create and train religious authorities in order to provide spaces for individuals to live out their beliefs and to be well-informed in a region where religion was outlawed for almost 70 years. At this time, another Turkish public diplomacy organization has been involved. It's the Directorate of Religious Affairs (TDV). This was also demonstrated through the amendments introduced to the institutional structure of the TDV. Although the Presidency of Religious Affairs previously functioned as a position reporting to the deputy prime minister, an amendment in 2014 brought it under the prime minister, which was seen as a component of religious diplomacy (Yılmaz and Kılıçoğlu 2016). In fact, the movement of workers to Europe has been the driving force for TDV to expand outside its mandate. Central Asia and the Balkans entered the framework of the struggle after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The Presidency of Religious Affairs, which has established a Religious Services Consultancy, operates in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan. There is a Religious Services Attaché Office in the Consulate General of Kazakhstan in Almaty. There is a religious services coordinator in Osh, Kyrgyzstan. The Kazakh mosque was built by the Turkish Religious Foundation. These divergences, which

are related to Türkiye's position and influence in the respective countries, can be attributed to the restrictions imposed by the laws in force as well as the attitudes of these countries towards Türkiye since there are a number of mosques built by the Turkish Religious Foundation. These mosques include Belbulak (Micurin), Talgar, Khoja Ahmet Yesevi and its complex, and Khoja Ahmet Yesevi (Nikolayevka). All five mosques receive human resources support from the foundation. (Ünal, 2013). Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan, is home to the Religious Services Consultancy of the Presidency of Religious Affairs, while Osh serves as the headquarters of the Religious Services Coordinatorship. The construction of mosques in Kyrgyzstan is carried out by the Turkish Religious Foundation. The Foundation helps public religious services by placing around 20 religious officials in mosques in this country (Ünal, 2013). In addition to religious services, the Directorate of Religious Affairs also offers educational programs. In cooperation with the Ministry of National Education, it opens and operates Imam Hatip High Schools and the Faculty of Theology. Accordingly, Kyrgyzstan opened an Imam Hatip High School in 2013-2014. This school educated 81 Kyrgyz students in 2014 and 2015 (Ünal 2013). Each year, a certain number of students are selected to be stationed in Türkiye to complete their Qur'an courses and Imam Hatip High School education. In this context, eighty students were stationed in 2014 (Ünal 2013). The Religious Affairs Foundation maintains a faculty of theology in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. It would be safe to assume that the awareness of the Kyrgyz people on religious issues would yield more benefits than the direct initiative of the Turkish authorities to provide support and guidance to the entrepreneurs of Kyrgyz religious institutions for the continuation of the services to be carried out in these institutions.

Yilmaz's recommendations, which were tailored for Kyrgyzstan especially, apply to all of Central Asia. Appointed as a consultant in 2013, Mustafa Sinanoğlu served for six months before leaving without being accredited and returning to Türkiye. In 2012, it reopened, and Emrullah Kaya began to work there. There are no mosques, establishments, services, or designated personnel. In this regard, Provincial Mufti Offices designate a city overseas as a twin city and sponsor the research there with the campaigns they conduct in their provinces (TDİB 2015). By taking out the idea to a higher level in 2006, it realized Twin City Projects. In this particular context, the Darül Erkam Quran Course and Mosque in Shymkent, Kazakhstan, were constructed with financial assistance from the Çorum Mufti Office. Once more, Hoca Ahmet Yesevi Mosque benefited from the Ankara Müftülüğü (TDİB 2015). Karabük, Çankırı, and Kyrgyzstan all have city brotherhoods. The Office of

the Çankırı Mufti gave cash support to the Bishkek Central Mosque in 2008. Similar to this, the Karabuk Mufti Office gave cash assistance to a mosque in Celalabad in 2013 (TDİB 2015). The Tajikistani Dushanbe Central Mosque was repaired in part by the Çanakkale Mufti.

TDV's Educational projects: Among TDV's primary soft power strategies in Central Asia was the implementation of educational projects. TDV brought high-quality education with a focus on moral and religious principles to the area by establishing a number of schools, colleges, and universities. In addition to giving Central Asian students access to higher education, these educational establishments promoted social and cultural exchanges between TÜRKİYE and Central Asia. TDV fostered goodwill within the community and developed human capital by making educational investments. (TDİB, 2015).

Religious and Cultural interchange: Religious and cultural interchange was a major component of TDV's operations in Central Asia. In order to foster communication and understanding between people of different faiths and cultural backgrounds, it arranged conferences, seminars, and cultural events. By means of these endeavors, TDV promoted the exchange of religious and cultural insights, cultivating a feeling of solidarity between the Central Asian nations and Türkiye. Through sharing knowledge and insights, Türkiye strengthened its soft power in the area and improved its reputation as a welcoming and accepting culture. (TDİB, 2015).

Humanitarian help: The provision of humanitarian help was a key component of TDV's soft power strategies in Central Asia. TDV started development programs to address socioeconomic difficulties, supplied food and medical supplies, and offered support during natural catastrophes. Through providing assistance and backing to the nearby towns, TDV exhibited Türkiye's dedication to the welfare of the people of Central Asia. In addition to improving the recipients' quality of life, this humanitarian aid increased Türkiye's standing as a kind and trustworthy ally. (TDİB, 2015).

Capacity Building: Another aspect of TDV's soft power strategies was the development of Central Asian nations' capacities. It set up courses that provided preachers, imams, and religious leaders with the information and abilities required for their positions. TDV sought to advance a moderate and inclusive perspective of Islam by supporting institutional capacity building within Central Asian religious organizations. By reducing

radicalization and extremism, these initiatives improved regional stability and strengthened Türkiye's soft power clout. (TDİB, 2015).

The Türkiye Diyanet Foundation's operations in Central Asian nations from 2002 to 2023 showed a thorough approach to soft power strategies. Through capacity building, humanitarian help, religious and cultural exchange, and educational programs, TDV successfully increased Türkiye's impact in the area. Through establishing long-lasting ties between TÜRKİYE Türkiye and Central Asian countries, TDV invested in the development of human capital, promoted cultural understanding, and provided aid during times of need, thereby contributing to the socio-economic growth of the region. By strengthening its reputation as a kind and dependable ally, these soft power strategies helped Türkiye solidify its place as a major actor in Central Asia. (TDİB, 2015). However, between 2002 and 2023, the Türkiye Diyanet Foundation (TDV) constructed a number of mosques in Central Asia. The Hoca Ahmet Yesevi Mosque in Turkistan, Kazakhstan, is a symbol of the close cultural and religious links between TÜRKİYE and Kazakhstan. It is named after the well-known Turkic poet and philosopher Ahmet Yesevi. Tajikistan's main city, Dushanbe, is home to the Dushanbe Mosque. One of TDV's accomplishments is the building of this mosque. The mosque is a significant site of worship for the Muslim community in the area. Almaty Mosque, Almaty, Kazakhstan: TDV aided in the building of this mosque, which is situated in Almaty, Kazakhstan. In the area, the mosque is a prominent religious and cultural monument. (TDİB, 2015). TDV has provided construction assistance for the building of a mosque located in Osh, Kyrgyzstan. The local Muslim community can congregate at this mosque for communal events and prayers. Khujand Mosque, Khujand, Tajikistan: Another project undertaken by TDV is building a mosque in Khujand, Tajikistan. The Khujand Mosque is a significant place of worship and cultural hub for the Muslim community in the area. The Religious Affairs Department is shipping religious literature, pamphlets, and the like to Central Asian nations, with a focus on the Qur'an. In Central Asian geography, it may be generally concluded that the Diyanet Foundation and the Presidency of Religious Affairs are successful and effective Ünal (2013).

3.5.6. Education

The significance of foreign education for Türkiye's soft power strategy and its impact on the country's global participation cannot be overstated. Türkiye's soft power strategy has

made international education an increasingly essential tool, allowing the country to project its cultural and educational values onto the rest of the world. Türkiye has been making significant investments in international education initiatives, such as the Yunus Emre Institute, which promotes Turkish language and culture outside, and the Türkiye Scholarships program, which offers financial aid to foreign students to attend Turkish colleges. (Gültekin, 2019). Additionally, Gültekin points out that Türkiye's soft power strategy can benefit from international education in a number of ways. First of all, it improves Türkiye's reputation abroad by portraying it as a contemporary, liberal nation that promotes cross-cultural learning and interaction. Second, it establishes a network of former students who support Türkiye's interests in their home nations and have a favorable opinion of the country. Thirdly, it contributes to the development of interpersonal relationships and the fortification of Türkiye's diplomatic and commercial links abroad. (Gültekin, 2019). Gültekin does, however, also draw attention to a few drawbacks and difficulties with Türkiye's foreign education initiatives. First and foremost, there are issues with the standard of instruction at Turkish universities and the employability of graduates from other countries. Second, linguistic and cultural hurdles could reduce foreign students' interest in Turkish colleges. Thirdly, other nations that are funding international education initiatives compete with Türkiye. (Gültekin, 2019)

International education has the potential to improve Türkiye's standing internationally and foster interpersonal relationships, but it also highlights the obstacles and constraints that the country must overcome in this area.

Student exchange programs are essential for fostering international understanding between nations. Nations acquire respect as a result of students returning and taking on diverse roles as prospective friends, which raises the subject's significance. The fact that student exchange programs entice international students to enroll outside of them makes them noteworthy economically as well.

Türkiye Scholarships are considered as Türkiye's nominal new international student programs for the 2012–13 academic year. The two scholarship programs were reexamined with a strategic vision of merging the outcomes of implementations. The Great Student Project started out with participation from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, which made up five countries. Later on, though, it broadened its scope to include

57 states and towns. The project was started by the General Directorate of Abroad Education and Training, Ministry of National Education, with the aim of developing a generation that could support the democratic transition and create long-lasting relationships with the Turkish World.

Up till the 2011–12 academic year, Türkiye allotted 42,318 scholarship quotas in support of this objective. Only 31,307 of these scholarships were ever used, though. 6,255 pupils are still enrolled in school, while 8,914 students have graduated successfully within the project's parameters. This translates to a graduation rate of about 28%. The accomplishments of the 8,914 graduates of this project represent a noteworthy contribution to Türkiye and show the benefits of establishing enduring relationships within the Turkish World and a generation-friendly mindset. (Goç Raporu, Türkiye, 2016)

Programs for student exchanges are arguably the most important component of educational activities. This is due to the fact that students who relocate abroad to pursue their higher education do so for an extended length of time, giving them the opportunity to become familiar with the customs and societal framework of the host nation. Students who study abroad acquire favorable experiences and perceptions that progressively deepen their empathy for the host nation and its citizens. 5,378 foreign students were enrolled in Turkish universities in 1983; that number rose to 55,000 in 2014; in the academic year 2015–2016, that number rose to 81,499 students. As of 2016, there were 14,180 students from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan among the 81,499 foreign students enrolled at our university (YÖK, 2017). Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan are just a few of the countries that benefit from the tremendous support of the Undergraduate Scholarship Program for Turkic Speaking Countries. This program acts as a lighthouse of opportunity, providing pathways to higher education in Türkiye for aspirant students from these countries. In a stunning show of energy and aspiration, about 3,900 applications applied in 2013 to be among the select few chosen to begin their academic career in Türkiye under the guidance of this prestigious program. This overwhelming reaction is indicative of both the lasting attraction of Türkiye as a center of education and the innate desire of young people from Turkic-speaking nations to learn new things, widen their perspectives, and advance their countries' development. (Er, 2012).

Türkiye Scholarships has been given a big role in relation to Türkiye's historical and cultural obligations in the modern era, in addition to its main goals of fostering internationalization and achieving global standards in higher education. The program plays a vital role in maintaining the cultural cornerstone of the Alliance of Civilizations project, a notion that former Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu and Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan have highlighted firmly. Türkiye Scholarships actively supports the implementation of this objective by giving gifted people from all over the world access to educational opportunities. This fosters collaboration and understanding across cultures and encourages communication between other civilizations. This illustrates Türkiye's dedication to using educational diplomacy to create a more welcoming and peaceful international community. (Öztürk, 2014). In order to manage this crucial sector, the Türkiye Alumni Coordinatorship was established in recognition of the significance of cultivating relationships with Türkiye alumni. There are 160 Türkiye Alumni Associations in total, and they are all actively involved in different activities. To provide the management of these associations with the skills and expertise they need, special training programs were held. Alumni reunions were also regularly held in Türkiye as well as in the nations or regions where the students were studying in order to strengthen the ties they had made there. One particularly noteworthy gathering, which offered a forum for alumni to re-connect, fortify existing ties, and exchange stories, was in Almaty on June 6, 2017. The creation of the Türkiye Alumni Coordinatorship is a testament to Türkiye's dedication to upholding enduring connections with its alumni community and utilizing their networks and experience for reciprocal development and cooperation.

3.5.7. Turkish Media

The media has become a potent tool for empowering and reshaping societies in the modern world. Its impact is felt in many facets of our life, educating people, creating viewpoints, and assisting in the making of decisions regarding a broad variety of topics. The media is an important instrument that helps shape public opinion by giving the general public access to information. Notably, the abrupt explosion in popularity of Turkish television dramas during the late 1980s brought about a revolutionary shift in the global interest in Turkish popular culture. This was a momentous period for the widespread global exportation

of Turkish cultural manifestations, as Turkish cultural content gained enormous momentum in nearby Balkan and Middle Eastern countries.

Turkish soft power media tools are the different communication and media related tactics used by TÜRKİYE to project its image, increase its influence, and mold perceptions around the world. These instruments make use of media channels and content to create favorable perceptions, promote comprehension, and establish relationships with global audiences. Turkish soft power media tools include the following:

TV Series: Turkish television shows, referred to as "dizis," have become quite well-liked throughout the Middle East, North Africa, and the Balkans. These shows frequently provide insights into Turkish society values, history, and culture, promoting intercultural understanding and establishing links between other cultures.

Cinema and Films: Another media that supports soft power is Turkish cinema, both historical and contemporary. Global audiences are introduced to Turkish cinematic talent and storytelling through international film festivals, film screenings, and partnerships with international filmmakers.

Turkish News Agencies and Media Outlets: These entities contribute to the dissemination of the nation's viewpoints on international affairs. TÜRKİYE can improve its credibility and influence by presenting factual and impartial news that shapes its narratives and image.

Digital Platforms and Social Media: Online content and social media platforms are essential tools for soft power in the digital age. Turkish government agencies, groups, and people interact with audiences worldwide by sharing information and cultural content on social media sites including Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter.

Documentaries and Cultural Events: Showcasing TÜRKİYE's accomplishments, history, customs, and scenic beauty through documentaries and cultural events can bolster the nation's soft power. An improved understanding of Turkish culture and values is facilitated by these programs.

Public Diplomacy Initiatives: TÜRKİYE's positive traits and initiatives are intended to be showcased globally through public diplomacy campaigns that include advertising,

videos, and promotional content. The goal of these advertisements is to make foreign audiences think positively about TÜRKİYE.

Cultural Festivals and Events: Putting on or taking part in festivals, art shows, music concerts, and other cultural events gives Turkish artists, customs, and talents a stage, promoting appreciation and understanding of their culture.

Language and Education Programs: Encouraging the use of Turkish in communication and fostering cultural interchange between Turkish and foreign communities can be achieved by offering scholarships and language classes to international students.

International Broadcasting Services: By expressing their viewpoints and ideas, international broadcasting services like TRT World and TRT Arabic help TÜRKİYE's soft power by reaching a wide range of global audiences with news, information, and cultural material.

TÜRKİYE can increase its soft power influence, improve cross-cultural understanding, and cultivate favorable impressions among audiences worldwide by skillfully employing various media methods. By strategically using the media, TÜRKİYE is able to promote its ideals, culture, and accomplishments, which in turn enhances its international relations and global image.

TÜRKİYE can strategically use soft power to develop a positive worldwide image, promote cross-cultural understanding, and establish itself as a major actor in international affairs by properly utilizing these resources. The Turkish soft power resources indicated earlier will be thoroughly discussed in the thesis's later sections when they have been successfully utilized. Moreover, it will be shown that these soft power resources have been used in more intense and significant ways since the AK Party era.

The wider distribution of Turkish cultural content has been made possible by the advancement of media technology, the emergence of substitute platforms, and the ubiquitous impact of globalization. The broad appeal of Turkish cultural outputs has been made possible by this transcultural movement, especially when it comes to the gripping Turkish TV series. These TV shows have drawn a lot of interest from audiences in Central Asia, the Middle East, the Balkans, Latin America, and the Far East. They have become an important part of Türkiye's soft power and a symbol of its successful cultural export. Türkiye is now the

second-largest exporter of TV series in the world, behind the United States, thanks to the success and exportability of its TV shows. This has strengthened Türkiye's brand value. Furthermore, the media has been essential to Türkiye's public diplomacy efforts, with the Anadolu Agency and the Turkish Radio and Television Corporation emerging as two significant Turkish media outlets that have driven these initiatives to a large degree.

Turkish Radio and Television Corporation's (TRT) broadcasting policy for foreign viewers may be traced back to its communal broadcasts for Turkish workers living in Europe, which started in 1990. In addition to serving the Turkish community in Europe, these early TRT-INT broadcasts also reached viewers in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. This was the first step in TRT's efforts to interact with a variety of audiences around the globe by expanding its broadcast reach beyond national boundaries. Başar, Hatice (2012). The TRT-AVRASYA channel began airing in 1993 and offers content for the Caucasus and Central Asia (TRT İnternet Haber 2021). Over the years, TRT (Turkish Radio and Television Corporation) has consistently established overseas agents. The first foreign TRT representative was established in 1998 with the opening of the TRT Germany-Berlin Representative Office. Then, in 1999, representative offices were opened in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan; these were then followed in 2000 by Azerbaijan in Baku, Egypt in Cairo, and Belgium in Brussels. In 2002, TRT opened its sixth overseas office in Washington, DC, as part of its ongoing development. The following year, in 2004, TRT expanded to Tashkent, Uzbekistan. By having a physical presence in significant areas throughout the world, TRT hopes to engage with global audiences and build international ties. These strategic actions demonstrate this commitment. (Online Haber TRT, 2021). With the launch of its website, www.trt.net.tr, in 1999, TRT_SAYTEK (Digital Broadcasting Technology Center) ushered in a new era of broadcasting. This web-based medium acted as a conduit, connecting with viewers throughout the globe. After TRT-Eurasia was replaced by TRT AVAZ, TRT's broadcast reach was greatly extended. With this change, TRT was able to serve a far wider region, which included the Middle East, the Caucasus, 27 countries, 13 autonomous republics, and the Balkans and Central Asia. TRT AVAZ, with a potential viewership of almost 250 million, functioned as a unifying voice for various communities in this large region. Launching on March 21, 2009, TRT-AVAZ bills itself as a "common channel" with programming in 137 countries, including Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Uzbek, and Turkmen, that takes place throughout the broadcast region and offers viewers a taste of every nation. It is worth questioning if the programs developed here address the area. Each state's unique conditions

need to be ascertained and communicated as such. The proportion of Turkish dialects utilized in the shows warrants consideration.

It is crucial to make sure that viewers in the area tune in to TRT's stations other than those that focus on Central Asia. TRT has sometimes attempted to accomplish this in the Turkish Republics. To this goal, TRT channels struck an arrangement in 2012 to view the Türksat 3A satellite in Central Asia as well as the YAMAL 201 satellite from the C band (İnternet Haber 2006). Given the trend in Asian and Central Asian satellite broadcasting, TRT FM and TSR radio stations, as well as TRT AVAZ, TRT CHILDREN, TRT TURK, and TRT ANATOLIAN channels, were aired from the YAMAL satellite under the parameters of this arrangement. One of TRT's contributions to the Turkic World is the Turkish Dialects dictionary, which is available for online usage. The TRT Turkish Dialects Dictionary (campaign=nocampaign 2005) is a thematic dictionary that includes word emphasis and pronunciation according to dialects. The TRT Foreign Publications Department's website is available in Uighur, Turkmen, Uzbek, Kyrgyz, and Kazakh.

The lack of a single alphabet and consistent dialect in this region drastically limits the number of people who watch TRT's channels. However, we are unable to state that the broadcasting regions employ a significant number of experts. TRT should launch a channel dedicated to Central Asia, possibly calling it TRT Turkistan. Furthermore, common terms and phrases that are understood by the citizens of the five nations are carefully chosen and written in a common language in the publications. Türkiye can significantly boost its soft power and influence in this region by implementing an editorial strategy that employs monitoring and periodically switches popular and cultural publications to collaborative publications with local channels. We believe it would be very beneficial and efficient to incorporate vocabulary from other Turkish dialects to the grammar of Turkish spoken in Uzbekistan in order to establish this common and comprehensible Turkish.

Anadolu Agency

The Anadolu Agency (AA) is a striking example of the importance placed on public diplomacy and communication—concepts that were firmly established during the War of Independence. The leaders of this movement understood the importance of a national presence, and AA is a manifestation of their forward-thinking methodology. Surprisingly,

the Anadolu Agency's international branch employs 3,272 specialists from 86 nations, which equates to 74 distinct nationalities. The agency has a wide global presence, with offices in 35 countries and representative offices in 86 more. Notably, Anadolu Agency keeps committed representatives in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, which strengthens its connections in these countries even further. The Anadolu Turkic News Package is a noteworthy offering from the agency that aims to raise awareness among Turkish-speaking nations while promoting the cultural heritage and values of the Turkish world.

An important effort to create a single and cohesive news source that connects the Turkish state with its different communities is shown in the development of an analytical news package for Turkish-speaking states and nations. These countries are united under one voice thanks to this endeavor. This news package, which is available in Turkish, English, and Russian, is a vital resource for media outlets, non-governmental organizations, Turkish-speaking communities, academic institutions, and research centers all around the Turkish world. Its publications in other languages give special emphasis to showcasing the work of prestigious organizations including Agency TİKA, Turkish Airlines THY, the Turks Abroad and Related Communities Presidency, and the Yunus Emre Enstitüsü. Especially, the Anadolu Agency (AA) publishes news articles about respectable establishments, associations, businesses, civil society organizations, and prominent people in an effort to foster a favorable perception of Türkiye. The Ministry of overseas Affairs is one of the several organizations that has a significant influence on how the agency covers overseas news.

3.6. Russia's Effects on the Use of Soft Power and Identity Construction

Among the main elements that are the source of Russian soft power in Kazakhstan are the cultural ties that emerged during the "Russification" process based on the common Soviet past; the prevalence of the Russian language in media and education in daily life, Russian minorities and regional organizations stand out. In general, Russia's soft power activity continues through ethnic, cultural and religious identities in most of the Eurasian geography. The constant influence of Russian culture and religious institutions on the countries of the region, political relations with the Commonwealth of Independent States and the use of the Russian language in education, trade and cultural activities as a regional lingua franca make Russia attractive to the communities living in the region (Hill, 2006).

Russian language appears to play a central role in Russia's soft power strategy in Kazakhstan. Historically, Russian was widely used and understood in a wide geography, including Kazakhstan, during the Soviet Union. In 1938, the Soviet government made the Russian language a compulsory course in schools of all Soviet republics, including Kazakhstan. After 1991, this obligation disappeared, but in some former Soviet countries, Russian schools remain effective. Even after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, it continues to be used in Kazakhstan, especially by ethnic Russians and a significant part of Russian-speaking communities. This language bond encourages cultural interaction and facilitates communication between Russia and Kazakhstan. Today, the official state language of Kazakhstan is Kazakh, while the Russian language has an official status that equalizes both languages in rights. According to Rossotrudnichestvo, Kazakhstan remains the most Russian-speaking country in Central Asia. Here, about 90% of the residents speak Russian fluently, while 20%of the population considers Russian as their mother tongue (https://iz.ru/1501052/valentin-loginov/ne-vsem-poniatno-sushchestvuet-li-ugroza-dlia-russkogo-iazyka-v-tcentralnoi-azii).

In 2007, the cultural project "Union of Three Languages" in Kazakhstan, including Kazakh, Russian and English, was adopted at the state level (https://online.zakon.kz/Document/?doc_id=30114941). However, there were many supporters and opponents of this idea. Since the beginning of the new school year in 2022, three languages have been canceled simultaneously by first-year students. According to Kazakhstan's Minister of Education Askhat Aimagambetova, elementary school freshmen will only study Kazakh. Students will start learning the Russian language as a separate discipline from the second grade and English lessons will be added for all schools from the third grade (https://www.interfax.ru/world/856780).

Russian minorities constitute the largest minority population in the region, with a population of 3.7 million people, corresponding to 23.7%of the country's population, according to Kazakhstan's 2022 census. It can be said that the increase in the Kazakh population, the return of the Kazakhs in the foreign country and Russia's return programs for the relatives abroad were effective in the decrease of the Russian population rate in the country from 40% to the current level before the declaration of independence. The proportion of the Russian population in Kazakhstan is higher compared to other Central Asian countries. This constitutes one of the important issues in the nation-state process in

the context of the country's culture and language. In addition, Russia's soft power strategy is closely related to its geopolitical interests. The country is in an effort to maintain its influence over former Soviet Union countries such as Kazakhstan in order to protect its security interests and maintain its geopolitical sphere. This is evident in regional organizations such as the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), where Russia is part of regional organizations and aims to promote economic integration with countries such as Kazakhstan. Russia offers trade incentives, economic cooperation and integration projects to increase its soft power influence in Kazakhstan through the EAEU. These efforts serve to strengthen political, economic and cultural ties, harmonize policies, and create a common sense of identity among member states, cementing Russia's position as a regional power. In addition, Russia's economic presence in Kazakhstan forms part of its soft power strategy. Russia represents an important economic partner for Kazakhstan, especially in sectors such as energy, trade and investment. The significant investments made by Russian companies in the Kazakh economy strengthen the ties between the two countries by encouraging economic growth. This economic integration increases Russia's soft power influence and further strengthens the economic dependencies and mutual interests between the two countries (Sergunin and Karabeshkin).

As the popularity of the Russian language and culture increases, Kazakhstan values its efforts to preserve its own Kazakh language, culture, and national identity. Kazakhstan has taken several steps to promote and protect its own cultural heritage. This helps to keep the national identity strong. Issues related to Russia also draw attention in the political agenda of the country. In the movements that started since the 1990s, suggestions were made for the northern regions of Kazakhstan to join Russia, but at that time the Kremlin showed a distant attitude to these groups. Russian activists often raise the democratization process and determine their political stance through the political party. Russian influence in Kazakhstan also manifests itself in defining the identities of individuals in society. Although they are ethnic Kazakhs in Kazakhstan, the number of people who are close to and interested in Russian culture in terms of values is not low. Although these people are Kazakhs, their loyalty to the state can be questioned from time to time due to their closeness to Russia. After the decision of a referendum contrary to the laws of Ukraine on the annexation of Crimea to Russia was taken in 2014, and Russia's war with Ukraine, which was launched in 2022, led to concerns on the part of Kazakhstan that similar events may develop, given that there is a dense Russian population in the northern and eastern regions of Kazakhstan.

3.6.1. Central Asia in the Context of Russia's Imminent Environmental Policy

Central Asia has become an important area for Russia due to its strategic location in the central region of Eurasia between the Caspian Sea and the Pamir Mountains and its various natural resources. The Presidents of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan, who met in Alma-Ata in January 1993 to discuss regional cooperation, stated the necessity of understanding the five regional republics in the global order with the expression "Central Asia" (Büke, 2007: 74).

Central Asia has always had an important place in both Tsarist Russia and Soviet-era Russian foreign policies. Russians have always been afraid of possible security-oriented rapprochements that may occur in Central Asia and the influence of Islam in the region, and they have formed their policies in this way by using the pretext of protecting the rights of Russian society (Aziz, 2009: 24).

In the early periods of their independence, the Central Asian Republics pursued various policies that would establish close relations with Russia due to their economic interests with the Russian state. Central Asian Republics, which need Russia's regional support in terms of economy and security, have come closer to Russia for this reason (Büke, 2007: 75).

With its "immediate environment" policy adopted in 1993, Russia has focused on some regional priorities in its foreign policy in order to prevent international powers and foreign elements from entering the region and to establish its own dominance in the region. Russia's interests in Central Asia can be listed as ensuring political and economic stability in the region in a way that is far from internal conflicts and economic crises, observing the rights of Russian minorities in the region, the formation of highly nationalist movements and trying to prevent the spread of radical Islam in the region (Purtaş, 2005: 191).

In terms of Russia, the neighbourhood of Central Asia with both Iran and Afghanistan is considered as an element of instability for Central Asia. The spread of radical Islamic organizations in Afghanistan and Iran to the whole region has been described as a threat to the stability of Central Asia. Radical Islamist activities in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan and the conflicts in Fergana were seen as a very important threat to Russia in the region, which resulted in Russia's establishment of military bases in the region (Ülkü, 2002: 100). In

addition, the United States' settlement in the region after its intervention in Afghanistan and the establishment of its own military bases in the region worried Russia in terms of national and regional strategic security. In all cooperation agreements since 1994, Russia has insisted on an article with border guards and military compliance. In fact, apart from radical Islam, no other element has been observed from Iran or Afghanistan to threaten the dominance of the region. (Roy, 2000: 259).

It is considered that radical Islam, which emerged by taking advantage of the gap that emerged with the dissolution of the Soviet Union and in the form of a reaction to the repression in Soviet times, is among the elements that threaten order and stability in Central Asia (Yapıcı, 2004: 65-66). The attitude of Western countries towards radical Islam is an excuse for Russia's interventionist policy in Central Asia. While Russia says that it is obliged to intervene in Central Asia in order to prevent militants from entering the region, it also improves its relations with countries such as Iraq, Sudan and Iran (Bezanis, 1996).

According to Brzezinski, the main source of unrest and instability in Central Asia is not radical Islam or ethnic conflict. The main cause of instability is considered as poverty. For this reason, political reforms in Central Asia can only be achieved through economic development (Brzezinski, 1996: 112-122). In other words, stability can also be achieved in Central Asia when economic conditions improve. The economic dependence left over from the Soviet era structure and the lack of a unique infrastructure to process the natural wealth of the states caused the Central Asian states to pursue parallel economic policies with Russia. As a result, after the Soviet period, Russia still aims to maintain its control over the rich natural resources in the region as before and not to lose its market in Central Asia (Büke, 2007: 76).

One of the reasons on which Russia bases its policy towards Central Asia is the minority problem. It is estimated that there are 25 million Russians and 5 million Russian-speaking minorities in the Soviet Republics (Dağı, 2005: 209). During World War II, Russian minorities sent to other countries with Stalin's "Russification" policy after the end of World War II were seen as an important problem in the new republics formed after the disintegration. Regime changes in the newly formed nation-statesin the global order have led to the redefinition of citizenship and identity, nationalization and indigenization efforts have led to the formation of ethno-cultural policies, and thus the relations between them with

different ethnic groups have changed and reshaped. For this reason, the liquidation of Russians in key strategic points from the region was accelerated and the citizenship rights of Russian minorities were limited and forced to emigrate. In the face of external migrations to Russia, Russia has tried to eliminate the possible negative effects of these external migrations by using its citizenship rights, pressure, diplomacy and cultural opportunities in its foreign policy (Özcan, 2005: 32).

Behaviors and practices towards Russians, the difference between natives and Russians in Central Asia is more evident (Özcan, 2005: 33). With the political change in the Central Asian Republics, the redefinition of the concept of nationality and the progress of policies in this direction have led to a gradual decrease in the regions where Russians dominate economically and politically.

Russia, which gives priority to its own environment within the framework of the "Close Environment" policy, has perceived defending the rights of Russian minorities living in other countries as a national case in Russia in both its domestic and foreign policy (Dağı, 2005: 213). Russia, which wants to give a legitimate status to the right of intervention with the "Military Doctrine", which is described as an important element in the "Close Environment" policy, aimed to take deterrent measures by protecting minority rights (Dağı, 2005: 218).

After the end of the Cold War, the problem of minorities, which was very important, emerged as an idea that Russian liberals should examine minorities in terms of human rights with a general judgment. Russia, which found another solution with the ‘dual citizenship’ agreement, was able to reach an agreement with Turkmenistan and Tajikistan, and other Central Asian countries did not view the agreement positively in terms of the security of their internal affairs (Dağı, 2005: 219). Regarding Russian minorities, Kazakhstan has a different value for Russia. In Kazakhstan, the region with the highest concentration of Russians, and in other states in Central Asia, minorities work in various fields. However, the unemployment problem that emerged after independence has been a problem for minorities like everyone else (Özcan, 2005: 51).

3.6.2. Relations Between Russia and Central Asian Republics

Immediately after the declaration of their independence, the Central Asian Republics aimed to find a solution to all the problems they faced in their domestic and foreign policies by becoming a member of the "Commonwealth of Independent States". These states, which had been under Russian rule for years, could only communicate fully with the outside world with an international community called the "Commonwealth of Independent States". In the Minsk Treaty, which was the founder of the CIS, the countries that are members of the community were accepted as equal among themselves and it was evaluated that relations would be reshaped and increased in the context of sovereignty, non-use of force against each other and universal principles accepted by international law. The "Community", which envisages unity in the solution of military and economic issues as well as political cooperation, is supported by both Turkmenistan and all other Central Asian Republics. Turkmenistan, on the other hand, has been a country that has approached a formation such as the CIS negatively from the beginning. Turkmenistan, not thinking like the Central Asian Countries and advocating the principle of full sovereignty within the community, doubted the necessity of reducing the obligation to Russia in all respects and Russia's establishment of an inter-country control mechanism for the CIS, as in the Soviet era. Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan argued that they were in need of Russia due to the military, economic, socio-cultural integrity and dependence brought by the communist regime, which has been ruling for 70 years (Büke, 2007: 59).

The Central Asian Republics' expectations from the Commonwealth of Independent States were not shaped as they expected. The Commonwealth of Independent States could not achieve the success it wanted from an institutional point of view and the formation of different approaches to the organization (such as not limiting sovereignty, disparities of interest, etc.) and asked, ‘How can a community fail?' were in the nature of answers to such a question. When considered prospectively, the creation of free trade zones and the establishment of political authority by implementing decisions can transform the Commonwealth of Independent States from a regional organization into a multi-dimensional union (Aziz, 2009: 35).

Contrary to the economic, military, and political reasons mentioned earlier, the Central Asian Republics' continued dependence on Russia and their failure to shape their

relations with the global external world can be considered as the need for state leaders to come from the communist infrastructure and to maintain cooperation with Russia in order to maintain their power (Arı, 1996: 75). In fact, the five Central Asian countries came together after the dissolution and formed the Central Asian Union in 1991 to oppose the Commonwealth of Independent States. However, the fact that these countries are founding members of the Commonwealth of Independent States has left the "Central Asian Union" initiative in the background (Hatipoğlu, 2000: 51). Olivier Roy states that there are divergences of opinion in various aspects between Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan and other Central Asian republics, which are not included in the alliance that the Central Asian states will form among themselves and aim to maintain policies that are not very advanced in the relations of the countries but not dependent on Russia (Roy, 2000: 253).

Central Asian countries, which try to establish relations with other countries based on multi-dimensional strategies in the global world system, have prioritized their own strategic and economic interests. Central Asian countries were mostly dependent on Russia for foreign trade when the Soviet Union disintegrated. On the other hand, a few Central Asian countries, especially Kazakhstan, which wanted to improve their foreign trade and did not want to lose their existing trade ties with Russia, were thinking of keeping up with Russia economically. Russia, on the other hand, wanted to relieve the economic burden created by other countries after the disintegration. Russia started to use the new Russian ruble in 1993, proposed high levels of exchange rates to change the ruble, asked countries to transfer their gold reserves to itself, and removed other states other than Tajikistan from the ‘ruble zone' (Takar, 2018: 72).

In 1996, the "Agreement on Deepening Integration in Economic and Social Areas" was signed between Russia and Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Belarus. With this agreement, it is aimed to create integration in science, education, economy and socio-cultural fields. In addition, this agreement formed the basis of the Customs Union Agreement and the "Customs Union" was established in 1999 with the inclusion of Tajikistan. Although the "Customs Union" was considered as the core of the Commonwealth of Independent States, it was aimed to remove the customs duty and quantity restrictions given in mutual trade, to determine similar foreign trade policies to be applied to third countries and to establish a single customs area. The "Customs Union" was considered as the right tool for Russia, which did not want to end its relations with its close friends. However, various factors such as other

member countries' support for the establishment of free trade zones and Kazakhstan's declaration that it has suffered from the Customs Union, not benefit, have led to the transformation of the union into an international organization (Purtaş, 2005: 251).

After the "Eurasian Economic Community" (EEC) agreement was signed and entered into force in 2001, member countries unanimously agreed that the organization should be international and a common economic market could be established in the region. Although it is desired to compare the "Eurasian Economic Community" to the organizational structure of the European Union, when the imbalance of the member weights in the EEC and the national revenues of the countries are evaluated, it is considered that Russia's economic weight is around 80% in the total economy of the Union. In terms of the Eurasian Economic Community, this situation has been described as an element that can be shaped in line with Russia's economic interests. Considering the economies of the Union, it is considered that Central Asia is in a position to serve as a raw material warehouse within the Eurasian Economic Community. Central Asia has been evaluated as a very efficient market for Russia, which cannot succeed in competition alone in global world markets (Takar, 2018: 77).

The emergence of the "Central Asian Economic Community" in 1994 resulted from the efforts of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan to form a single common economic zone after the abolition of the "ruble zone". At the summit held in Germany in 2000, the "Cooperation in Combating Transnational Crime, Terrorism and Extremism" agreement was signed. At the summit held again in 2001, the proposal of the strategic partners to establish a security system was evaluated, and as a result of these developments, it is considered that the Central Asian Union will last for a very long time and can ensure its influence in the region. Although the border problems between Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan seem to be obstacles to cooperation, it should not be forgotten that the problems that may occur in any country may affect the countries in the region (Saraç, 2018: 115).

Depending on economic, political, military, historical and geographical factors, Kazakhstan attaches great importance to the continuation of its relations with Russia, which has recently increased in its foreign policy. It has an economic relationship with Russia, which is an important strategic economic partner of Kazakhstan, based on 20% in imports and 50% in exports. In addition, in Kazakhstan-Russia relations, the problem of the joint use of the "Baikonur" space base in Kazakhstan has been solved since 2003; the border problem

between countries has been concluded and important steps have been taken regarding various cooperation in the field of energy (Takar, 2018: 78).

Kyrgyzstan was another Central Asian country that improved its relations with Russia. Russia has steadily increased its economic influence in sectors such as industry and energy in Kyrgyzstan. By using the security problems related to the activities of radical groups in the south, the Kyrgyzstan administration has further strengthened its effectiveness in the country through cooperation in the fields of military and intelligence. Various social and economic problems in the country have encouraged cooperation with Russia. Kyrgyzstan's rulers thought that economic cooperation with Russia would reduce the problem of unemployment and poverty. In addition, labor migration from Kyrgyzstan to Russia has been an important factor in increasing bilateral relations. It is thought that approximately 500,000 Kyrgyzstani citizens have the status of workers, and there are 200 thousand to 500 thousand dollars of entry to the country per year thanks to the Kyrgyz people living abroad (Saraç, 2008: 165).

In the bilateral relationship between Russia and Uzbekistan, Uzbekistan aimed to strengthen relations, especially in many areas such as security and economy. The advancement of relations with Russia in various aspects was also based on strategic and utilitarian reasons. If an evaluation is to be made, first of all, considering the strategic reasons, it can be considered that Russia has the right to veto the decision if a possible sanction decision is taken for Uzbekistan at the UN. As a utilitarian, the fact that the Soviet period was still effective militarily, politically and bureaucratically under the rule of Uzbekistan facilitated the rapprochement with Russia in terms of mentality (Büke, 2007: 36).

In addition to security cooperation, Uzbekistan has pursued a policy of increasing its relations with Russia economically. In order to further increase its effectiveness in the region, Russia joined the "Eurasian Economic Community", one of the two important elements, together with the "Collective Security Treaty Organization" in 2006. Following the "Eurasian Economic Community" summit, various agreements including both oil and natural gas issues were signed. With the agreement signed between Russia's most important gas producer "Gazprom" and Uzbekistan's state company "Uzbekneftegaz", it was decided

to work together in Uzbekistan. With this signed agreement, "Gazprom" has a say in exporting the gas produced in Uzbekistan abroad (Takar, 2018: 75).

With the decision of the Eurasian Economic Community to carry out work in line with the aim of creating a customs union and a common energy market, Russia's economic superiority in Central Asia gained strength. Uzbekistan has also made amendments to the laws in order to harmonize the customs and trade laws with the criteria of the "Eurasian Economic Community" in order to fully comply with the Community, in which Russia has a 40% share (Aziz, 2009: 40). While Uzbekistan was subject to Russia's economic influence due to its participation in the "Eurasian Economic Community", it became very close to Russia in terms of security relations with its decision to join the "Collective Security Treaty Organization" at the last "Community" summit (Büke, 2007: 37).

Tajikistan, which continued to be influenced by Central Asian countries and Russia militarily and politically after independence, is considered as the weakest country in the region economically. Therefore, possible instability in the region may lead the country to a crisis again. After Tajikistan cooperated with the United States, it started to distance itself from its policy towards Russia in a certain period of time, and in this direction, Tajikistan, the Russian 201st He requested a rent of 150-200 million dollars to the region where the Motorized Infantry Union was located. Although there was a brief pause in bilateral relations after this demand of Tajikistan, Russia followed a soft policy by acting politically in order not to further control its influence and influence in the region. After these difficulties in bilateral relations between Russia and Tajikistan for a very short time, bilateral diplomatic contacts, which started with Russia's steps, eventually started to improve again. As a result, on March 15, 2002, Russia and Tajikistan organized a military exercise together, and on April 8, due to the 10th anniversary of the relationship between the two countries, organized a "friendship" conference in Dushanbe, the capital of Tajikistan. As a result of the talks held at the friendship conference, the demand to build a “permanent” military base in Tajikistan was also raised. Then, in June 2004, as a result of the evaluations of the heads of state of the countries, it was decided to turn the lands in Tajikistan into a "permanent military base" of Russia. In addition, with the decisions taken in the signed agreements, the old "Air Control Center" was allowed to be rebuilt and used by Russia. Russia, which built its military base in Tajikistan after the "Kant Air Base" built in Kyrgyzstan in 2003, established its second base in Central Asia after the September 11 attacks, continued to increase its effectiveness

in the region by establishing its military bases in Tajikistan after Kyrgyzstan (Takar, 2018: 74)

Since 1992, more than 60 contracts and agreements have been signed between Turkmenistan, one of the important countries of Central Asia, and Russia, which regulate relations in various fields. One of the issues that plays a strategic key role in the relations between Russia and Turkmenistan is the Caspian Sea issue. In this respect, many evaluations are made on the convention, which has been prepared legally in the status of the Caspian Sea, and the decisions to be taken for Russia and Turkmenistan to act together are evaluated. While Russia insists on maintaining its sovereignty over the Caspian resources, it is trying to attract Turkmenistan, which it sees as an element of balance against Azerbaijan, which has signed various agreements with international unions on the operation of these resources. However, after the "Agreement on the Determination of the Bottom Borders in the North of the Caspian Sea" signed with Kazakhstan in 1998, he changed his attitude and re-evaluated it (Purtaş, 2005: 213).

3.6.3. Russia's Soft Power in Central Asia

Russia's soft power is undoubtedly one of the most important parameters of its presence in the region. The Russian language, Russian culture, and Russian-speaking knowledge space can be seen as comparable economic or military-political tools. Because protecting its own cultural influence in the region is one of Russia's most important interests, otherwise it ties with the Central Asian region and Russia's position may be lost (Toropygin and Mendagaziev, 2020). In fact, Russia has some advantages over other countries in the use of “soft power” in Central Asia. First, the territories of the modern states of Central Asia were incorporated into the first Russian Empire, and then into the Soviet Union, before the emergence of modern nation-states in the region. This continues to leave a strong mark today, including the orientation of the elites and the population, who are still very close to Russia and see themselves as part of a single area (Çolak, 2011: 23). Second, the Central Asian region was included in the integration processes in the post-Soviet space. The interaction is therefore closer than with other states outside the region. Third, although its use has narrowed in many cities of Central Asia, Russian is still widely spoken. Fourth, Russia is positioned as a migration region not only for the purpose of making money for a significant part of the active population of Central Asia, but also for education (Lebedeva,

2014: 49-50). These resources allow Russia to successfully use its “soft power” mechanisms and strengthen its own positions in the region

Today, the Russian language plays an important role in the development of Russia-Central Asia relations, as most of the population of the region speaks or speaks Russian. In particular, Russian mass culture, from series and talkshows to pop music and modern literature, continues to be hugely popular in almost the entire post-Soviet space. Many people continue to watch Russian channels, read Russian newspapers and books, and access the Russian language section of the internet (Sahakyan, 2021). This advantage was the result of the Soviet authorities’ policy of long-term nation-building through language, which began in 1938 when the Russian language became compulsory in all schools. During the Soviet Union, the Russian language was used in bureaucratic work, military and law enforcement structures, Russian books and newspapers were published, and the Russian language served as an important source for social progress. However, in the 30 years since the dissolution of the USSR, the number of Russian speakers in the Central Asian region has decreased significantly and has been replaced by national languages. Statistics show that the number of non-Russians exceeds 50% in all Central Asian countries except Kazakhstan.

In addition, official status in the Russian language is currently granted only by the constitutions of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Thus, for example, in accordance with Article 7 of the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan, - “In state bodies and local self-government bodies, the Russian language is officially used in conjunction with Kazakh.” (https://online.zakon.kz/document/?doc_id=1005029&pos=5; -90 #pos=5; -90) Article 13 of the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic. The Russian language has the status of an official language. However, it would be wrong to mention that the Russian language has completely declined in the Central Asian region despite the decline. In general, the vast majority of people in the countries of the region can speak or understand Russian. In addition, the popularity of the language is supported by the widespread Russian media and internet sources (Ospanova and Rahmatulin, 2018). In addition, the role of specially created structures such as Rossotrudnichestvo agency, Russkiy Mir Foundation and a.m. Gorchakov Public Diplomacy Foundation, which operate to protect and strengthen the influence of Russian language and culture, should be emphasized. These "soft power" tools of Russia aim to strengthen ties and rapprochement with post-Soviet countries, including Central Asia (Lebedeva, 2014: 48).

The headquarters and offices of the Russkiy Mir Foundation are located in Central Asia. Looking at the map presented on the Foundation's website, the number of such centers and offices is 3 in Kazakhstan; 4 in Kyrgyzstan; 1 in Tajikistan and 5in Uzbekistan (https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?mid=16W-8Ar770aTYGJXi2HWagXW-FRVb9u2J&ll=45.06714271406927%2C99.57701192317059&z=2). As for the Rossotrudnichestvo Agency, its agencies operate in five countries of Central Asia and two cities in Kazakhstan, NurSultan and Almaty. The Agency organizes meetings with citizens in the region, interacts with partners, promotes the development of humanitarian cooperation and the development of cooperation between universities in the region and Russia. In contrast, the Gorchakov Foundation is a non-profit organization that deals with Russian foreign policy, supports research, experts and public initiatives in the field of public diplomacy. The Foundation hosts an annual school for young professionals from Central Asia and the "Security in Eurasia" program, including geopolitics, economics, security and information technology courses with the participation of Russian experts (Gusarova, 2024).

It is clear that Russia attaches special importance to working with young people in Central Asia. Due to the fact that young people have a certain understanding of what is happening in the world during their student years and the formation of a worldview, today the education sector has become a battleground for hearts and minds among many regional and world actors. Given this trend, Russia recognizes the importance of exporting educational services as an effective tool for implementing "soft power." It should be noted that a network of public and private Russian universities in all Central Asian countries except Turkmenistan, in particular branches of Moscow State Universities located in Nur-Sultan, Tashkent and Dushanbe, are represented by the Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University in Bishkek. Only 15 Russian universities have branches in Uzbekistan (Lebedeva, 2014: 50). Also in March 2022, the Russian Ministry of Science and Higher Education announced plans to open branches of seven more Russian universities in Uzbekistan. In early February 2022, after negotiations in Moscow, Tokayev and Putin announced that branches of Russian universities would be opened in Kazakhstan (https://tengrinews.kz/kazakhstan_news/novyie-filialyi-rossiyskih-vuzov-otkroyutsya-kazahstane-461608/).

In addition, Russia allocates quota for Central Asian citizens to study at Russian universities. In particular, citizens of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan can apply to

state-funded places in Russian universities on the same basis as Russian citizens. According to various sources, approximately 74 thousand Kazakhs, 24.5 thousand Tajiks, 30 thousand Turkmens, 16 thousand Kyrgyzstan and approximately 35 thousand Uzbeks were studying in Russia in 2020 (https://avesta.tj/2021/10/19/pochemu-v-rossii-bolshe-vsego-studentov-iz-tsentralnoj-azii-vyyasnili-issledovateli/).

In addition to the opening of branches of universities and the granting of grants, active studies are carried out in schools to help the learning of the Russian language. In 2016, the "Russian Humanitarian Mission" (RHM) was established in order to spread the Russian language in the CIS countries by improving the skills of Russian teachers and providing Russian educational materials to educational institutions (Sarimsokov, 2019). In an interview with Fergana publishing house, the representative of rhm stated that in 2017 alone, the delegation delivered more than 40 thousand textbooks to Tajikistan and also sent more than 21 thousand books to schools in Kyrgyzstan (https://www.stanradar.com/news/full/28340-russkij-jazyk-pervyj-iz-inostrannyh-v-tsentralnojazii.html). In April 2019, Putin signed an intergovernmental agreement with Tajikistan on the construction of five Russian-language schools to be commissioned by Russian teachers in the cities of Dushanbe, Bokhtar, Kulyab, Khujand and Tursunzade. In addition, since 2020, more than 100 Russian teachers have been working in Uzbekistan.

The influx of migrant workers into Russia also encourages the interest of the population in the Russian language, which serves as a demand for the protection and creation of the Russian educational sector in some countries of Central Asia. Russia hosts the largest number of migrants after the US, and remittances from labour migrants are crucial for Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan (for Kyrgyzstan, this figure was 31.1% of GDP, followed by Tajikistan with 26.7%) (Rutland and Kazantsev, 2016). For this reason, it is quite acceptable to see labor migrants as both soft power and a leverage in the hands of Moscow.

As a result, public opinion about Russia in Central Asia now remains predominantly positive, in contrast to the attitude toward China and the United States (Laruelle & Royce, 2020). But the problem is that Russian soft power is based almost entirely on the resources of the past, not on today's achievements. Factors such as the widespread spread of the Russian language in the region and the respectful attitude towards Russian culture have their roots in the Soviet era. The effectiveness of this strategy is decreasing over time, as the

legacy of the USSR is not endless, and even now observers note that with the increasing popularity of English, Turkish and Chinese, the interest in learning the Russian language among Central Asian youth is decreasing. It is also quite clear that modern Russia lacks components of "soft power", such as the values and political ideals that it can impart to other states (Letnyakov and Evelyanova). The reason why Russia is currently trying to increase the effectiveness of the main soft power tools in the region is largely due to these factors. In addition, given the recent events around Ukraine, soft power projects and their effectiveness in Central Asian countries remain a major question mark.

3.7. China's Effects on the Use of Soft Power and Identity Construction

Relations between China and Kazakhstan have been strengthened by cultural, economic, political and geopolitical ties throughout history. The common history between the two countries, mutual trade and investment opportunities, and a strong diplomatic cooperation have supported the development of relations between the two countries. China's soft power influence in Kazakhstan is also characterized by these various economic, geopolitical, and cultural factors that shape bilateral relations. One of the main features of China's soft power in Kazakhstan is strong economic links. China has become one of Kazakhstan's most important trading partners and investors, especially in sectors such as energy, infrastructure and manufacturing. Chinese investments in Kazakhstan contribute significantly to the country's economic development, job creation, and technology transfer. The energy sector stands out as an important cooperation area with the construction of oil and gas pipelines, joint ventures in the field of oil extraction and refining, and long-term supply contracts. These economic ties have created a sense of interdependence between China and Kazakhstan, making China a key contributor to Kazakhstan's economic growth and development (https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/dunya/kazakistanda-yarin-orta-asya-liderleri-zirvede-bulusacak/3298395).

As seen above, the Beijing administration has gained extraordinary economic power as a result of directing the country's production to foreign markets since the early 1990s. China also plays an active role in global politics by reinforcing its image as a "powerful actor" in international relations. It is constantly creating new opening channels in different geographies such as Africa, South America, the Middle East and the Balkans. Of course, the most remarkable of these expansions is the Silk Road, which it is trying to revive in Central

Asia. China's signature project, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), involves connecting the ancient Silk Road routes with modern infrastructure and communication networks. Since the early 1990s, China has sought to establish mechanisms of strategic importance in Central Asia. Its aim is to strengthen regional and global connectivity through the promotion of trade, investment, and cultural interaction. The revitalization of the Silk Road is part of China's strategy to expand its economic and geopolitical influence. Kazakhstan occupies an important position on the BRI routes, rendering it a vital point for regional connectivity and trade facilitation between China and Europe. The BRI has resulted in the implementation of large-scale infrastructure projects in Kazakhstan, including the construction of railways, highways, and logistics hubs. These projects enhance Kazakhstan's transport and logistics capabilities, stimulate economic activity, and promote regional integration. As one of the most important actors in the Silk Road project, Kazakhstan stands out as an important country with its strategic position in the Central Asian geography as well as its natural resources. In this context, the Chinese government has taken important steps to expand bilateral and multilateral cultural relations with Kazakhstan.

As a result, China's Belt and Road Initiative strengthens its soft power by positioning it as the driving force behind economic development in Kazakhstan, but it should be noted that China's economic influence in Kazakhstan also faces challenges and concerns. Although Chinese investments have brought economic benefits, there have also been cases where the conditions of these investments have raised questions about transparency, environmental impact and the potential for economic dependence. Some critics argue that Chinese investments prioritize China's own economic interests over Kazakhstan's development needs and sustainability. Environmental problems such as pollution and water resources management have also led to public concerns and protests in areas where Chinese companies operate. These challenges underscore the importance of achieving balanced and mutually beneficial economic cooperation between China and Kazakhstan.

Geopolitical considerations also contribute to China's soft power in Kazakhstan. The two countries share a long border and have a history of cooperation, especially within the framework of regional organizations such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU). Kazakhstan's participation in these regional platforms, where China plays an important role, strengthens China's influence and soft power projection in the region. In particular, the SCO provides a platform for political dialogue,

economic cooperation and security cooperation, allowing China to interact with Kazakhstan and other Central Asian countries on issues of mutual interest.

Cultural and educational changes constitute another dimension of China's soft power in Kazakhstan. China promotes cultural programs, educational exchanges, and learning of the Chinese language and culture through initiatives such as Confucius Institutes. These initiatives aim to strengthen interpersonal ties, promote intercultural understanding, and increase cultural closeness between China and Kazakhstan. The growing popularity of learning Chinese and engaging in cultural activities further strengthens China's soft power as it provides individuals with opportunities to interact with Chinese culture, build personal relationships, and develop a deeper understanding of China

It is also worth noting that there are anti-Chinese sentiments among certain sections of the Kazakh population. Some Kazakh citizens express concerns about business competition, cultural assimilation, and the encroachment of Chinese businesses on local businesses. These feelings are often fueled by business disputes, social tensions, and environmental degradation associated with Chinese investments and business activities (Goldstein, 2022).

The historical roots of anti-Chinese sentiment in Kazakhstan go back to the Kazakhs' war with the Jungars. Some researchers think that these origins originated in the later period when it was part of the Soviet Union, which had rather tense political relations with China. Bilateral tension erupted during the Soviet-Chinese border conflict on Damansky Island in the 1960s. After that, the USSR and China constantly waged an "information war" against each other. Therefore, the Sino-Soviet Union conflict, which started historically in 1969 and continued in different ways until 1989, and the resulting border conflicts form the basis of China's negative perception in Central Asia. At the same time, the fact that China was generally closed off until the 1990s caused China to be an unrecognized country in the region with its ideological, religious and cultural differences for the Central Asian countries that declared their independence with the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991.

Other reasons were added to the anti-China attitude during Kazakhstan's independence period. One of these reasons is the "land issue" in 2013. When the New Silk Road Project was introduced in 2013, China started to make large land purchases in Central Asia. These commercial relations have raised the idea of selling or leasing some agricultural

land to China in Kazakhstan, but this has led to serious reactions and concerns in the country. Especially in March 2016, the Kazakhstan administration made a decision to lease agricultural land for 25 years, as opposed to 10 years previously. Claims that this decision was actually made for Chinese agricultural companies caused great protests in the country. Following these events, then-President Nursultan Nazarbayev stopped the law from entering into force. In fact, the New Silk Road Project is seen by many Kazakh citizens as a tool that serves China's expansion goals in Central Asia. Claims that China, one of the two most populous countries in the world, intends to purchase large plots of land in the region and establish colonies there are met with concern by the Kazakhstan community. In this context, the Kazakhstan government also exhibits a very careful attitude on some issues in its relations with China. Although trade relations between the two countries continue to develop, Kazakhstan's territory is not allowed to be sold to Chinese citizens and they are not allowed to live collectively and become ghettos.

Apart from this, while the concept of nation-state has developed further in Kazakhstan in recent years, it is observed that extreme nationalist tendencies have increased especially in the West Kazakhstan region. This sometimes leads to some reactions against minorities. The most intense of these reactions are recorded by workers and employees from China. Historical anti-Chinese in Kazakhstan, as well as economic reasons, may have led to these reactions. Although the agreements signed between Kazakhstan and China generally prohibit bringing collective workers to the country, the arrival of many Chinese companies as well as many workers causes controversy in Kazakhstan public opinion. Videos of Chinese workers in Kazakhstan, which are occasionally filmed in secret on social media, are shared millions of times, and Kazakhstani people openly express their dissatisfaction with this situation. In addition, Beijing's human rights violations and genocide policies in East Turkestan and historical anti-Chinese relations in Kazakhstan have the potential to evolve in a different direction in the future. This is a situation that balances and mitigates the Chinese soft power projection in Kazakhstan. Compared to the other 4 actors, what happened in history constitutes negative baggage for Russia, and there is no such historical negative baggage for Americans and Europeans. For Turks, there is a positive baggage due to the "sense of brotherhood".

3.7.1. China's "Belt-Road" Project and Its Impact on Central Asia-China Relations

In September 2013, Chinese President Xi Jinping proposed the creation of the Silk Road Economic Belt during his visit to Kazakhstan. Speaking in front of the Indonesian Parliament in Jakarta in October of the same year, Xi came up with the idea of creating a 21st century Maritime Silk Road. Later, these two proposals were combined into a single Belt-Road Project (Alperen, 2018). China's main strategic document on the Belt and Road Initiative was published in March 2015 as "Vision and Actions on Jointly Building Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road". As highlighted in this paper, the main objective of the Belt and Road Initiative is to promote the orderly and free flow of economic factors, highly efficient resource allocation, and deep market integration as well as to ensure economic policy coordination of countries along the Belt and Road route and induce them to implement broader and deeper regional cooperation that mutually benefits all (Aminjonov et al., 2019).

The Belt and Road Initiative consists of two main pillars: the Silk Road Economic Belt and the Maritime Silk Road. The "Belt" is to connect China to Central and South Asia as well as Europe. The maritime "Road" on the other hand aims to connect China to Southeast Asian countries, the Gulf states, East and North Africa, and eventually to Europe (Owen, 2020). Six land economic corridors have been identified in this framework: the China-Mongolia-Russia Economic Corridor; the New Eurasian Land Bridge; the China-Central Asia-West Asia Economic Corridor; the China-India Peninsula Economic Corridor; the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor; and the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor. In addition to these corridors, the Maritime Silk Road defines two other routes, one from the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean to Mediterranean ports and the other from the South China Sea to the South Pacific (Tekdal, 2017).

Presently, the Belt and Road Initiative is among the key objectives of China's foreign policy and foreign economic strategy. First, through the initiative, China aims to expand and broaden the markets in which its products are available. Second, China has the need to ensure reliable sources and routes of raw materials to sustain economic growth. Third, investments in the Belt and Road's infrastructure projects provide employment for Chinese companies. In addition to purely economic goals, the successful implementation of the project also

serves China's geopolitical goals, such as strengthening China's role and participation in the global economy and politics. In this sense, given the current conditions, especially the growing tension between China and the US in the Asia-Pacific region, the project can be perceived as the Chinese version of macro-regional integration (Izimov and Muratalieva, 2018).

The Central Asian region is a key region for the implementation of this global project, both when the Chinese side initiated the Belt and Road construction and for other various reasons. First, as mentioned earlier, the region is rich in energy resources that are critical to nurturing and sustaining China's economic growth. The implementation of the Belt and Road initiatives will increase the development, processing and then transport of energy resources from Central Asia to China, which will contribute to Beijing's energy security.

Secondly, the land trade routes pass through the countries of Central Asia, connecting the western provinces and the whole of China in general to the foreign markets of Eurasia and Europe. It should be emphasized that China needs new markets to sustain high levels of local economic growth. In this context, the Belt and Road Initiative is seen as a project to further China's "go out" policy, which aims to export the products of China's overcapacity (Lain, 2018). Therefore, Central Asia, which plays an important role as an intercontinental land bridge between Asia and Europe, plays an important role in the implementation of the project. It is no coincidence that two of the six corridors planned within the scope of the Belt and Road Project pass through Central Asian countries. For example, the China-Central Asia-West Asia Economic Corridor is being built to connect China to the Persian Gulf via Iran and to the Port of Piraeus, which belongs to Greece in the Aegean Sea via Türkiye. Similarly, the New Eurasian Land Bridge will connect China and Europe through Central Asia (Sim and Aminjonov, 2020).

Third, considering the underdeveloped SUÖB (Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region), which borders three of the five Central Asian states (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan), Chinese investments in Central Asia aim to generate markets to revitalize trade with the region, which represents a major concern for China (Owen, 2020). The development policy adopted by the Chinese leadership for this region under the Belt and Road Initiative aims to establish a security context, political stability, and economic development, thus reducing the risk of the spread of radical and extremist movements. As Antoine Garapon

notes, “China relies unwaveringly on the powerful potential of its economy to solve problems.” In this sense, especially in the context of the Belt and Road Initiative, economic development is regarded not only as the ultimate objective but also as an effective way to ensure stability and security. The implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative in Central Asia is associated with active bilateral cooperation between Beijing and the states of the region and the further expansion of China's economic presence (Garapon, 2016; Yazdani, 2020).

Trade promotion and industrial development are the sectors with the highest activity in the region. This area receives most of the investment. In fact, the region was the first to receive large amounts of Chinese credit, investment, and economic support in all areas. In terms of the number of projects implemented, transportation corridors are the second key sector, followed by energy (Yazdani, 2020). The construction of highways and railways, bridges and tunnels, and the development of basic infrastructure offer great opportunities for the economies of Central Asian countries. In addition, Belt and Road Projects help Central Asian countries to establish physical and economic connections with each other and with the world. Therefore, the Belt and Road Initiative, which holds a pivotal role in the strategic route of both Central Asian countries and China, has numerous projects and components in Central Asia (Koparkar, 2017). Some of these projects are listed below.

- From China's Lianyungang port to Kazakhstan via St. “Western China-Western Europe” transit corridor to Petersburg. As part of the implementation of this corridor, a 293-kilometer section of the railway (Zhetygen-Altynkol-Khorgos) connecting Kazakhstan to China was completed in 2013 (Sizov, 2021). In 2014, the Sino-Kazakh logistics park in Lianyungang (Jiangsu province) became operational, allowing Central Asian states to reach the Pacific Ocean via China for the first time (Kaya, 2011).
- China-Kazakhstan-Uzbekistan-Turkmenistan-Iran-Türkiye-Europe transport corridor. In part, this route is also linked to the Trans-Caspian International Transport Corridor (European Caucasus-Asia Transport Corridor) and the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway line.
- In the future, the railway in question will be part of the central and southern branches of the Belt going to Europe via the South Caucasus, Iran and Türkiye. The route is believed to be the shortest route from the western regions of China

to the Persian Gulf ports. Participating countries have a common political desire to build a railway; however, many unresolved problems remain, such as metrics, financing conditions, construction, operation, etc.

- China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan and Bishkek-Naryn-Torugart (Kyrgyzstan) highways. In Kyrgyzstan, with the help of China Road and Bridge Corporation, the construction of the second North-South highway, designed to shorten the distance between the cities of Bishkek and Osh and to help accelerate the passage of Chinese goods to Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, is entering the final phase (Sizov, 2021).

Overall, Central Asia has emerged as an attractive region for China, which initiated the Belt and Road Initiative in 2013. All Central Asian countries have responded positively to China's initiative. As Central Asian countries do not have direct access to ocean and sea routes, China's plans to build railways and highways under the Belt and Road Initiative are crucial to enhance connectivity and regional integration. In addition to facilitating the movement of goods and people within and between regions, the implementation of the BRI helps ease the burden on local governments to finance much-needed local projects. However, project financing through loans from Chinese financial institutions could pose threats of financial fragility for borrower countries. Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan carry the largest debt burden among Central Asian countries. Their external debt, as well as their debt to China, exceeds their nominal Gross Domestic Product (GDP). As a result, despite massive investments in Belt and Road infrastructure projects, some countries are still at risk of falling into a major debt spiral.

3.7.2. China's Security Cooperation Initiatives with Central Asian States

After the dissolution of the USSR, China thought that the situation in newly established Central Asia could be accompanied by extremely complex and very worrying processes that could adversely affect the security of the SUÖB, which is the border neighbor of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan (Paramonov, 2021). Unsurprisingly, the main goal of Beijing's policy in Central Asia throughout the 1990s was to establish stability in the northwest by solving border problems and trying to get the newly formed Central Asian countries to accept the “One China” discourse and control the Uyghur diaspora separatist elements in the region (Paramonov & Stolpovskiy, 2008). The Uyghur Question has also

been a particular reason for China's efforts to establish a “Shanghai Quintet” dialogue between China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in 1996 and the institutionalization of the SCO with Uzbekistan in June 2001 (McMillen, 2009).

In addition to stabilizing its neighbourhood with Xinjiang, the SCO helps China strengthen its political ties with Central Asian states and build a common understanding of the non-traditional security threats they face, including terrorism, transnational organized crime, and natural disasters. At the first SCO summit in 2001, member states signed the Shanghai Convention on Combating Terrorism, Separation and Extremism, in which the fight against the "three evil powers" was defined as the main task of the organization. Since then, SCO member countries have signed several documents related to security cooperation, such as the SCO Convention on Combating Terrorism, the Cooperation Agreement on Drugs and the Joint Convention on Combating Crime. The organization's security portfolio has gradually expanded to wider areas, including strategic security, defense, law enforcement, information security, and the fight against transnational organized crime (Mariani, 2013). The SCO has two permanent institutions. These are the Secretariat in Beijing and the Regional Counter-Terrorism Structure in Tashkent (Bolonina, 2019). As a result, SCO has become an important regional mechanism that encourages communication, mutual understanding and cooperation among member states in order to prevent the spread of religious extremism, separatism and terrorism in the region.

However, a more recent analysis shows that Chinese leaders are aware that the multilateral dimension of security within the SCO is not yet developed. In addition, given the expansion of China's economic interests in the region, especially within the framework of the Belt and Road Project, regional security in Central Asia is becoming complex for China. Safe pipeline routes and a stable security environment conducive to investment and project guarantees in Central Asia require China to be more interested in security (Turaeva et al., 2018). Here, on the one hand, the political, economic and military security of the Central Asian states, which guarantees the "fluid" implementation of the Belt and Road Project, on the other hand, the security of the Chinese presence itself is mentioned. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, various international powers tried to “win” the Central Asian market and challenged each other. For example, there is a major shift in economic influence from Russia to China, which is interested in maintaining its advantageous position.

Competition on security concerns primarily the USA, Russia and China, where security is an indispensable condition for the economy (Bolonina, 2019).

In 2015, when Xi explained the importance of military diplomacy as a foreign policy tool, a policy shift from "economy" to "economy and security" became evident. Beijing has repeatedly mentioned securing China's industrial facilities and transportation networks with traditional and non-traditional forms of security, especially for the Belt and Road Project. Non-traditional security here refers to the use of private security companies (Rolland, 2019). For example, the state-owned Chinese National Electronic Import and Export Company has an agreement with the Kyrgyz government on public oversight to protect its interests in the event of anti-Chinese demonstrations. The Chinese railway group involved in the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan Railway Project relies on the security services of Zhongjun Junhong Security Company (Yau, 2019).

As a result, given the growing interest in regional security, China has increased its military presence in the Central Asian region through military exercises and the training of military experts, the expansion of arms assistance, and the creation of military infrastructure within the framework of bilateral relations (Vassily, 2018). China has established the most active cooperation in the fight against terrorism on a bilateral basis with Tajikistan, where it organizes joint military exercises quite regularly, including the protection of critical infrastructure facilities. In addition, China's large investments in Tajikistan and its interest in containing instability from Afghanistan have required China to invest in securing the loosely guarded border between Tajikistan and Afghanistan. Against this background, in 2016, China agreed to finance the construction of 11 border checkpoints and military training bases for Tajik border guards. In the same year, China established the Quadrilateral Cooperation and Coordination Mechanism (QCCM), a multilateral organization that includes China, Tajikistan, Pakistan, and Afghanistan, to improve border control (Sizov, 2020). In addition, a military outpost has been operating as part of the Chinese People's Armed Police in the Mountainous Badakhshan Autonomous Region on the Tajik-Afghan border since 2016. In October 2021, Tajikistan signed an agreement with China to build a second military base for its Special Forces in Badakhshan, near the Vahan Corridor (Ananth, 2021).

Active bilateral interaction between China and Central Asian countries is also seen in military trade. As the defense industry has become increasingly diversified and competitive, Beijing has gradually become an arms exporter with very advantageous prices and supply conditions to the Central Asian military goods market. For example, between 2015 and 2018, China provided 18% of its arms supplies to the region. This is a significant increase compared to 1.5% of arms imports from Central Asia between 2010 and 2014. Until 2014, China's exports were limited to products such as small arms, small-scale military aid, gas tanks and uniforms (Jardine and Lemon, 2019). Over the next five years, however, Central Asian countries received technologically advanced weapons from China, including armed and unarmed Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (S/UAVs) and communications equipment. For example, in September 2018, Kazakhstan purchased eight Chinese Y-8 transport aircraft modeled after the Russian An-12. Turkmenistan imported a QW-2 Vanguard 2 portable anti-aircraft missile modeled after the Russian 9K38 IgLA 2018 from the Chinese military-technical company CATIC. In November 2019, the Uzbekistan Air Defense Forces successfully tested the Chinese medium-range air defense system FD-2000 on a target drone (Jardine and Lemon, 2020).

Another area of bilateral cooperation between China and Central Asian countries in the field of security is the training of Central Asian soldiers at Chinese military universities. China's Ministry of Public Security, which focuses on deepening law enforcement cooperation, offers various training programs for Central Asian security officers in China. Most of these training programs focus on the exchange of experience in counter-terrorism, cyber security, research technology, drug trafficking, and pipeline security (Yau, 2022). For example, the Academy of Homeland Security of Uzbekistan and the University of Public Security of China have been official partners since May 2017. China has admitted 213 officers of the Ministry of Interior of Uzbekistan to courses on combating terrorism and drug trafficking in educational institutions (Jardine and Lemon, 2019). As for military exercises, a total of 12 military exercises were held between China and Central Asian countries on a bilateral basis from 2002 to 2020, nine of which were on a common border with Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan (Yau, 2022). In addition, an important trend in recent years has been the launch of the “2019 Cooperation” series of exercises, which has enabled China to increase the interoperability of local paramilitaries with its People's Armed Police. Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan participated in 2019 and stated that the national guard units received anti-terrorism training for the first time with China (Sadykova, 2020).

As a result, it can be said that the problem of ensuring China's security interests in Central Asia is complex. The current situation in the world forces China to seek new solutions and initiatives to protect its interests at the regional and global level, which leads to the increasing importance of Central Asia for Beijing. Xinjiang's security concerns, as well as the threat of terrorism and the prospect of destabilization in Central Asia, remain a key factor in China's view of security cooperation with Central Asian states. At the same time, new security interests related to the protection of Chinese investments in the region and the elimination of threats from Afghanistan following the withdrawal of US and NATO military forces are attracting more attention and pushing for greater security cooperation with countries in the region.

3.7.3. China's Soft Power in Central Asia

China's demographic and economic superiority has always led to overt or hidden fears that could hinder the development of trade and economic ties and other types of cooperation in Central Asia. Peyrouse points out that the main finding of numerous surveys on China in Central Asia is that "China is seen as a threat to Central Asia" (Peyrouse, 2016). Two main factors can explain the Sinophobic attitude towards China among the people. First, Chinese investments and loans raise suspicion in local communities in Central Asia, where growing fears of public debt and debt traps fuel anti-Chinese sentiment. Second, the influx of Chinese immigrants and China's increasing economic participation in the region, especially the increase in the number of Chinese farmers renting land in Central Asia, greatly worries the public (Vakulchuk and Overland, 2019).

Against this background, Beijing initiated several soft power projects in the early 2000s to create a positive image of the country in the eyes of the local population in Central Asia (Custer et al., 2021). The main study is carried out in two directions. The first aspect is the allocation of funds to the leaderships of the countries of the region for infrastructure projects, projects related to the solution of social problems, health problems, humanitarian aid, etc. For example, China has been the main source of humanitarian aid for Central Asia during the pandemic, as well as technologies, investments and vaccines from COVID-19. Renowned American economist Nouriel Roubini believes that China's economic impact during the COVID-19 pandemic can significantly increase its "soft power" (https://www.wired.com/story/china-flexes-soft-power-covid-diplomacy/). It was also

announced during the “Central Asia-China” online summit on 25 January 2022 that China would provide $500 million in free aid to Central Asian countries for the implementation of socially important projects over the next three years (https://www.asiaplustj.info/ru/news/tajikistan/politics/20220126/kitai-nameren-bezvozmezdno-pomoch-tsentralnoi-azii-millionami-dollarov).

The second aspect of China's soft power is cultural and educational cooperation. In this sense, as in other regions, the main instruments of soft power in Central Asia are Confucius Institutes (based on local universities) and Sinology classes (based on primary and secondary schools) (Zhenpeng, 2017). In addition, in educational assistance projects, Beijing is increasingly focusing on scholarships, technical assistance, and education as ways to attract applicants to Chinese higher education institutions (Custer et al., 2021). There are three strategies Beijing uses to compete with traditional countries that are favored for studying abroad. These include easing visa restrictions, providing government-sponsored scholarships, and reducing language, technical, and geographical barriers by expanding English-speaking service offerings and introducing Mandarin Chinese overseas (Rashid & Lefen, 2018). Thus, according to the Ministry of Education of the PRC, the number of students coming from Kazakhstan in China for 2017 reached 13.2 thousand, approximately 11 thousand from Kyrgyzstan, approximately 5 thousand from Uzbekistan, and 2-3 thousand from Tajikistan. Some of these students are studying within the framework of Chinese scholarship programs. For example, more than 5,000 educational scholarships were awarded to students from the Central Asia region between 2010 and 2018 (Gabrielyan, 2021).

3.7.4. China's International Media Policies as a “Soft Power” Element

For emerging powers like China, soft power and image management are key aspects of their diplomacy. For China, soft power is a power that will make it possible for it to strengthen in the world public opinion and will create understanding, respect and eventually support for its political model and policies. Soft power will also make new friends and allies (D’Hooghe, 2010: 1). However, China still has significant shortcomings in the use of soft power. One of these problems is the imbalance between the soft power and the hard power of the country. The Chinese administration is aware of an imbalance (or mismatch) between the soft power and the hard power of the country (Jian Wang, 2011: 5). Chinese

administrators also emphasize that their countries should be economically strong, but more importantly, culturally strong (Fook, 2010: 549).

Aware that its economic power is not enough to become a "superpower", China has multiplied its efforts to improve its international image through cultural diplomacy and media in the last decade (Yanqiu, 2014). It is noteworthy that China has used "Soft power" (Hongying Wang, 2011: 37), which is a relatively new concept in its discourse, quite effectively in recent years. Considering that the perception of openness and transparency play a key role in the success of soft power (Zhu, 2012: 7), China's understanding of soft power has changed from "opening (its borders)" to "opening to the outside" since 1990 (Li and Ronning, 2013 Cited by: Yanqiu, 2014). China tries to be visible in the international arena and to give the image of a reliable, cooperative, peaceful and developed country to the outside world in order to break down prejudices and gain trust (Akçadağ, 2011). Another image that China tries to place is the image of "benevolent" (Zhu, 2012: 7).

Beijing attaches great importance to the media, which is one of the leading tools of public diplomacy (Kurlantzic, Cited by: Akçadağ, 2011). While many western countries leave the news industries at the mercy of the brutal economic race, China makes long-term-strategic media investments (Nelson, 2013: 32). However, the criticism of China's “lack of credibility” for public diplomacy (D’Hooghe, 2010: 30) also applies to its media. China allocates millions of dollars to broadcasting in order to eliminate this deficiency and to compete with international broadcasting channels such as BBC, CNN, Al Jazeera (D’Hooghe, 2010, p 31).

There are four basic organizations for media activities, which is one of the most basic tools used by China to promote itself outside: Xinhua, China Central Television, China Radio International, China Daily (Li, Cited in: Sak, 2014: 21). These four organizations formed the basis for the media organizations to be established later.

In 2001, after the statement of the then Chinese president Jiang Zemin "Let's spread the voice of China to the whole world", SARFT (The State Administration of Radio Film and Television), the top organization in Radio, Television and Film issues in China, started the expansion project. The project included the establishment of Chinese radio and television channels overseas in five years and multilingual, localized-regionalized broadcasting and journalism in ten years. The Chinese media would become a player in the same global arena

as CNN, the BBC and other Western media companies. The strategy of opening up included CCTV-4 broadcasting internationally in Chinese and CCTV-9 broadcasting internationally in English (Zhu, 2012: 32).

In addition to the traditional media, China also effectively uses the internet as a tool for public diplomacy. Founded in May 2011, the Xinhuanet Corporation LTD publishes in Chinese as well as English, French, Spanish, Arabic, Japanese, Korean, Tibetan and Uyghur (http://news.xinhuanet.com). In addition, there are numerous English-language websites such as People's Daily, Shanghai Daily, Caixin Online, Global Times and so on. Sites organized by the Information Office for the purpose of public diplomacy provide access to information about China in these languages (Lejli, cited in Sak, 2014: 22). These pages contain information about the Chinese language and culture, current news about China, official information or specific topics such as the Tibetan Region (Akçadağ, 2014). However, China also uses social media effectively.

China's use of media is not limited to state media. The Chinese media, which has become very visible especially in Africa in the last decade, broadcast with state media such as CCTV Africa, China Daily Africa Weekly, Beijing Review, Xinhua News Agency, China Radio International (CRI), as well as private digital TV platforms and a private newspaper, Star Times (Yanqiu, 2014).

3.8. The Influence of Central Asian Countries on the Relations between the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation

In order to maximize the national interests of the states, which are the active power in international politics, their achievements in the international arena play an important role. Especially the USA, which is the dominant power of the unipolar structure after the Cold War, has damaged the image of the world's ruling power in line with the only strategies it has carried out in foreign policy since the beginning of the 21st century. This brings with it the search for new power. The fact that Third World countries gained power in the international arena and rose to the level of competition helped bring multipolarity debates to the agenda. As a matter of fact, organizations such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and BRICS, which are offered as alternatives to Western-based institutions and organizations, have highlighted multi-option policy opportunities (Askeroğlu 2017: 57). In

addition, unipolarity has caused criticism from states that are considered regionally strong and unipolar alliances to be made to establish a multipolar world order.In this sense, the Russia-China rapprochement provides an important example. As a matter of fact, China and Russia, which carry out a balance policy on behalf of the predominant power of the USA in the region, are also trying to minimize or equalize the possibility of damage to their countries and international positions due to their problems with the USA.

With the beginning of a new period under the leadership of Mao Tse-tung in 1949, China brought the USSR-China rapprochement. The two ideologically close countries reinforced their multi-dimensional cooperation with the "friendship agreement" they signed in 1950. In this context, the Soviet Union sent experts for the development of China and contributed to economic and infrastructure improvement (Güneş 2015: 840). Reasons such as the losses after the Korean War between 1950-53 and the different interpretation of the ideology between the two countries and the conflict of interest in domestic/foreign policy caused the 1960s to be tense between the two countries. With the withdrawal of the "Friendship Agreement", Russia implemented isolation policies against China (Güneş 2015: 840). As a result, China became closer to the USA in the early 1970s and implemented a balance policy. China, which was a permanent member of the UN Security Council in 1971, acted with the "strategic triangle" policy put forward by Henry Kissinger with the USA and contributed to the isolation of the Soviet Union by cooperating with the USA in the fields of security, economy and politics. Disturbed by China's cooperation with the United States, Russia tried to soften relations with China after 1982. As a matter of fact, factors such as the Taiwan policy of the USA and the trade wars between China and the USA have also contributed to China's affection for Russia's move. In this context, China pursued an equal-distance policy with the USSR-US until after the Cold War (Güneş 2015: 841). With the end of the Cold War, the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991 and the Russian Federation was established in its place. China-Russia relations started with "constructive cooperation" in 1994. In 1995, Boris Yeltsin emphasized that China is important for Russia and stated that he attaches importance to bilateral relations (Akman 2015: 312). In 1996, the rapprochement with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization continued. The two countries, which came together against the unipolar world order, determined these relations as "strategic partners" in 1996. With the rise of Putin in 2000, a "friendship agreement" was signed between Russia and China in 2001, and the two countries decided to develop multilateral cooperation (Güneş 2015: 841).

Russia and China, which want to strengthen geopolitically in global politics, have a strategic partnership in the "Great Alliance" agreement they signed in 2001. The agreement creates an environment of consultation rather than a classical military-political alliance. 9. According to the article, "according to the parties to the agreement, if it is determined that the threat that will disturb the peace and affect the security interests has occurred, Russia and China will come together as soon as possible and consult for the elimination of the said threat". In this way, both the risk of being involved in the war on a single front is eliminated and the concerns that may threaten security in the event of the breakdown of a possible alliance are eliminated. In addition, the idea of security dilemma is prevented by the US and the Western alliance (Askeroğlu 2017: 58)

It is seen that Russia and China act as strategic partners in line with their interests in the region, and sometimes the conflicting elements bring the two countries together as a rival power. In this context, it would be wrong to present the Central Asian dimension of Russian-Chinese relations within a definite framework. How if there is a strategic partnership in order to reach the right conclusions, and why if there are two competing powers? Their questions will guide the Central Asian-based analysis of the relationship between the two countries.

One of the overlapping issues between the two countries in the region is undoubtedly the US presence in the region. In the eyes of Russia and China, the US presence in the region creates a sense of enclosure for the two countries. In addition, the acquisition of bases by the USA within the scope of Asia rather than just Central Asia and the alliance of the countries disturbed by the expansionist foreign policy of China and Russia with the USA indicate a USA that aims to break the influence of Russia and China in the region.

As a result of the wait-and-see policy, the United States, which tried to indirectly build its effectiveness in the region before September 11, 2001, gained an entry visa to the region with the September 11, 2001 attacks and attempted to acquire bases in the region in order to increase its effectiveness in the Central Asian region. This initiative is first answered by Uzbekistan. It is known that airspace was also used in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan with this base during the Afghanistan intervention. Initially, Russia and China supported the US's "peaceful" presence in the region. As a matter of fact, Russia has tried to help the US in many issues such as providing intelligence and opening its airspace to humanitarian aid issues (Akman 2015: 317). However, the US's attempt to extend its presence in the region

beyond its intention to achieve peace was seen as an uncomfortable situation by the two major powers in the region. As a matter of fact, the colorful revolutions in Central Asia, the EU's attempts to integrate with Eastern European countries, the expansion of NATO's sphere of expansion against Russia, the EU's attempt to attract the countries of Georgia, Armenia and the South Caucasus to its side (Ercan 2017: 485) created a perception of threat on the Moscow front and accused the US-EU of breaking the influence of the Kremlin.7 On the other hand, the West's criticism of Moscow with Chechen policies and the Kremlin's anti-democratic characterization (Kamalov 2011: 22), Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 caused serious reactions from the US and EU countries, and as a result of these reactions, Russia's economic and political embargo (Güneş 2015: 842). As it is known, the US and the EU, which banned 38 businessmen from entering the country as a result of Russia's annexation of Crimea, also froze the assets of businessmen in their own countries. In addition, the prohibition of the sale of spare parts, which is important for the Russian industry, to Russia has put the Russian industry in difficulty (Güneş 2015: 850). The decline in oil prices in 2014 also reflected negatively on Russia's economy. As a matter of fact, in order to prevent the depreciation of the ruble, which lost 22% of its value against the world currencies in 2014, a high amount of foreign currency such as 51 billion dollars had to be put on the market. This situation has also negatively affected foreign investments (Güneş 2015: 850). Russia, which is tried to be isolated with the embargo applied, is trying to get out of this situation with China. Russia 's rapprochement with China is a situation where China has an advantage. As a matter of fact, Russia has previously approved the sale of high-tech weapons that it was afraid to give to China. As a result of Western sanctions on Russia, it is seen that China supports Russia's infrastructure investments and cooperates in the field of energy. Russia's developing relations with the West after this crisis have been damaged economically, politically and militarily. In addition, after this crisis, NATO postponed its orientation to Asia and focused on Russia's borders again (Askeroğlu 2017: 59).

On the other hand, it is seen that the USA wants to break the Russian monopoly in the Central Asian region and also targets China, which is an important power. The US orientation towards Asia-Pacific under Bill Clinton and Bush was discussed within a broader program covering the economic and political fields as well as the military field with the Obama period (November 2017: 186-187). The increase in interest in the region with the Obama period has led to the perception of threats by China. The US follows two paths towards China in the region. The first is to cooperate with China and accelerate the

integration process with the world, and the second is to balance and surround China by cooperating with both neighboring countries and potential competitors. During Clinton's visit to China in 1998, he used the term "strategic partner" for China. (Güneş 2011: 346) However, in 2001, the capture of the US spy plane at the Chinese airport and the detention of its personnel caused tension between the two states, and after this incident, US Secretary of State Colin Powell defined China as a "strategic competitor" instead of a "strategic partner" (Güneş 2011: 346). Thus, China became the owner of the new competition for the USA after the Cold War. In this context, the US, which is trying to improve its relations with allied countries in the region in order to surround China in the region, also plays an arbitrator role for disputes between allied powers. As a matter of fact, it is important for the US regional policy to ensure security among the allies before the US reacts to China's containment policies (November 2017: 183).

It is seen that America continues its integration and containment policy despite the definitions of "strategic rival" in order to keep the new rival power under control. As a matter of fact, in 2010, Washington proposed the G-2 formula to Beijing to govern the world based on the USA-China. However, China preferred the option of a multipolar order and rejected the proposal by suggesting that a decision to be taken should be within the framework of the UN (Askeroğlu 2017: 59). When the offer was not accepted by China, the US started to carry out a more active containment policy against China. In this sense, it strives to establish close contacts and bases with the countries where China has problems in the region (Güneş 2015: 851-853). In an effort to keep strong military ties with Australia, the Philippines and Singapore in the region, the US reached an agreement with the country's administration in 2011 to deploy 2,500 US sailors to Australia. The agreement is important in that it represents the first long-term expansion of the US presence in the region since the end of the Vietnam War (November 2015: 91). In addition, the embargo imposed by the USA on China in return for its arms trade with Taiwan is one of the issues that accelerated China's rapprochement with Russia. As a matter of fact, China is the country that imports weapons from Russia, which holds 27% of the world arms trade (Güneş 2015: 858). China and Russia, acting together in response to this policy of the USA, held a joint exercise near the Spratly islands on 29 April-4 May 2012. On the other hand, the US-Philippines held a joint military exercise in the same position on 16-27 April 2012. In addition, the US increased the number of "USS American aircraft carriers" in the region in terms of the safety of the South China Sea (Güneş 2015: 853).

On the other hand, China has allowed the US presence in Asia up to a certain point. As a matter of fact, the US bases in Japan have a satisfactory side for China. Restricting the use of nuclear power by the US by Japan is important for China's security in the region. However, Japan's desire to develop an active defense system due to the fact that China is a rising power and North Korea continues its nuclear activities rapidly in recent years is a move that can change the balances in the region (Güneş 2011: 350). In addition, the US presence and interventions in other regions (such as Taiwan, Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran) are disturbing for China. Factors such as the fact that the US made its foreign policy Asia-centered and made its presence felt in the surrounding regions with the Arab Spring that broke out in the Middle East (such as supporting regime change in Syria, putting pressure on Iran), and the US's conflict with China on Taiwan (Güneş 2015: 842) caused China to feel that it was exposed to the US's policy of surrounding itself and to meet on common ground with Russia. In addition, the presence of the USA in the region is seen as an obstacle for China's moves in the name of energy security (Güneş 2011: 351). In addition, the "National and Regional Missile Shield Project" planned by the USA in 2000 was determined as a threat to both China and Russia. While Russia opposes the national missile shield, China reacts to the regional missile shield project, especially due to the Taiwan issue. This common reaction is another reason that unites Russia and China. As a matter of fact, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said ".. The only threat to Russia is the US missile defense system"clearly explains the disturbing extent of the danger that may exist. Considering in this context, the success of the USA in the project will make the nuclear power assets in the region questionable for Russia and China. This situation will cause the two countries to lose prestige in the international arena and contribute to the rise of the USA in the region (Güneş 2015: 844). When all these are evaluated, the common stance of the Russian-Chinese relationship towards the USA loses its coincidence.

Another issue that causes China-Russia rapprochement is the economic interests of the two countries with expectations from the region. As this situation is carried out with a collective understanding, it is seen that it gains effectiveness with bilateral agreements. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization can be considered as a functional organization in this sense. Russia and China are important powers in the region. Based on the regional domination theories, the Central Asian region, which will attract the attention of the great powers, threatens the fragile structures to enter the sphere of influence of external powers in the first years of their independence (Akman 2015: 315). In this sense, in addition to Russia's

efforts to regain dominance over the former dominance area, which it sees as a "backyard", China's attempts to rapprochement with the region and especially to establish economic relations have come to the fore. In addition, Russia is in an effort to seek support by the members of the organization in order to provide dominance over a region of strategic importance such as Chechnya (exit to the Black Sea, the oil zone of the Grozny region and the transit area of the pipelines coming through Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan). The same is true for China. The Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, its border with Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, India, Pakistan and Mongolia, the existence of important oil and natural gas reserves of the Agricultural Basin region and the presence of three-quarters of the country in this region in terms of underground wealth are of particular importance for China. The existence of separatist movements in East Turkestan has led China to the option of cooperation with the countries in the region (Akman 2015:315).

Russia pursued a pro-Western policy for a short time during the Yeltsin period. However, when it was understood that the foreign policy adopted was not beneficial for the country's economy and that NATO was in the enlargement area, a return to the former dominance area of the CIS took place. In this sense, considering that energy has 26.3% and 6.6% of natural gas and oil reserves in the world, respectively, and that energy covers more than 50% of its exports (Akman 2015: 315-316), it is seen that the return to CIS geography is significant. On the other hand, China's rising economy brings with it the increasing energy need (Akman 2015: 316). This situation directs China to regions where it can import energy without any problems. Central Asia is one of these regions. This situation pushed the two countries to cooperate economically.

It is seen that the energy demand of China, which is the country with the largest population in the world, has increased in the same way in direct proportion to its increasing production. In this context, China, the second energy-importing country in the world, was concentrating on the Middle East region such as Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran and Libya for energy supply until the end of 2010. However, the energy imported from here is faced with the danger of piracy and the threat of getting stuck in the US navies (Güneş 2015: 486). The intervention in Libya and the instabilities in the Middle East have shifted China to Central Asian and Russian energy. In this sense, Russia has serious reserves. Russia, which holds 26.3% of the world's natural gas and 6.6% of its oil, constitutes a significant percentage of Europe's energy needs. As a matter of fact, EU countries, which imported 80% of oil and

55% of natural gas between 2011-12, met their energy needs by 20% and 45% from Russia, respectively (Güneş 2015: 847).

Russia is the third country where China cooperates in the field of energy after Saudi Arabia and Angola. In this context, ESPO, the world's longest pipeline, which was launched in March 2006, started to operate in 2013 (Güneş 2015: 847). This line has an annual capacity of 80 million tons, is 4070 km long and transfers oil between East Siberia and the city of Daqing in northeast China. (Güneş 2015: 847)On the other hand, the Ukraine Crisis in 2014 caused a great reaction on the European front. As a result of these reactions, the embargo imposed on Russia brought Russia closer to China (Öğütçü 1 and Öğütçü 2 2017: 12). The decrease in oil and natural gas prices in 2014 negatively affected the economy of Russia, which is an oil exporter. Oil and natural gas trade, which constitutes 50% of the country's exports and 70% of export revenues, has also revealed a situation in favor of China in the agreements between China and Russia (Öğütçü 1 and Öğütçü 2 2017: 13).

On the other hand, at the meeting where the presidents of the two countries met in 2014, Chinese President Xi Jinping emphasized the necessity of increasing the projects carried out with Russia on natural gas and oil supply and stated that they were in favor of cooperation on other issues such as nuclear energy and electricity. As a result, Russia, which wants to develop alternative energy, is supported by China, which is eager to provide cheap energy. In 2016, the first green bonds of the BRICS Development Bank of China, Russia, India, Brazil and South Africa, which were shown as an alternative to the IMF, were issued. It is seen that this money has been agreed to be used on ecological issues, including alternative energy. Chinese companies are also willing to invest in the construction of Russia's solar and wind power plants. The share of alternative energy used in Russia in all energy used is 17%. This rate was not available before 2013. One of the projects carried out jointly with China is the construction of Power China mini plants with the RusHydro plant operator, which is Russia's hydroelectric power (Grinder 1 and Grinder 2 2017: 14).

China is also Russia's largest trading partner. In this context, it can be said that Chinese goods are abundant in the Russian market. During his visit to Shanghai on April 20, 2014, Putin decided to launch the CR929 aircraft, a joint Chinese-Russian aircraft, by 2025, by agreeing to build a long-haul passenger and transport aircraft to compete with Airbus A380 US aircraft (Güneş 2015: 849). In addition, against the global hegemony of the US

dollar, the leaders of the two countries in cooperation with VTB Bank and Bank of China decided to transform the Chinese currency, the Yen, into a regionally strong currency by using it in bilateral trade (Güneş 2015: 849-850). On the other hand, the trade volume between the two countries reached 100 billion dollars in 2018. In 2024, this figure is aimed to be 200 billion dollars. On the other hand, in his speech during his meeting with Xi Jinping in 2014, Putin emphasized that it was a remarkable figure when evaluating his developing relations with China. China's invitation to Russia to participate in the "Belt and Road Initiative" is welcomed by Russia and it is seen that Russia is very willing to connect the Trans-Eurasian railway line to the Silk Road Economic Belt and Maritime Silk Road. If this happens, a more developed cooperation between the two countries is likely to take place.

There is an asymmetric situation in favor of China in the developing trade between Russia and China. Although China is the most important trade partner for Russia, the same is not true for China. The most important trade partners with which Beijing has a foreign trade surplus are the USA and the EU. When viewed on a country basis, this can be seen as the USA and Russia. However, from this point of view, while Russia is becoming increasingly dependent on China in terms of trade, there are alternatives for China. China-Russia arms trade has also gained a position in favor of China in the region. In 2014, China agreed with Russia to supply 24 Su-35 fighter jets worth 1.5 billion dollars. In addition, the fact that Russia sold the S-400, the most effective air defense system with a range of 400 km, to China in 2015 helps China to rise militarily in the region and make China more effective against Japan. Again in 2015, a military exercise was held in the Mediterranean, where NATO member countries were deployed in China-Russia cooperation (Güneş 2015: 858). A militarily rising China may cause relations with Russia to become controversial in the long run.

Another factor in the China-Russia rapprochement in the region is that they are advocates of a multipolar structure. The imperialist understanding brought about by the rule-free foreign policy structure of the USA contradicts the interests of China and Russia both in the regional and international arena. In the face of this situation, it is seen that two important powers in cooperation express their thoughts mostly through collective organizations. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization is the foremost organization in this sense. Although the SCO comes to the fore in order to defend the multipolar system for the

two countries, it also has an important function to ensure regional security. In this context, the effect of the SCO on China-Russia relations is examined below.

Although Russia and China act as a strategic partner in the military/security field, the two countries also have issues to consider as competitors. From a regional perspective, China and Russia can be seen as potential competitors for each other (Güneş 2015: 859). As a matter of fact, Central Asia, which is Russia's vital area of interest, is in a position that cannot be ignored for China's important energy, trade area and security. China is seen as an alternative that diversifies Russia's monopoly energy lines in the region. As a matter of fact, in 2006, with CNPC, Kazmuney gas started to be supplied through a 965 km oil pipeline from Atasu in the Karagasan region to Alashankou in the Xinjiang region of China. The pipeline, which had a carrying capacity of 2.2 million tons in 2006, reached a carrying capacity of 10 million tons in 2008, 12 million tons in 2011 and 20 million tons in 2013 with the addition of new stations. Another project of China that disables Russia is the TAPI project, which will import energy to China from THE Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India connection. It also signed an agreement with Uzbekistan on oil and natural gas in 2006. In this context, it is seen that China has taken its place in the competition for access to Caspian resources (Iqbal and Afridi 2017: 237).

China is also an important trading partner for Central Asian countries. Considering the trade volume between China and Central Asian countries, it reached $465 million in 1992, $7.7 billion in 2004, and $29 billion in 2010, surpassing Russia ($22 billion). In addition, the country with the largest share in China's trade between Central Asian countries in 2009 was Kazakhstan with $13.8 billion. On the other hand, it also signs bilateral agreements with the countries of the region for road and railway construction (Iqbal and Afridi 2017: 239). China will play a decisive role in improving the infrastructure of Central Asian countries and integrating them into the world if China's important initiative “One Belt One Road”, which aims to connect many regions in the world, takes place actively (November 2019)

On the other hand, China's arms trade with Ukraine (Güneş 2015: 859) and Russia's export of submarines and warships to Vietnam and India, which have tense relations with China, reflect negatively on the strategic relations between the two countries. Güneş 2015: 859). From this point of view, on the one hand, two countries are trying to improve economic

relations and on the other hand, they are looking for alternative partners and developing projects in order to reduce dependence on each other.

China, the rising power in the region, is met with concern by Russia despite its developing relations. In this sense, it is seen that Russia pursues a cautious foreign policy. As a matter of fact, with Putin's return to power in 2012, the fact that he made his first trip to Belarus and then to the countries that were his former dominance is an important clue for determining the priority order. It also considers alternatives other than China in security matters. As a matter of fact, Russia has tried to take a dominant role in security over Central Asian countries with the Collective Security Treaty Organization. On the other hand, it is seen that China does not include Russia in the Asian Community. Thus, Russia did not take part in the ASEAN+3 cooperation organization formed with Southeast Asian countries. The Moscow administration, on the other hand, is cautious about the wishes of Chinese investors. As a matter of fact, the attempts to prevent China from being the only customer as a supplier of oil and natural gas in Siberia are an important move for Russia's foreign policy to reduce its dependence on China (Akman 2015: 320).

The fact that the trade between the two countries is in favor of China reflects negatively on Russia-China relations. While Russia exports raw materials such as minerals, pulp and timber to China, China exports machinery and technological materials to Russia. In this sense, the advantage has passed into the hands of China (Akman 2015: 324). This is a matter of concern for the Russian people. As a result of a study conducted by the Russian Public Opinion Research Center, as high as 60% of Russians have the opinion that cooperation with China leads to unemployment in the country (Akman 2015: 324). Russia has tried to balance itself by establishing a Customs Union in the region against the developing Chinese economy. The union, which consists of Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, also serves the purpose of establishing an EU system. As a result of seeing China as a competing power in the long term, Russia is trying to maintain its relations with Central Asian countries in the context of the Collective Security Treaty Organization and the Eurasian Economic Development Organization, where China does not take part, except for the SCO, in which it is in the same body with China (Kamalov 2011: 9). This situation is disturbing for China (Akman 2015: 324).

The Central Asian dimension in Russia and China relations is proceeding on a careful ground. Considering the common interests, it is seen that more cautious steps are taken in the short term. However, the fact that there is competition between the two important powers in terms of underground riches and especially hydrocarbon resources also feeds the idea that the two powers may face each other in the future (Oliphant 2013: 11). So far, it can be thought that task sharing has been made in Central Asia in the Russian-Chinese strategic partnership. Rather than being a planned practice, it has been shaped in line with the expectations of Russia and China in the region. In this context, while Russia tries to exist intensively in Central Asia with its security and political elements, China is more interested in the economic field. This situation shows that China-Russia relations will proceed under the title of "strategic partner" in the short and medium term.

CONCLUSION

One of the concepts that will not lose its importance in international relations is the concept of power. Many theorists have speculated on the concept of power, such as Morgenthau, Mearsheimer, Dahl, and Holsti. The concept of power has become important in the discipline of international relations with the realist theory gaining weight in the discipline. The concept, which is mostly identified with military capacity in realist theory, has also begun to be measured with other non-military capacities with the increase of theoretical diversity within the discipline. Before the Cold War and during the Cold War period, the idea of making gains by taking advantage of the compelling effect of military and economic elements was dominant. However, these methods have lost their importance due to their high costs and developments in technology and socio-cultural areas, and in parallel, methods with a softer side of power have emerged. The concept of soft power, which can be defined as the ability to attract without using force, has emerged. Although the concept of soft power has been present in the historical process of human life, its conceptualization and introduction to the literature date back to the 1990s.

The concept of soft power was introduced to the literature by Joseph Nye. The concept of soft power was essentially addressed by Nye with a US-oriented approach to substantiate that the power of the US was not in a state of decline, however, in his later works on the subject, the concept was subjected to a systematic evaluation, and attracted the attention of academic circles. The concept of soft power assumed prominence due to the fact that hard power methods did not yield the desired results and the phenomenon of globalization was at the forefront. Due to the advancement of the Internet, printed and visual media, and communication tools, there has been an interaction between cultures, and an occurrence in one region has become a catalyst for events in other regions. Consequently, states that want to utilize the seductive effect of power have frequently resorted to this method. States like the USA, China, France, Germany, France, Germany, and Türkiye are also practicing soft power instruments today.

Soft power is a form of power that enables an actor to empathize effectively, which does not involve hard power elements, and which influences an actor through attraction and captivation. It is relatively a more time-consuming method compared to hard power. At the same time, it is important not to presume that soft power is a method that can be applied to

all policies pursued by a country in order to realize its objectives. It is neither a method that can be substituted for hard power. An actor's ability to achieve the desired results depends on the type of power that can be chosen according to the conjuncture, the characteristics of the system, and the respective capacity of the country. Therefore, we cannot say with absolute precision which form of power is more effective for each country. Considering the power potential of Türkiye, it is safe to say that Türkiye needs to utilize its soft power potential. Needless to say, while utilizing this potential, hard power potential should not be neglected. The soft power potential of Türkiye comes from its history, culture, and geographical location. Located on the intersection of the Middle East, the Balkans, and the Caucasus, Türkiye is at the crossroads of some of the greatest power struggles in history. Considering the global rivalries in the region, it would be appropriate to pursue a foreign policy based on a soft power approach. As the inheritor of the Ottoman Empire, Türkiye has the potential to utilize its soft power capabilities in a wide area from the Balkans to the Caspian Sea, from Africa to the Middle East. Furthermore, belonging to the Muslim faith of the Turkish people might also be considered as another contributing factor.

Türkiye is currently at an advantageous level in utilizing its historical, cultural, religious, and linguistic resources. Through its public diplomacy activities, Türkiye has succeeded in creating a positive perception of Turks in every region in which it is actively involved. In addition to the institutions carrying out public diplomacy activities, private sector organizations, non-governmental organizations, and the media have also fulfilled significant functions. In addition to the policies carried out by the Republic of Türkiye, the Turkish television and film industry also contributes significantly. Turkish films and TV series are particularly popular in the Balkans, the Middle East, and Central Asia. In fact, in societies where admiration for Turks and the Turkish culture is instilled thanks to these movies and TV series to the extent that newborn children are named after the characters in the movies, and people visit the places featured in the TV series and movies, are among the indicators that Türkiye's foreign policy has the ability to achieve its goals in the years to come. The discourse and the adopted attitudes of Turkish foreign policy are considered to be another vital factor. Especially the Palestinian conflict and the “one-munite” situation have increased the admiration for Türkiye in the Middle East. However, the Arab uprisings in the region and the widespread use of hard power have put Türkiye's soft power in a precarious position.

In this regard, Türkiye has restored the love of the people of the region with its military operations against terrorist organizations in Syria. Public diplomacy institutions and organizations have accomplished and are accomplishing important deeds in the implementation of Turkish soft power policies. Institutions such as TIKA, TURKSOY, Public Diplomacy Coordination Office, Yunus Emre Institutes, YTB, etc. contribute positively to Türkiye's image in their respective areas of activity by carrying out many projects in the fields of education, culture, health, religion, and social affairs. "Türkiye's Soft Power Policies in Central Asia: A Comparative Analysis" focuses on policies towards Central Asia. After the Central Asian Republics gained their independence, Türkiye took the first steps to establish relations with the countries of the region by recognizing these countries. In order to define the changes and achievements in Türkiye's Central Asia policy, we can divide it into two periods. The first period is the period from independence until 2001. The second period is the period from the AK Party rule until today. In the first period, Türkiye was undoubtedly caught unprepared for the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Türkiye was also affected by these global transformations and new avenues emerged in its foreign policy. The historical, cultural, and linguistic commonalities with the Central Asian Republics, which declared their independence, provided Türkiye with significant benefits. In the post-independence period, they started to look for a model for themselves. In this context, Türkiye's common cultural, linguistic, and religious ties with the peoples of the region have been increasingly highlighted both domestically and internationally as Türkiye's most important asset in the region. Central Asian Republics have also drawn closer to Türkiye in order to consolidate their independence and complete their transformation. This rapprochement of the Central Asian Republics led to the emergence of discourses such as "the great Turkic world from the Adriatic to the Great Wall of China" and "Turkic Union", which were voiced by Turkish politicians of the period. However, due to these unrealistic discourses and the unwillingness of these newly independent states to enter under a single structure, the Turkic summits did not yield the desired results. In addition, Türkiye came to the realization at that time that the lack of a lingua franca with Central Asian leaders was another challenge.

Due to the erroneous policies, unfulfilled promises and unrealistic discourses that Türkiye created in the region without taking Russia and Russian minorities into account, it could not achieve the desired rate of gain in this period. Türkiye made high-level visits to the region during this period. After these visits, Türkiye made serious investments and aids

to the region. It entered into positive relations with the Central Asian Republics by establishing telecommunications and flight lines, providing scholarships to Central Asian students at Turkish universities and schools, and providing training courses to Central Asian diplomats and businessmen. Türkiye has done positive works in the region through TİKA and Eximbank. Turkish companies have taken important roles in the establishment of the necessary infrastructures. Turkish universities were opened in the region. Although Türkiye made necessary and significant investments and aids in the region in the first period, it could not achieve sufficient gains due to its faulty policies and the attitudes of the political elites. In the following period, political and economic instability, ideological conflict of coalition governments, Türkiye's full membership process to the EU have reduced its interest in the region due to reasons such as.

After Türkiye's application for full membership to the EU was rejected in 1997, although Türkiye turned to the region again with the rhetoric of nationalist politicians and soldiers in Central Asia, Türkiye turned its face to the west again in 1999 when the EU nominated Türkiye as a candidate country again. With the AK Party government coming to power in 2002, there was a change in foreign policy. Throughout the AK Party governments, we see that Türkiye wants to carry out Central Asian policies on the basis of economy and language-culture. For this reason, technical aids, scholarships, and cooperation in various fields such as education, economy, culture, and religion have been provided. In the post-2002 period, cultural studies were emphasized in Central Asian policies. In particular, the issue of language has become an important issue. Language is a unifying element. Therefore, the opinion on the development of a common alphabet and written language is dominant. After this period, mutual training activities were developed. Schools and universities have been opened. Tika, TURKSOY, YTB, DIB, TURKPA studies continue to increase. In the post-2002 period, the institutionalization of the projects and activities taken in the first period and the establishment of a common mechanism are carried out.

For today, Türkiye is among the important countries that pursue a soft power based foreign policy. Türkiye has managed to turn its negative image in the past in a positive direction during the period of AK Party governments. When we look at Türkiye's Central Asia policies, the recent policy shows great differences compared to the first period. Türkiye's Central Asia policies after 2002 have more realistic traces.

Considering the economic situation of Türkiye and the conditions of the region, Türkiye is implementing its soft power potential better than in the first period. Considering the current strategies, we can say that he is carrying out long-term projects. Soft power, as it was said at the beginning, requires a long process. In short, one of the main questions of the thesis is "Does Türkiye really have soft power in the region?" we give the answer to the question. In summary, Türkiye pursues a long-term, more abstract policy in the post-2002 period. Projects covering studies such as language, education, culture. Currently, Türkiye does not have the desired level of power in the region.

Although Türkiye carries out activities in a wide range of fields from education to religion, the capacities of these activities are not sufficient. Investments made in the region or in the form of projects are shown to be too large by the Turkish authorities. In addition, one of the biggest mistakes is to express the end of all soft power activities as economic transformation, although the formation of economic-based relations has paved the way for cooperation in other areas. While examining Türkiye's soft power potential, soft power resources and policies for the region, which are the main reasons for the study titled the role of soft power in Turkish foreign policy and the example of Central Asia, the reasons why Türkiye is not at the desired level in this regard have also been identified. We can explain the recommendations for these missing points as follows; Türkiye should see each state as independent and equal. Although we have common denominators, the result is interdependencies.

Although Turkish companies operate in the region, they are not sufficiently effective. Activities in the field of education, culture and religion should be made more qualified. Public diplomacy institutions operating in the region should act more healthily. Healthier data should be collected from the region, research centers should be established and developed. Improving relations with Uzbekistan and Tajikistan states will further strengthen Türkiye's position in the region. Türkiye should turn to medium, long-term and possible policies, and the institutions and officials at every stage of the implementation of these policies should remain loyal to their duties.

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