THE REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE
SOCIAL SCIENCES UNIVERSITY OF ANKARA
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

AN ANALYSIS OF TURKISH SOFT POWER POLITICS IN CENTRAL ASIA DURING AK PARTY ERA (2002-2023)

Master's Thesis

Aslı YANIK

International Relations

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ABSTRACT

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 only instrument to achieve a certain purpose. Today, where technology, information and globalization are developing rapidly, the perception of power in the international system has also changed. The importance of soft power, which takes its source from a country's culture, political values and foreign policy, has increased especially after the Cold War. Soft power refers to a nation's ability to influence others through attraction, persuasion, and non-coercive means. Türkiye, with its rich historical and cultural heritage, geographic location, and contemporary achievements, has established itself as a significant player in the realm of soft power. This study, which was prepared to understand the role of soft power and soft power tools using in Turkish foreign policy and the use, place and importance of soft power in Central Asia, aims to reveal Türkiye's potential, fields of activity and practices in this field. In this context, this thesis aims to address the following questions: How has the AK Party's tenure influenced Türkiye's soft power initiatives and effectiveness in Central Asia? How do the activities of state-supported institutions reflect Türkiye's increased emphasis on soft power in Central Asia during the AK Party era? This thesis covers the period from 2002 to 2023. As a method, qualitative and descriptive study of the Turkish Soft Power Politics towards the newly independent Central Asian Republics were used. For this purpose, newspapers and internet-based news sources, especially books and articles written in this field, were also consulted. As the hypothesis of the study, Türkiye's use of soft power in Central Asia is more effective between 2002-2023. The result is that after the Central Asian Republics gained their independence in 1991, soft power came to the fore in Türkiye's regional policies. Türkiye has followed soft power strategies in Central Asia, especially in the fields of education, culture, social economy, religion and foreign policy. Türkiye's soft power influence is a result of its rich history, cultural heritage, economic growth, and various diplomatic efforts. By leveraging its cultural assets, cuisine, economic strength, and humanitarian initiatives, Türkiye effectively engages with the global community, building connections and enhancing its global standing. In an increasingly interconnected

world, Turkish soft power serves as a means of fostering understanding, building relationships, and contributing positively to global dynamics.

Key Words: Soft Power, Hard Power, Türkiye's Central Asia Foreign Policy, Soft Power Tools, Foreign Policy.

ÖZET

AK PARTİ DÖNEMİNDE ORTA ASYA'DAKİ TÜRK YUMUŞAK GÜÇ POLITIKALARININ ANALİZİ

Uluslararası ilişkiler tarihine bakıldığında, devletler belirli bir amaca ulaşmanın neredeyse tek yolunu askeri unsurları, askeri gücü kullanmayı yani sert gücün kullanımı olarak algılamışlardır. Bugün teknoloji, bilgi ve küreselleşmenin hızla geliştiği bir dönemde, uluslararası sistemde güç algısı da değişmiştir. Bir ülkenin kültüründen, siyasi değerlerinden ve dış politikasından beslenen yumuşak gücün önemi, özellikle Soğuk Savaş sonrasında artmıştır. Yumuşak güç, bir ülkenin diğerlerini çekicilik, ikna ve zorlamaya dayanmayan yöntemlerle etkileme yeteneğini ifade eder. Türkiye, zengin tarihi ve kültürel mirası, coğrafi konumu ve çağdaş başarılarıyla yumuşak güç alanında önemli bir oyuncu olarak kendini kabul ettirmiştir. Bu çalışma, Türk dış politikasında yumuşak gücün rolünü ve yumuşak güç araçlarının kullanımını anlamak, Orta Asya'da yumuşak gücün kullanımının yeri ve önemini ortaya koymak amacıyla hazırlanmıştır. Bu bağlamda, AK Parti döneminin, Türkiye'nin Orta Asya'daki yumuşak güç girişimlerinin sayısını ve niteliğini nasıl etkilediği? Devlet destekli kuruluşların faaliyetleri, AK Parti döneminde Türkiye'nin Orta Asya'da yumuşak güce verdiği vurgunun yansımalarını nasıl yansıtmaktadır? sorularına cevaplar aranmıştır. Bu tez, 2002'den 2023'e kadar olan dönemi kapsamaktadır. Yöntem olarak, Türk Dış Politikasının Yeni Bağımsız Orta Asya Cumhuriyetleri'ne Yönelik Yumuşak Güç Politikalarının nitel ve tanımlayıcı bir çalışması kullanılmıştır. Bu amaçla, özellikle bu alanda yazılan kitaplar ve makaleler olmak üzere gazete ve internet tabanlı haber kaynaklarına başvurulmuştur. Çalışmanın hipotezi olarak, Türkiye'nin Orta Asya'da yumuşak gücü kullanımının 2002-2023 yılları arasında daha etkili olduğu ileri sürülmüştür. Sonuç olarak, Orta Asya Cumhuriyetleri'nin 1991 yılında bağımsızlıklarını kazandıktan sonra, yumuşak güç Türkiye'nin bölgesel politikalarında öne çıkmıştır. Türkiye, Orta Asya'da özellikle eğitim, kültür, sosyal ekonomi, din ve dış politika alanlarında yumuşak güç stratejilerini takip etmiştir. Türkiye'nin yumuşak güç etkisi, zengin tarih, kültürel miras, ekonomik büyüme ve çeşitli diplomatik çabaların bir sonucudur. Kültürel varlıklarını, mutfağını, ekonomik gücünü ve insani girişimlerini kullanarak Türkiye,

etkili bir şekilde küresel toplumla etkileşimde bulunur, bağlar oluşturur ve küresel konumunu artırır. Giderek daha fazla bağlantılı bir dünyada, Türk yumuşak güç anlayışını teşvik etmek, ilişkileri geliştirmek ve küresel dinamiklere olumlu katkıda bulunmak için bir araç olarak hizmet eder.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Türkiye'nin Orta Asya Dış Politikası, Yumuşak Güç Araçları, Sert Güç, Kamu Diplomasisi, Yumuşak Güç ve Dış Politika.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AA	**:** Anadolu Agency
AK PARTY	**:** Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (Justice and Development Party)
BOP	**:** Great Student Project
BSEC	**:** Black Sea Economic Cooperation
CENTO	**:** Central Treaty Organization
DAC	**:** Development Assistance Committee
EU	**:** European Union
OIC	**:** Organization of the Islamic Conference xi
OSCE	**:** Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
RCD	**:** Regional Cooperation for Development
TIKA	**:** Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency
TRT	**:** Turkish Radio and Television Corporation
TURKSOY	**:** International Turkish Culture Organization
USSR	**:** Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
YEE	**:** Yunus Emre Institution
YTB	**:** Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Power is the capacity to exert influence over others in order to bring about desired results. Power may also refer to a state's capacity to influence or control other states or events in order to achieve particular goals. (Griffiths 2013) In the field of international politics, soft power is a strategy that uses appeal and persuasion rather than coercion or force to exert influence on other countries. Soft power essentially involves influencing others' preferences by appealing to their interests and creating an air of fascination. Soft power is a strategy that uses cultural, artistic, and scientific components as opposed to hard power, which incorporates economic, political, or military actions. Soft power is developed within the realm of diplomacy using a variety of techniques, including education diplomacy, science diplomacy, public diplomacy, and digital diplomacy.

In 1990, Joseph Nye introduced a groundbreaking concept called "soft power" as an alternative tool to hard power American foreign policy. Since then, this notion has gained tremendous significance in the realm of international relations. Nye defines "soft power" as a country's ability to sway and persuade others to align with its objectives, without resorting to coercion or force. (Sönmezoğlu 2017) It can be seen as a diplomatic art of achieving desired outcomes by employing convincing methods. Soft power primarily revolves around the realms of knowledge, allure, and personal preferences (Sönmezoğlu 2017). The emergence of international organizations, the increasing empowerment of non-governmental entities, the growing influence of non-state actors, and the advancements in global media have ignited a vibrant discourse around the concepts of "hard power," "soft power," and "smart power." According to Nye, the underlying principle of soft power lies in the idea that when a country succeeds in accomplishing something, other nations naturally aspire to emulate it, rendering coercive tactics unnecessary (Nye 2009).While soft power and hard power share a common objective of influencing others and achieving goals, they diverge in their approach and resource utilization. Hard power predominantly relies on coercion and persuasion to assert dominance, whereas soft power operates through the allure of one's culture and values, or skillful manipulation of political agendas to further their interests. As a result, others may feel compelled to align with the manipulator's

preferences, convinced that their own aspirations are either unrealistic or less desirable (Nye 2002).

In order to understand nature of soft power, soft power tools need to be explained and analyzed these tools are carefully analyzed. There are important soft power tools. These tools enhance a country's attractiveness, influence, and credibility on the global stage. One of these tools is public diplomacy. It is a term that is widely used and defined as well. This term, which is formed by combining the concepts of diplomacy associated with the government and public and official diplomats, means the inclusion of non-state actors, non-governmental concepts, and non-governmental organizations in foreign policy. It can be possible to divide into two branches: traditional and new public diplomacy. (Nye 2005). Traditional public diplomacy, related to governments' addressing to the global public, involves public efforts to be involved in national goals and foreign policies; it also aims to inform and influence these publics (Nye 2006). Public diplomacy is based on the principle that countries can better explain world values. Countries that can skillfully use elements such as science, art, sports, culture, and education, which are defined as "soft power", can become a point of attraction. Public diplomacy tools that enable interaction between communities; provides economic, political, cultural cooperation and friendships (Özkan and Öztürk 2012).

Distinct from traditional diplomacy, public diplomacy is targeted towards non-governmental actors and public sentiment, rather than the governments of other countries. (Doğan 2012). Traditional diplomacy to give messages; public diplomacy can be said to focus on developing relationships (Nye 2010)States must pay attention to three dimensions of public diplomacy. First comes the daily communication dimension, which includes the disclosure of political decisions using the internal and external press. While doing this, you should be quick so that misunderstandings and/or misleading information can be avoided. The second is the strategic communication dimension, which includes running campaigns in line with government policies and creating institutions to run them. The third is the development of permanent relationships. The development of these relationships includes scholarships, exchange programs, training, seminars, conferences, etc. can be done through tools. States should make plans to cover all three dimensions. (Nye 2008). States must win the minds and hearts of the people in order to be permanent and successful in other

countries. This added a new dimension to perceptions about being powerful and successful in international politics.

In the case of Türkiye's soft power politics in Central Asia, Türkiye used its soft power in the region extensively, especially during the AK Party Government. Turkish soft power tools has been successfully developed to increase Türkiye's presence in Central Asia. This thesis, therefore, provides an analysis of Türkiye's relations with the Central Asian Republics in terms of its soft power politics in the region and examines Türkiye's soft power tools in the implementation and the application of the Turkish soft power in Central Asia.

1.1. Problem Statement

Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Türkiye's relations with Central Asia have traversed various phases, experiencing both favorable and unfavorable periods. However, the current trajectory of Turkish-Central Asian ties has witnessed a notable acceleration. To ascertain the impact of Turkish soft power in fostering these improved relations, this study aims to examine the role played by Turkish soft power in these partnerships. Türkiye has recently expanded the horizons of its soft power strategies. Consequently, this research will explore the correlation between the utilization of Turkish soft power strategy in Central Asia and the most significant recent transformations in relations between Türkiye and the Central Asian Republics. Existing studies analyzing Türkiye's soft power policies in Central Asia Türkiye's soft power tools' pivotal role in the region are not sufficient. The primary objective of this study is to analyze Türkiye's utilization of soft power in Central Asia and investigate and how do the activities of state-supported institutions reflect Türkiye's increased emphasis on soft power in Central Asia during the AK Party era.

1.2. Research Questions

This thesis will try to look for answers to the following questions

1. How has the AK Party's tenure influenced Türkiye's soft power initiatives and effectiveness in Central Asia?
2. How do the activities of state-supported institutions reflect Türkiye's increased emphasis on soft power in Central Asia during the AK Party era?

1.3. Research Aims and Objectives

The aim of this thesis is to study the Turkish-Central Asian Republics relations in terms of Turkish Soft Power strategy and examine the Turkish soft power tools devising and affecting Türkiye’s foreign relations between in Central Asia. The primary aim of this research is to comprehensively analyze Turkey's soft power initiatives in Central Asia between the years 2002 and 2013. The study seeks to provide an in-depth understanding of how Turkey utilized its cultural, economic, and diplomatic tools to project influence and strengthen its relations with Central Asian countries during this period. By examining the strategies, successes, challenges, and impact of Turkey's soft power efforts, the research aims to contribute to a nuanced comprehension of the dynamics shaping Turkey's foreign policy in the region. There are research objectives are to assess the extent to which Turkey's soft power initiatives contributed to regional stability in Central Asia, particularly in terms of conflict resolution, economic development, and cultural exchange., to provide a historical overview of Turkey's relations with Central Asian countries before 2002, laying the foundation for understanding the context of its soft power efforts during the selected timeframe and to identify and categorize the specific soft power tools deployed by Turkey in Central Asia, including cultural exchanges, economic cooperation, educational programs, and diplomatic engagement. To this end, this research will study the Turkish Soft Power tools and politics between 2002-2023 and find out the contributions of Turkish soft power tools in process of this politics.

1.4. Significance and the Purpose of the Research

Due to the scarcity of research in existing literature on Türkiye's soft power tools’ role in utilizing soft power for Türkiye's foreign policy towards the Central Asia, as well as the nascent state of studying the factors influencing Türkiye's soft power and the decision-making processes impacting its soft power tools, each investigation in this domain holds tremendous significance and originality. Hence, this thesis stands poised to bridge the existing knowledge gap by offering invaluable insights. Moreover, the concept of power in the realm of international relations has undergone a profound transformation in the wake of technological advancements and global connectivity, which have ushered in a departure from conventional state-centric relations and fostered enhanced global interactions among individuals. Consequently, it becomes

imperative to acknowledge the role of soft power and its associated instruments within the context of communication and the information society. In light of this, the dynamics, evolution, and application domains of soft power, along with the decision-making mechanisms influencing its utilization, have been extensively explored. Thus, the inclusion of an assessment of soft power tools in evaluating the implementation of soft power, accompanied by real-world examples, endows this study with a distinctive and invaluable contribution. While the existing literature has scrutinized the components of soft power in the Türkiye-Central Asia relationship from both state and non-state perspectives Türkiye's employment of soft power in its Central Asia foreign policy, as well as practical instances thereof, remains an unexplored area. By delving into how Soft Power tools has been shaped and influenced and Türkiye's utilization of soft power in its Central Asia foreign policy between 2002-2023, this thesis presents an original analysis that enriches the existing literature in a truly unique manner.

1.5. Research Methodology

The primary objective of this study is to comprehend, analyze, and elucidate Türkiye's soft power tools in Central Asia. The research methodology employed for this purpose is qualitative and descriptive in nature. This section will elaborate on the research methods, data collection instruments, and data analysis process. This study adopts a qualitative research approach. Qualitative research is used to understand complex subjects, conduct in-depth analysis, and comprehend participants' perspectives. Given the objective of understanding the impact of soft power tools on Türkiye's Central Asia policies, this approach is well-suited. For this purpose, I examined various books and articles written on the subjects. I studied activity reports of exchange programs and humanitarian aids of YTB and TİKA, TDV and Yunus Emre Institute. Document analysis and literature review serve as the data collection methods in this study. Various sources such as academic articles, books, news outlets, and official documents have been scanned and analysed to comprehend Türkiye's Central Asia policies, soft power tools, and their utilization. The collected data is analysed using content analysis. This method is used to identify and understand themes and patterns within documents. The data is initially qualitatively coded and then themes and relationships beneath these codes are extracted. This study is designed as a qualitative research endeavour aimed at comprehending Türkiye's soft power tools in Central Asia. Data is collected through document analysis and literature review, and

content analysis method is utilized for data analysis. The findings of this research will provide significant insights into the impact and role of soft power tools used in Türkiye's Central Asia policies.

1.6. Research Scope

Türkiye's Soft Power practices have been carried out in a wide range of geographies from Asia to Africa, from Europe and the Balkans to Latin America. The policies implemented in the Asian region are particularly significant as Türkiye aims to develop the potential for cooperation with the Asia, which has historical and cultural ties, through its "New Asia" initiative in recent years. However, the research scope of this study covers the application of Türkiye's Soft Power in Central Asia geography. The study examines the relationship between Türkiye and the newly independent republics of Central Asia from the Soft Power perspective since 2002. It also evaluates effectiveness and activities of soft power tools in Turkish Soft Power politics and its development and implementation towards Central Asia. The Study tries to answer the question of whether soft power politics has been effective in the development of relations between Türkiye and Central Asian countries. The Study also examines the influence and competence of Türkiye’s soft power tools in the Central Asia.

1.7. Limitations of the Thesis

In this study, the foreign policy relations between Türkiye and the Central Asian countries are based on the using of soft power through various instruments and agreements. The shaping of this soft power has been analyzed. However, the historical, ethnic, and religious ties between the people of the region and the Turkish nation are crucial factors in the effective utilization of soft power. These factors have not been examined in this study. Also, this thesis is subject to several limitations in its examination of the soft power relationship between Türkiye and Central Asian countries. The constraints are primarily attributed to the inability to undertake an on-site exploration of the region, restricted access to the entirety of relevant sources, and the absence of interviews with significant individuals and institutions pivotal to the soft power dynamics. The lack of opportunities to physically visit Central Asian countries results in the inability to capture firsthand insights, experiential nuances, and contextual intricacies that are intrinsic to comprehensively addressing the study's

scope. Furthermore, a significant limitation arises from the absence of interviews conducted with influential figures and institutions central to the discourse of soft power relations. The non-availability of direct engagement with key stakeholders hampers a comprehensive understanding of the nuanced interplay within the realm of Türkiye-Central Asia soft power dynamics. Despite these constraints, this study endeavors to contribute meaningful insights into the soft power relationship between Türkiye and the Central Asian countries within the confines of its defined research scope.

1.8. Structure of the Thesis

This study encompasses five distinctive sections, which include an introduction and conclusion. The initial segment delves into the comprehensive conceptual framework of "Soft Power." To cultivate a profound understanding of this term, this section expounds upon its various dimensions. It meticulously explores the essence of power as elucidated in the definition, tracing the evolution of power itself. Furthermore, it scrutinizes the intricacies of soft power, hard power, smart power, and diplomacy, while also shedding light on the ongoing discourses within the realm of international relations that pertain to these concepts. Consequently, this section encompasses an in-depth exploration of the primary definitions associated with soft power, as well as an insightful examination of its evolving structure and distinctive attributes.

Moving on to the second section, it delves into the historical trajectory of Türkiye's soft power, meticulously analyzing the diverse elements, institutions, and actors that contribute to Türkiye's soft power endeavors. Through this exploration, the practical application of soft power in Turkish foreign policy comes to the forefront. Aligned with the multifaceted influences that shape Türkiye's understanding of soft power, the country has adopted a foreign policy approach centered on fostering cooperation, particularly within the Central Asian region, capitalizing on its diverse and multicultural identity, particularly with its neighboring nations. In this context, the utilization of soft power assumes paramount importance within Türkiye's foreign policy framework. The section thoroughly examines the institutions that play a pivotal role in Türkiye's soft power endeavors, such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye, Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA), Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Türkiye, Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB), Yunus Emre Institute, and Turkish Radio and Television

Corporation (TRT). Additionally, the contributions of think-tanks, humanitarian aid organizations, and civil society organizations as key actors in Türkiye's soft power landscape are duly considered. The section not only analyzes the organizational structures of these institutions but also explores their wide-ranging areas of activity as influential purveyors of soft power.

In the third section, the increasing importance of Central Asia in Turkish foreign policy is discussed and Türkiye's activities in Asia within the framework of soft power are examined. The growing significance of Central Asia in the 21st century and Türkiye's "Opening to Asia" policy are considered important in this context, and attention is drawn to the country's relations with the region. Since the 2000s, relations with Central Asian countries have been developed, and strong partnerships have been established with regional countries. Türkiye's soft power capabilities are emphasized as a significant factor in its relations with regional countries. Türkiye operates in the region through strategic partnerships, utilizing a soft power approach that includes political, economic, cultural, scientific-technological, regional relations, and international forums for increased cooperation, in addition to economic collaboration. Moreover, the soft power actors of Türkiye discussed in the second section have significant activities in Central Asia.

The fourth chapter discusses the activities of these institutions within the scope of Turkish public diplomacy in Central Asia., the effects of Türkiye's soft power policy in Central Asia have been examined. In general, the relations and differences between the global world, particularly Asia, and Türkiye have been analyzed. In this regard, the changes in the application areas of soft power tools during the Erdogan era have been studied. In this thesis, the quantitative changes in treaties, collaborations, cultural and public diplomacy practices between Central Asia and Türkiye have been investigated to answer how they were affected between 2002-2023. In the final chapter, the influence of Türkiye's soft power policy in Central Asia has been evaluated and concluded.

1.9. Literature Review

The notion of Soft Power was originally developed and introduced by the renowned American scholar Joseph Nye in the late 1980s. Nye identified a key characteristic of soft power—it operates without coercion—where cultural influence, political values, and foreign policies serve as its currency. Numerous books and

articles have been dedicated to exploring various aspects of soft power and its utilization. In 2002, Nye emphasized that states employ their military forces to ensure security, counter threats, and achieve desired outcomes. Economic power, too, often represents a straightforward and time-tested exercise of power. However, harnessing soft power is a challenging and time-consuming endeavor, relying on the receptiveness of the target audience. Utilizing sources of soft power requires patience, persistence, and holds greater potential than relying solely on hard power mechanisms. (Nye, 2002). However, in cases where the use of soft power is successful, the gain is also more permanent and long-lasting.

Soft power encompasses the values, culture, and foreign policy practices that shape the behavior of foreign actors and influence the nature of relationships formed with other entities (Özev,2012). When examining the implementation of soft power in Türkiye, cultural interaction activities emerge as significant components. Türkiye's adoption of peaceful methods in foreign policy and its proactive stance in setting the agenda serve as prime examples of soft power in action (Nye, 2002). Within this context, addressing challenges within Türkiye's sphere of influence and assuming a regulatory role can be regarded as Türkiye's strategic employment of soft power (Oğuzlu,2011). Moreover, Türkiye's economic and humanitarian aid initiatives, similar to the economic assistance provided by other major actors such as the USA, China, and the USSR during the Cold War, exemplify the application of soft power (Oğuzlu, 2011). Türkiye's endeavors in this direction serve as a noteworthy illustration of soft power's potential.

Turkey, strategically positioned in a region rife with security challenges, has long prioritized hard power strategies (Çaman & Akyurt, 2011). Its geographical proximity offers the potential for Turkey to become a significant player in the region. Historical and cultural ties serve as the foundations of Turkish soft power, enabling the country to establish strong connections with neighboring nations. These attributes position Turkey to effectively wield soft power and contribute positively (Aras, 2009).

In studies examining the soft power policy employed by Turkey during the AK Party era vis-à-vis the Central Asian countries, bilateral relations have been scrutinized from various perspectives. The pertinent articles are provided below.

The collapse of the Soviet Union initially dampened Turkey's soft power influence in neighboring states. However, the evolving dynamics of global politics prompted a shift. In the early 1990s, particularly during Turgut Ozal's presidency,

Turkey revitalized its relations with nearby countries. Notably, Turkey leveraged cultural and economic links to forge connections with the "Turkic" republics that emerged post-Soviet era (Ekşi & Erol, 2018). While contending with challenges like the PKK conflict since 1984, as well as political and social shortcomings, Turkey also grappled with border issues arising from its proximity to the Middle East. These factors necessitated the continued consideration of hard power strategies. Nonetheless, the new government in 2002 instigated a shift in Turkish foreign policy. This marked the initiation of EU-related reforms, a pivotal move within the context of Turkey-EU relations (Keyman & Duzgit, 2007). The European Union lent support to the Turkish government's pursuit of domestic democratization through its endorsement of these reforms (Keyman & Duzgit, 2007).

The emergence of a new government ushered in a period of rejuvenation for Turkey's soft power institutions. This marked Turkey's expansion of its soft power objectives towards neighboring regions, encompassing the Middle East, the Balkans, Central Asia, and the Caucasus (Cagatay, 2008). It could be asserted that Davutoglu's doctrine significantly influenced the foreign policy stance of the AK Party, with Davutoglu assuming the role of Foreign Minister in 2009. Under this new administration, a novel phase commenced, characterized by a commitment to fostering stability and harmony with neighboring countries, a principle aptly embodied in the "Zero Problems with Neighbors" policy (Davutoglu, 2003).

This government embarked on proactive dialogues concerning security, economic stability, and diplomatic visits to countries, including those in post-Soviet regions, often employing the framework of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) as a basis (Efegil, 2008). The European Union expressed favor for these initiatives, and the AK Party government was met with enthusiasm during accession negotiations (Aras, 2009). Bulent Aras posits that the era of the AK Party was marked by the activation of Turkish soft power, particularly evident as various organizations gained traction in disseminating Turkish values overseas (Aras, 2009).

TIKA, YTB, the Yunus Emre Institute, the Religious Affairs Directorate, the Radio and Television Corporation, and Turkish television series stand out as the pivotal pillars of Turkey's soft power apparatus (Aras, 2009). An instrumental channel for disseminating Turkish values, Turkish TV programs have been instrumental in

extending these values to predominantly Muslim regions such as the South Caucasus, Central Asia, and the Middle East (Aydin, 2004).

Prime Minister Ahmet D. authored the book "Strategic Debt," which delves into the fundamental responsibilities of governments toward their neighbors and neighboring nations (Davutoglu, 2001). The linchpin of the foreign policy strategy was to harness soft power tactics in the pursuit of overarching objectives (Davutoglu, 2004). This foreign policy stance earned Turkey the monikers of the "new Ottomans" or purveyors of "new imperialist ideas," as posited by scholars like Ziya Onis and Efe Caman (Onis, 2014) (Caman, 2013).

Bulent Aras contends that the Arab Spring in the Middle East prompted a diminishing of Turkish foreign policy aspirations in the region (Aras, 2009). Furthermore, criticisms emerged, suggesting a decline in Turkey's soft power, fueled by the nation's involvement in conflicts that tarnished the image of its public diplomacy (Ekşi, 2018). In the early 2000s, Turkey's foreign policy landscape experienced a transformation under the new government, characterized by the fostering of favorable relations with neighboring states.

Closer examination of TIKA's role reveals its significance, particularly due to the establishment of new offices in Central Asia and the South Caucasus during the AK Party era, with approximately 9.92% of aid being allocated to these regions (TIKS, 2016). The organization effectively undertook the responsibilities of the Turkish Republic's ministry across diverse domains, ranging from education to various socio-cultural initiatives within the host countries. A central focus of the AK Party’s foreign policy agenda has been the strategic utilization of soft power and cultural diplomacy (Kilicoglu & Yilmaz, 2017).

During the tenure of the Justice and Development Party, Turkish soft power exerted substantial efforts toward the Central Asian nations, and the South Caucasus. These endeavors aimed at revitalizing frayed relations with neighboring countries, with the aspiration of positioning Turkey as an exemplar within its immediate vicinity. Turkey assumed a mediation role, notably intervening in crises such as Russia's Georgian conflict in the South Caucasus and the Israeli-Palestinian discord in the Middle East. This diplomatic involvement contributed to Turkey's image enhancement as a regional influencer on the global stage. Consequently, this situation prompted Turkey to channel its amassed soft power, embodied in various institutions, into the

activities of TIKA. The institutional initiatives were geared towards attracting emerging post-Soviet elites to engage with Turkey.

Turkey's exertion of soft power in the Central Asian and South Caucasus regions is noteworthy, particularly in its close connections with Azerbaijan in the South Caucasus and Turkmenistan in Central Asia. However, Turkey's relationship with these nations has encountered fluctuations over time. Ivanova presents the perspective that Turkey's soft power influence in Central Asian and South Caucasus countries is limited due to the involvement of competing actors (Ivanova, 2018).

In 2002, Turkey inaugurated a fresh foreign policy approach that prioritized fostering positive relations with nations in both Central Asia(Bal, 2017). Guided by the new doctrine of the AK Party, Turkey employed cultural diplomacy as a tool for engagement with post-Soviet Turkish-speaking countries (Caman, 2013). The overarching objective was to fortify connections across all Turkic republics and establish robust ties with all Turkic states (Caman & Akyurt, 2011).

Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan, both endowed with abundant oil reserves, share inherent cultural affinities with Turkey (Caman & Akyurt, 2011). Significantly, facets such as language, religion, tradition, and culture assume paramount importance in Turkey's endeavor to augment its soft power influence. In both cases, Turkey asserted the concept of "Turkic unity" based on historical and cultural kinship, projecting itself as a regional power (Eren, 2013).

Davutoglu articulates that Turkey's "zero problems with neighbors" policy extends its validity to encompass the Turkic realm, including the Caucasus and Central Asia (Davutoglu, 2002). Central to Davutoglu's doctrine is the belief that the bedrock of Turkish soft power across all Turkic countries rests upon the shared Turkic culture and language (Davutoglu, 2004). Consequently, a comprehensive analysis of collected documents pertaining to Turkey's soft power provides insight into the core meanings, codes, and key concepts.

The outcomes derived from the content analysis of select literature concerning Turkey's presence in Central Asia and the South Caucasus remarkably resonate with the dimensions of a Colonial frontier geostrategy. This emerges from the emphasis that Turkish soft power practitioners place on leveraging cultural and historical elements to enhance the nation's image (Davutoglu, 2002), (Kalin, 2014). The content analysis underscores that Turkey strategically advances its soft power positioning within the

Central Asian and South Caucasus contexts by foregrounding historical and cultural attributes.

In the aftermath of the dissolution of the USSR, Turkey emerged as the pioneer in recognizing the sovereignty of the five Central Asian states. Promptly initiating negotiations across diverse spheres—political, economic, cultural, and military—Turkey engaged individually with these nations (Caman, 2003). Facilitating aid and cultural initiatives, TIKA stood as the pivotal institution that catalyzed Turkey's presence and activities in Central Asia (TIKA, 2005). This regional terrain, coveted by both regional and global players for its resources and energy potential, drew Turkey into the fray with a similar agenda (Oner, 2018).

For Turkey, Central Asia holds profound significance as the ancestral homeland of Turkish forebears. Numerous historical texts and archaeological inquiries lend credence to the notion of this region as the historical cradle of Turks (Efegil, 2008). This historical kinship fosters a sense of cultural affinity between Turkish and Central Asian populations. The establishment of strong cultural bonds with the four Turkic republics—Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan—forms a driving incentive behind Turkey's engagement in Central Asia (Caman, 2003).

Following the independence of these five Central Asian countries, Turkey embarked on a new mission across the entire region, channeling support to foster multifaceted advancements in these nations post their separation from the Soviet Union.

During the 1990s, a pivotal epoch witnessed remarkable advancements in energy, trade, and education, leaving a lasting imprint (Caman, 2003). Notably, an influx of Central Asian students embarked on their educational journey in Turkey, exemplifying the regional collaboration in education. At the heart of Turkey's initiatives lay the aspiration to cultivate linguistic and cultural bonds with these five nations (Caman, 2003).

This multifaceted endeavor encompassed diverse avenues, ranging from shared television broadcasts to projects promoting the Turkish language and the exchange of scholars and educators (TIKA, 2005). Turkey's strategic significance resonated in its capability to cultivate robust relationships with these nations, ultimately strengthening their ties with Turkey (Sancak, 2016). Consequently, Turkey stands out as a nation that recognizes and establishes formal relations with the "Turkic" states within Central Asia (Efegil, 2008).

The dissolution of the USSR ushered in opportunities for Turkey to forge bilateral connections with the ex-Soviet countries. This transformation elevated Turkey's presence and influence, a shift that also caught the attention of the European Union, underscoring Turkey's amplified significance on the international stage (Caman, 2003).

Initially, the European Union extended support to Turkey, appreciating its secular stance that could potentially counteract the influence of Islamic groups in Central Asia (Akgul, 2007). This stance prompted scholarly examinations into Turkey's geopolitical ambitions concerning its neighboring regions (Onis, 2014). Subsequent to the ascendancy of the AK Party, led by Erdogan, Turkey redirected its efforts to harness its soft power resources, with Central Asia emerging as a prominent target (Cagaptay, 2008).

Central to Turkey's soft power strategy was an emphasis on cultural diplomacy toward nations within Central Asia, with a pronounced focus on fostering unity among the broader "Turkic world" (Bal, 2000). Aras and Akpinar point out that Turkey adroitly employs cultural values through diverse avenues, including popular TV series that have gained substantial traction within Central Asian countries (Aras & Akpinar, 2011). Notably, initiatives like "Maarif Vakfi" and "Diyanet," closely affiliated with Turkish religious affairs, have facilitated cultural relations and engagement (Alaranta & Silvan, 2022).

Moreover, Ankara assumes a pivotal role within the framework of the "Turkic Council," established in 2009. This collaborative platform encompasses Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkey, yet Turkmenistan's abstention is rooted in its policy of neutrality (Alaranta & Silvan, 2022).

Within scholarly discourse, the transformation observed in Türkiye's foreign policy towards Central Asia has prompted diverse interpretations, with particular attention given to AK Party Government’s influential role in steering this shift. Scholars have expounded upon the discernible changes within Türkiye's foreign policy in Central Asia since the ascent of the AK Party to power in 2002, emphasizing a heightened focus on Pan-Turkism, pragmatism, and Islamism. These viewpoints highlight the nuanced dynamics at play, illustrating Türkiye's evolving approach towards Central Asia as it navigates the complexities of cultural, historical, and geopolitical considerations. As Türkiye's foreign policy landscape continues to evolve, scholars delve deeper into the multifaceted facets shaping the nation's engagement

with Central Asia, shedding light on the intricacies of Pan-Turkism, pragmatism, and Islamism as influential factors in this transformative journey. (Alrmizan,2022). The interplay of three influential factors has seamlessly woven the fabric of Türkiye's foreign policy in the Central Asian region. Pan-Turkism, serving as an ideological cornerstone, bolsters Türkiye's commitment to fortifying cultural and linguistic bonds with the Turkic-speaking Central Asian states. At the heart of this strategic approach lies pragmatism, propelling Türkiye's pursuit of economic prosperity and security interests, deftly aligning its policies with practical considerations. Moreover, Islamism has emerged as a potent tool, enabling Türkiye to establish and extend its influence within the region while leveraging its soft power. Together, these three dynamic forces harmoniously shape Türkiye's engagement in Central Asia, facilitating a multifaceted approach that capitalizes on shared heritage, pragmatic endeavors, and the promotion of Islamic values, thereby solidifying Türkiye's presence and impact in the region. (Alrmizan,2022).

Furthermore, Alrmizan highlights President Erdoğan's personal role in shaping Turkish foreign policy towards Central Asia. Erdoğan's leadership style and his personal affinity for Central Asia have led to a greater emphasis on Türkiye's cultural and religious ties with the region, as well as the promotion of a more assertive foreign policy that seeks to establish Türkiye as a regional power in Central Asia. (Alrmizan,2022). Firstly, Türkiye faces competition from other regional powers such as Russia and China, which have a significant presence in the region. Secondly, Türkiye's soft power in Central Asia is constrained by the political and economic instability of some of the Central Asian states, as well as the linguistic and cultural differences between Türkiye and the Central Asian countries. (Alrmizan,2022)

Türkiye's engagement with Central Asia is driven by a sense of "Turkic togetherness," or a shared cultural and historical heritage among Turkic-speaking countries. This has led Türkiye to pursue a "pan-Turkic" foreign policy, which seeks to establish closer ties with Turkic-speaking countries in Central Asia and beyond. (Michel and Korkmaz,2014)

The bond between Türkiye and Central Asia has experienced a profound metamorphosis, marked by notable transformations. With the emergence of independent Central Asian nations following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Türkiye swiftly rose to prominence as a pivotal and influential actor within the region. This dynamic shift in the relationship underscored Türkiye's growing significance as

a key stakeholder, actively engaging with Central Asian countries in diverse realms ranging from politics and economics to culture and beyond. The evolving dynamics between Türkiye and Central Asia have fostered a mutually beneficial partnership, shaping the course of regional developments and exemplifying Türkiye's enduring commitment to bolstering ties with its neighboring nations. (Kadioglu 2022).

Kadioglu highlights the role of economic integration that is increased by AK Party era in deepening Türkiye's relationship with Central Asia. Türkiye has pursued economic cooperation agreements, trade partnerships, and investment initiatives to enhance its economic ties with Central Asian countries. These efforts have not only bolstered economic development in Central Asia but have also benefited Türkiye by expanding its economic footprint in the region. According to Kadioglu, Türkiye's proactive involvement in regional economic platforms, including the Cooperation Council of Turkic-Speaking States (CCTS) and the Turkic Council, has played a vital role in promoting economic integration and bolstering Türkiye's position as a valuable economic collaborator. By actively participating in these forums, Türkiye has effectively facilitated greater economic cooperation and solidified its reputation as a trusted partner in the global economic landscape.. She also addresses the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead for Türkiye's engagement with Central Asia. Kadioglu notes that geopolitical dynamics, including the competing interests of major powers in the region, pose challenges to Türkiye's aspirations. Moreover, the landlocked nature of Central Asia and inadequate transportation infrastructure present obstacles to increased trade and connectivity. However, Kadioglu argues that Türkiye's soft power initiatives and economic integration efforts provide opportunities to overcome these challenges and forge closer ties. By leveraging its geographic location, historical connections, and economic potential, Türkiye can contribute to the stability, prosperity, and regional integration of Central Asia. Kadioglu provides a comprehensive analysis of Türkiye's engagement with Central Asia, focusing on geopolitical narratives, soft power strategies, and economic integration initiatives. The historical and cultural affinity between Türkiye and Central Asia has laid the foundation for a multifaceted relationship. Türkiye's utilization of soft power tools and its commitment to economic integration have enhanced its influence and presence in the region. By navigating the challenges and seizing the opportunities, Türkiye can further deepen its ties with Central Asia, contributing to regional stability, economic development, and mutual prosperity.

Kadioglu emphasizes the significance of geopolitical narratives in shaping Türkiye's engagement with Central Asia. Türkiye's historical and cultural ties with the Turkic-speaking nations of Central Asia have played a crucial role in framing its foreign policy objectives in the region (Kadioglu 2022). Türkiye views itself as a natural partner and advocate for the development and security of Central Asian states, based on shared linguistic, cultural, and historical connections. This narrative has enabled Türkiye to position itself as a bridge between Europe and Asia, with Central Asia serving as a vital component of its strategic vision especially after 2002. Türkiye's employment of soft power strategies to enhance its influence in Central Asia. Türkiye has utilized cultural diplomacy, educational exchanges, and humanitarian aid to foster closer ties with Central Asian countries (Kadioglu 2022). Kadioglu argues that Türkiye's soft power initiatives, such as the establishment of Turkish schools and the provision of scholarships for Central Asian students, have contributed to the projection of Turkish influence in the region. By emphasizing cultural affinity and common Turkic roots, Türkiye has successfully cultivated a positive image and strengthened people-to-people connections with Central Asian societies (Kadioglu 2022).

Also Rauf Ceylan examines Türkiye's engagement with Central Asia in the context of the shifting geopolitical landscape after the collapse of the Soviet Union. As Central Asian countries gained independence, Türkiye recognized the strategic importance of the region and pursued an active policy toward Central Asia in 2000s. (Ceylan 2020). Ceylan emphasizes the significance of energy security in shaping Türkiye's policy toward Central Asia. With its growing energy needs, Türkiye has sought to diversify its energy sources and reduce dependence on external suppliers. (Ceylan 2020) Central Asia, rich in oil and gas reserves, presents an opportunity for Türkiye to enhance its energy security. He explores Türkiye's efforts to develop energy partnerships, promote energy infrastructure projects, and facilitate the transportation of energy resources from Central Asia to global markets. Ceylan critically assesses the challenges and prospects of energy cooperation between Türkiye and Central Asian countries. (Ceylan 2020) He delves into the role of cultural ties and soft power in Türkiye's policy toward Central Asia. Türkiye shares historical, linguistic, and cultural affinities with the Turkic-speaking nations of Central Asia. Ceylan examines Türkiye's cultural diplomacy initiatives, such as educational programs, cultural exchanges, and the establishment of Turkish cultural centers, as means to strengthen people-to-people connections and enhance its soft power in the region and he address AK Party era for

this development. He analyzes the impact of Türkiye's cultural outreach on fostering closer ties and promoting a positive image of Türkiye in Central Asia. Ceylan highlights Türkiye's efforts to promote regional integration and cooperation in Central Asia. Ceylan explores Türkiye's involvement in regional organizations, such as the Turkic Council and the Cooperation Council of Turkic-Speaking States (CCTS). Türkiye's engagement in these platforms aims to enhance economic cooperation, facilitate trade and investment, and foster political dialogue among Central Asian countries. Ceylan critically assesses the prospects and challenges of regional integration efforts and the role Türkiye plays in promoting regional cooperation. He addresses the challenges and prospects that Türkiye's policy toward Central Asia faces in the post-Soviet era. Ceylan examines the competition for influence among regional and global powers in Central Asia, including Russia, China, and the United States. He discusses the complexities of navigating this geopolitical landscape and the implications for Türkiye's policy choices. Additionally, Ceylan assesses the economic and security challenges that Central Asian countries face and the role Türkiye can play in addressing these issues through its engagement in the region after 2010. By examining energy security, economic cooperation, cultural ties, and regional integration, Ceylan sheds light on the multifaceted dimensions of Türkiye's engagement in the region. These all policy shifts were there because of Ak Party Government foreign policy in Turkiye’s politics in the Central Asia. He argues the strategic importance of Central Asia for Türkiye and the opportunities it presents for energy cooperation, cultural diplomacy, and regional integration. (Ceylan 2020)

The recent discourse surrounding the soft power exerted by the AK Party government in Central Asia has sparked a vibrant debate within academic and diplomatic circles. This discussion has revolved around the effectiveness, scope, and implications of Turkey's soft power initiatives in the region during the AK Party era. The multifaceted nature of this debate reflects a nuanced evaluation of Turkey's diplomatic strategies and their impact on Central Asian countries.

Critics of the AK Party government's soft power approach argue that while Turkey's efforts have led to increased economic engagement and cultural exchange, the desired level of influence and impact has yet to be fully realized. Some scholars contend that the economic initiatives, while fostering trade and investment, have not necessarily translated into substantial geopolitical leverage for Turkey. Additionally,

questions have arisen regarding the sustainability of cultural diplomacy efforts, particularly in terms of long-term shifts in perceptions and attitudes towards Turkey.

Conversely, proponents of the AK Party's soft power endeavors emphasize the incremental progress achieved in terms of economic integration, diplomatic partnerships, and cultural resonance. They contend that Turkey's engagement in the Central Asian region has fostered greater interdependence and cooperation, which are essential components of soft power influence. Advocates also highlight the success of cultural exchange programs and educational initiatives in fostering greater people-to-people connections, thereby contributing to a positive image of Turkey among Central Asian populations.

Amidst this debate, scholars and analysts have also sought to assess the evolving geopolitical dynamics in the Central Asian region, considering factors such as the role of other global and regional powers, the changing economic landscape, and evolving security challenges. These considerations have added layers of complexity to the evaluation of Turkey's soft power strategy, prompting further exploration of the nuances in Turkey's engagement and its implications for regional dynamics.

In conclusion, the recent discourse on the AK Party government's soft power efforts and effecting using of soft power tools in Central Asia reflects a nuanced and multi-dimensional conversation. This debate is marked by varying assessments of the effectiveness and impact of Turkey's soft power initiatives and soft power tools considering economic, cultural, and geopolitical factors. As Central Asia continues to be a focal point of global and regional interests, the evaluation of Turkey's soft power in the region remains a subject of ongoing analysis and deliberation. With this study, it has been investigated how and to what extent Turkey utilized soft power in its foreign policy towards Central Asia during the AK Party era. Additionally, Soft power tools and effects of them for this purpose have been examined and elucidated.

CHAPTER 2
SOFT POWER

2.1. Soft Power

Joseph Nye defined power as the capacity to exert influence over others in order to bring about desired results. He develops the idea of "hard power," which is defined as coercion accomplished by threats or inducements. Hard power is based on material assets like military might, forceful diplomatic efforts, and economic penalties. Its goal is to force things to act in ways that they would not normally choose to. Economic sanctions and military invasions are two instances of hard power. In contrast, Nye's concept of soft power relates to the ability to influence people to support one's goals. It was first used in his seminal article "Soft Power" that was published in Foreign Policy in 1990. As contrast to the forced action associated with hard power, soft power works through encouraging voluntary action and consent. Nye also emphasizes that compulsion often leads to conflict, whereas voluntariness leads to consent. This observation helps explain why solutions driven by soft power tend to be more sustainable and long-lasting compared to those relying solely on hard power. (Nye 2005)

The notion of soft power has emerged as a captivating focal point within the realm of international affairs, captivating the attention of scholars and practitioners alike. Drawing inspiration from Nye, the essence of a nation's soft power lies in its remarkable capacity to captivate and shape the hearts and minds of individuals, free from the shackles of violence or coercion. Nye asserts that a nation's soft power finds its roots in the rich tapestry of its culture, political ideologies, and foreign policy, all of which synergistically contribute to its alluring influence. It is the profound ability to allure and persuade that empowers a nation to inspire and sway other nations, beckoning them to tread the path it lays. Soft power gracefully transcends the deployment of force or monetary means, instead embracing the art of charm, the power of persuasion, and the skill of setting agendas, paving the way for captivating diplomacy and harmonious interactions on the global stage. (Nye 2005).

The concept of soft power is in contrast to hard power, which is the use of military force, economic sanctions, or other coercive measures to achieve political

goals. Nye argues that in today's interconnected world, where information travels quickly and easily, and where military force is often seen as illegitimate, soft power has become increasingly important. Nye also highlights that a country's soft power can be enhanced through investments in education, cultural exchange programs, and public diplomacy initiatives. By promoting its cultural values and positive foreign policies, a country can increase its influence and gain support from other countries.

Nye's definition of soft power emphasizes the importance of using non-coercive means to achieve political goals and highlights the role of culture and ideas in shaping international relations. It suggests that a country's soft power can be as important as its hard power, and that a combination of the two is often necessary for success in world politics. Joseph Nye's definition of soft power as the ability of a country to attract and persuade others to do what it wants, without using force or coercion, is an important concept in international relations (Nye 2005).

In an era marked by the growing acknowledgment of the limitations of coercive methods in achieving political objectives, the ascendancy of non-coercive approaches gains remarkable prominence, shedding light on the pivotal role played by culture and ideas in shaping the landscape of international relations. Soft power emerges as an extraordinary instrument for nations aspiring to bolster their influence and garner support from the international community, with its significance projected to soar even higher in the times to come. Since its inception, masterfully crafted by Joseph Nye, the concept of soft power has commanded considerable attention within the realms of both scholarly discourse and policy formulation. The allure of soft power finds a notable place within the influential volume "Power in World Politics," published in 2007, stemming from a thought-provoking forum organized by the esteemed journal Millennium in 2002, dedicated to a comprehensive exploration of power within the domain of diplomacy. (Williams 2007)

Within the realm of hegemonic states like the US and China, a compelling paradigm known as "smart power" has taken center stage. Both nations, the US and China, deftly combine the forces of soft power and hard power to shape their respective foreign policies. Notably, China has emerged as a frontrunner, employing this strategy to great effect within its diplomatic endeavors. China's astute recognition of the indispensability of soft and smart power as integral components of its international influence has sparked vigorous debates within the nation, as policymakers grapple with its nuanced application to foreign policy. This strategic approach was initially

embraced by Chinese leaders, most notably President Hu Jintao, during the early years of the 21st century, underscoring the nation's unwavering commitment to harnessing the potency of soft power in conjunction with its traditional sources of power. (Cho and Ho Jeong 2008)

Influencing the receiving country is the main goal, and therefore, conveying positive messages to the other Party is the primary goal (Kroening, 2010). The behaviors of the states leave positive or negative impressions on the thoughts of the recipient, and according to the researches, it is seen that the attractive messages enable the recipient to change his thinking in a positive way. The effectiveness of soft power is influenced by various factors, including the source of the message, the content of the message, and the recipient. Therefore, when employing soft power, a state may find that its soft power sources resonate with certain recipient countries but not with others. The area of interest of the recipient country becomes crucial in determining the impact of soft power efforts. (Kroening,2010).

As each country has its own soft power strategy, according to Geun Lee, the generally used soft power strategies are:

> '*Nations often engage in shaping or reshaping their own image to extend their sphere of security. Following the aftermath of World War II, Japan and Germany, for instance, adopted more peaceful policies to rectify their previously expansionist and aggressive images. Germany pursued integration with other European countries, while Japan actively reduced its military expenditures and self-imposed restrictions to avoid posing a threat within the Asian region. These deliberate actions aimed to project a more benign and cooperative perception on the international stage..''* (Lee,p.78, 2011)

Providing support from recipient countries by tarnishing the image of others. For example, the US calls Soviet Russia the 'enemy empire' and Iran, Iraq and North Korea the 'devil's triangle'…

The strategy he calls the network effect strategy is to spread the norms and behaviors that the recipient (target) countries are accustomed to, in other words, accepted. For example, the USA's universalization of the English language, the neoliberal, using the elements of democracy…

The strategy of using heroes and celebrities: These world-renowned celebrities, in cooperation with their governments, create models suitable for universal values, make comments and help for example (Lee, 2011) Before the concept of soft power evaluation in a time, there are examples of the use of soft power in history. For example, France spreading its culture and making its language the language of

diplomacy. After the First World War, countries set up offices to propagate their cause, and during the cold war, the USA and the USSR used their economic cards to spread their ideologies and attract target countries to their side.

Governments implement support programs for economic development and adopt a proactive and constructive approach in their foreign policies to enhance their positive image in the eyes of target countries. Countries that wisely invest in public diplomacy tend to experience an uplift in their image, consequently increasing the likelihood of attaining desired outcomes. Supporting literature, art, education, and investing in areas where a country excels while promoting them globally represents another strategic use of soft power. By showcasing their strengths and contributing to various fields, nations can effectively wield soft power to shape perceptions and generate goodwill.

China, one of today's rising soft powers, uses economic and humanitarian aid in its foreign policy. Examining China's soft power strategy, Joel Wuthnow suggested that the 'peaceful rise', 'scientific socialism' and 'harmonious world' discourses of China, which is a rising economic power, are factors that positively affect its image and increase its soft power (Wuthnow, 2008). Kalathil, who focused on China's soft power and strategy, claimed that foreign investments, peaceful and humanitarian aid, exchange programs, diplomacy, multilateral relations are the soft power strategies in China's foreign policy.

While this debate was continuing in China and in a broader sense in international discipline, Nye suggests in his article “Think Again: Soft Power,” the term is explained (Nye, “Think Again: Soft Power,” Foreign Policy), 2006). In his article, there are two understandings of soft power. One of them is more extensive, the other one is limited, meaning that soft power is the same as cultural hegemony and attraction.

In the extensive meaning of soft power, according to Mingjiang in the extensive meaning of soft power, many scholars of IR discipline argue that states use cultural, public diplomacy and economic power without using hard and military power. This interpretation is actually inaccurate. Why this misunderstanding is issued has three particular reasons that are absence of educational clarification, unformulated in theatrical meaning and systemic ambiguity (Mingjiang 2009).

There is an important reason for this misunderstanding and confusion. Mingjiang say that soft power resources are confused with soft power attitudes. As

Nye said, people simulate touching power with soft power and their resources. (Nye 2006) Soft power is confused with touching power and its resources. Obviously, power cannot be measured without its resources and in order to say something powerful about someone, we need some indications that are actually power resources not power itself. It is the same for soft power. In publicly and IR scholar, there are the same mistakes about soft power and also its resources. They assumed that all soft power resources and touching power look alike. Certainly, we use some power tools and sources in order to realize power itself but it does not mean these resources are the definition of power. For example, to call someone to be powerful, we check her/his properties, economic wealth or strength. We do not confuse the powerful with these power resources. These two are totally different terms. Therefore, if we want to say this state has soft power, we check soft power resources and use these resources through the intended way. (Cho and Ho Jeong 2008)

Power resources cannot be confused with the power itself because power resources can be used both soft power and hard power. Important mark is how this power resource is used and what their results are. Also, power resources are used for both coercion and attraction intent. After attraction and coercion, we can decide whether this use is soft power or not. Sometimes, we can see some power resources and action as a soft power but it is blurred. power resources can be used both soft power and hard power. This issue is a little bit perplexing in international discipline. This perplexing results from power resources and power currencies. In order to display differences between power currencies and power resources, we can assume them as buildings: power resources are the structure of these buildings and power currencies are the architecture of these buildings. therefore questions will be appeared and what create soft power (Cho and Ho Jeong 2008)

Vuving argues that in order to address this question, we need to make two distinctions. The first distinction is between soft power and other forms of power, while the second distinction is between the mechanisms through which soft power operates. (Vuving 2009) Let us embark on an exploration of the nuanced distinctions that set soft power apart from other forms of power. As elucidated by Nye, soft power manifests as a unique ability to allure and captivate, often resulting in a state of acquiescence. Within this context, acquiescence embodies a potent combination of ardent desire and passive acceptance. Alternatively, we can broaden the definition to encompass the notion of acceptance, where soft power becomes a skillful means of

persuading others to not only desire but also accept one's own aspirations. However, we encounter a limitation when incorporating the term "accept," as it carries connotations of embracing an undesirable reality without the capacity to effect change or acquiescing against one's will. Thus, the statement "soft power is the ability to persuade others to want, or accept, what you want" stands as a preliminary approximation rather than a definitive definition, offering a valuable entry point into the intricate realm of soft power's conceptual domain.. (Vuving 2009).

In a groundbreaking contribution to the field, Nye introduced the concept of soft power in his seminal work "Bound to Lead" back in 1990, shedding light on his perspective regarding the decline of America (Nye, 2002). The notion of soft power was subsequently expounded upon by Joseph S. Nye in his book aptly titled "Soft Power." Nye contended that while hard power may rely on deception or threats, achieving desired outcomes can be accomplished without tangible coercive measures or financial incentives. According to Nye, the admiration for a country's values and the encouragement of others in that direction wield greater effectiveness than employing force. In this context, values such as democracy, human rights, and individual opportunities assume paramount importance (Nye, 2002). Furthermore, soft power entails facilitating other states' pursuit of their own values, garnering their admiration, and aligning their goals with the global policies of the actor in question. Diverging from hard power, soft power strives to collaborate with individuals rather than coercively impose its will upon them (Demir, 2012).

Today, what is more important than threats and sanctions for states is to create the world agenda and to attract other actors in order to achieve their wishes in the system. (Oğuzlu,2007) This is possible with soft power. Soft power is the ability to influence and shape the choices of other actors. States have a significant advantage in getting what they want to know the strength of their abilities or attractiveness (Oğuzlu,2007).

Nye, referring to the importance of attraction in his book "Soft Power", said that "*if I can make you want what I want, there will be no need for the carrot-stick duo*". (Nye, 2002) When talking about soft power, it should be added that this is not penetration. According to Nye, while influence can also be based on the hard power of money and threats, soft power refers to attracting, pleasing with attraction. Another theorist who works on soft power is Guen Lee. He handled soft power work in three stages. The first one divides soft power into five categories in line with political

purposes in international relations. Secondly, he revealed the differences between Joseph Nye's theory of soft power and his own theory. According to Lee, Nye's concept of soft power focuses too much on the nature of power. While Joseph Nye emphasized the elements of attraction, cooperation and mobilization of soft power, Lee highlighted the sources and argued that soft power can be coercive and hard power can be cooperative, which is the important difference with Nye. According to Lee, Nye showed the difference between soft power and hard power, but could not put it into a meaningful theoretical framework that would explain the mechanism that would transform power resources into power. In addition, Lee stated that soft power can be valid not only in the context of the United States of America (USA), as Nye thinks, but also in medium-sized states. Thirdly, he revealed a soft power theory based on soft power resources. He divides Lee's soft power application categories into five. The first is to provide an environment of peace and create an attractive image in order to ensure external security. In particular, Lee cites the peaceful image of Japan after the Second World War as an example. Secondly, it is the support of another country or countries in terms of security policy. He cited the realization of economic sanctions and foreign interventions through the United Nations (UN) as an example. Third, it is soft power used to influence the opinions and preferences of other countries. Here, Lee explains that countries direct the behavior of others by disseminating the theories and concepts they have developed. Of course, he points out that internationally famous people play an important role in the spread of these theories and concepts, and names such as Bill Gates and Nobel prize winners are examples. Fourth, it is to establish or join organizations for cooperation with other countries. Lee cites organizations such as the European Union as an example. Fifth and last are the methods used to obtain the internal support of the country's leader or government. Lee describes here the extraordinary performance of leaders at international meetings and conferences (Lee, 2009).

Alexander L. Vuving. Vuving contributed to Nye's definition of soft power and helped it take its new form. He added the word "accept" to Nye's statement, which is to make them want our wishes, and redefined it as "what we want is wanted or accepted by others". In this case, Vuving underlined that the definition of soft power should be in the form of making others want or accept them in the direction we want (Vuving, 2009). According to Vuving, there are three main factors that bring about soft power: compassion, majesty and beauty. The first of these factors, compassion, emphasizes

the mutual benevolence and cooperation of countries. A state's benevolence towards others aims to create admiration with its mutual aid. It reflects the state of appearing nice, sympathetic, helpful and generous to others, protecting them, taking care of their problems, respecting their values, being unselfish and not being seen as a danger to them. In this way, it creates gratitude and sympathy in others. This created state of gratitude and sympathy leads them to cooperate by providing a trust environment. However, the point to be noted here is that the forms of behavior constituting the principle of compassion are carried out in a multilateral framework. Because, if it is carried out within the framework of bilateral relations, it may not lead to good results as a feeling of debt may occur on the other side. However, if this situation is developed within the framework of multilateral relations, the negative consequences can be eliminated and the compassion factor will be able to produce soft power.

Another factor, glory, is the country's strong and magnificent military resources, its rich economy, its deep-rooted culture and history, or its peaceful and qualified people, which will make the country stand out as attractive. Such a country holds success, is capable and strong. Glory creates admiration on the other side and this creates a desire to emulate and imitate. One of the ways this can turn into soft power is the perception of invincibility it will create, while the other is the desire to do and imitate something that it will create on the other side. This makes the country a model country and enables other actors to 'follow and act in the same way'. The splendor of a country creates admiration and emulation in other countries, and it creates respect and reverence. Beauty, on the other hand, explains the rapprochement of actors as a result of shared values and visions. Trust and friendship are formed between the actors who meet on a common ground. Whenever the value shared by a state is seen as the representative of that value by the state it shares, it means that it has turned into soft power. Because it is thought that the person who is thought to represent the common values will protect the said values and therefore it is possible to be accepted as a guide by others (Vuving, 2009). Although the concept of soft power is a type of power that has been used since ancient times, it entered the international relations literature in the post-Cold War period and has been a concept frequently used by policy makers, academics and bureaucrats after the terrorist attacks in the USA on September 11, 2001. (Sancak, 2016) As the great strategist Sun Tzu said, “If you fight, it is necessary to kill people. However, the phrase "the best is to win without fighting" is a method of soft power, to gain gains without using military methods. Considering

that he lived in the Wu State (now China) in the 500s BC, as it can be understood from this, soft power applications were used in various ways during the periods of the Chinese, Persians, Churches, Romans and Ottomans. Looking at the historical process, it is seen that France's culture from the 18th century, England's liberal system from the 19th century, and the USA in the 20th century, with soft power elements such as popular culture and liberal democratic system, are effective in the global system. (Iron, 2012).

The recent debate about soft power has questioned its effectiveness and relevance in contemporary international relations. Some scholars argue that soft power is becoming less effective in the face of rising nationalism and populism, while others suggest that soft power is still relevant but needs to be adapted to the changing international environment. This adaptation is called as smart power.

2.2. Key Concepts Related to Soft Power

In the realm of soft power, an actor's repertoire must encompass a diverse array of resources, each bearing a distinct contribution. However, the impact of these resources can vary, as some possess a greater allure while others exert a lesser pull. The dynamic nature of societal preferences and the prevailing zeitgeist further influences the attractiveness of these resources. According to Nye, a country's soft power finds its roots in three pivotal resources: culture, political values, and foreign policies. The appeal of a nation's culture, when resonating with others, assumes a paramount role in shaping its soft power. When a country steadfastly upholds its political values both domestically and internationally, it augments its soft power capital. Moreover, a nation's foreign policies acquire soft power when they are perceived as legitimate and carry the weight of moral authority among other nations. These three interwoven resources form the bedrock of a country's soft power, empowering it to exert a compelling influence and engender attraction on the global stage. (Nye, 2002). Soft power draws its influence from various sources that contribute to a country's attractiveness, persuasion, and ability to shape international perceptions. These sources enhance a nation's credibility and ultimately its ability to achieve its foreign policy objectives without relying on coercion. The sources of soft power can be categorized into several key areas:

Culture and Heritage: A country's rich cultural traditions, art, music, literature, and historical achievements contribute significantly to its soft power. Cultural exports

can create a sense of familiarity, connection, and shared identity, fostering positive perceptions among global audiences.

Political Values and Ideals: A nation that promotes democratic governance, human rights, rule of law, and respect for individual freedoms projects an image of openness and progress. Its adherence to these principles can attract admiration and respect from other countries.

Foreign Policy and Diplomacy: A consistent and principled foreign policy that promotes peace, stability, and cooperation can enhance a nation's credibility and trustworthiness on the global stage. Diplomatic efforts that foster collaboration can create positive perceptions.

Media and Communication: A country's media outlets, news agencies, and entertainment industry play a crucial role in shaping international perceptions. Broadcasting positive news, cultural exports, and accurate information can contribute to soft power.

International Aid and Development: Providing humanitarian aid, participating in development projects, and offering assistance during crises showcase a nation's willingness to contribute positively to global challenges, fostering goodwill.

By leveraging and strategically nurturing these sources of soft power, countries can enhance their global influence, build positive relationships, and achieve their foreign policy goals in a way that resonates with international audiences.

The following elucidated headings of soft power resources and tools have been selected and expounded upon due to their applicability to Turkey's effective utilization of soft power instruments and assets in Central Asia. The expounded headings' corresponding institutions and organizations will be elucidated in the subsequent chapter 4.

2.2.1. Culture

The universality of a country's culture and its capacity to establish appropriate principles and institutions within its international engagements are immensely significant sources of power. When a state possesses a culture that resonates universally and assumes responsibility aligned with it, the likelihood of achieving its desired objectives can be heightened. This attraction, coupled with the sense of responsibility stemming from a state with a universal culture, enhances its potential to accomplish its goals in a more impactful manner. (Demir, 2012).

According to Nye, culture is the collection of beliefs and customs that are significant to a given society. There are several methods to display culture. There is popular culture in addition to high culture, which includes things like literature, art, and education. (Nye, 2002). Every society has its own culture. However, turning this culture into soft power or creating a power potential depends on its attractiveness to other actors in the system. It is important for a culture to have universal characteristics in order to be attractive to other actors. Since Nye mainly deals with the issue in the context of the global leadership of the USA, he keeps the framework of the culture that will produce soft power broad and states that the probability of obtaining the desired results will increase if this culture includes universal values. It is difficult for narrow-minded values, cultures with certain boundaries to have soft power.

Sometimes a country's culture may not be attractive to another society and may face adverse reactions. Since Joseph Nye dealt with soft power over the USA in his book "Soft Power", he also gave examples from this state. For example, while a variety of American-made motion pictures containing American culture may be attractive from various parts of the world, in some Islamic countries these films may not be attractive and may cause reactions. The German editor Josef Joffe made the case that American soft power transcends its economic and military might in this sense. Additionally, Joseph Nye included a case study in his book to bolster Joffe's argument. We might claim that the current political usage of ideas like democracy, human rights, and freedom is an example of soft power. When utilized to further a political objective, ideas like democracy and human rights that emerged in western civilization are soft power tactics.

The Colored Revolutions process, in which the discourse of democracy is at the forefront in the post-Soviet states and Eastern European countries, is actually an example of soft power. These concepts, which emerged from the Western culture, attracted other societies and enabled the change of certain situations in their own countries, and actually ensured the realization of the purpose of those who wanted this change. The increase in American popular culture in the world causes soft power to be understood only as popular culture power. This situation causes us to confuse culture with attractiveness. Of course, the products sold or the movies shown around the world may affect the societies and lead them to consumption, but they may not make it possible to develop politically. Therefore, it would not be correct to say that popular culture does not support soft power totally. Sports are also an important

element in popular culture. Basketball (NBA) games in the USA are watched by 750 million people in 42 languages and 212 countries around the world. Political messages can also be conveyed through the behavior of sports teams or celebrities, or through various images shown by television or cinema.

2.2.2. Political Values

Political values serve as another significant source of soft power. As identified by Nye, these values encompass democracy, human rights, the rule of law, and individual freedoms. However, Nye asserts that these values should not remain confined to mere discourse but must also be evident in a country's foreign policy, thereby generating attraction and influence. Nye emphasizes that the values upheld by a government through its domestic practices (such as democratic governance), engagement with international organizations (through collaborative efforts), and foreign policy endeavors (in promoting peace and human rights) significantly shape the decisions and preferences of others. The alignment of a country's political values with its actions can enhance its soft power and foster greater appeal and credibility on the global stage." (Nye, 2002). The fact that a country has the values we have mentioned above, and that it has economic and cultural development indicators can create an attractive power for those living in other countries. When we look at the world, there are human migrations to the leading countries of the USA and Europe, which have these indicators. The most important of these human migrations is what we call the "brain drain". The migration of experts in important fields such as culture, art, science and education, who lack political values in their own countries or who do not receive the necessary attention and support, will undoubtedly have positive reflections on the country they visit. In the age we live in, knowledge has become a very important element. The studies to be carried out by the experts in their fields or the contributions they will make to the existing studies will help the country to gain significant economic, technological and cultural gains. Nye cites Silicon Valley in the USA as an example in this regard. He drew attention to the fact that one-fourth of the engineers working in the field of advanced technology here were Chinese and Indians, and emphasized the attractive aspect of the USA. (Nye, 2002). In order for a country's political values to be the source of soft power, it must create admiration and attraction in others. Political values may not always be attractive. If we go over the US and its values, which Nye takes as an example, he says that while values such as democracy

and freedom in US culture may be attractive to some societies, they can lead to hatred of the USA in the eyes of fundamentalists. When political values are mentioned, only universal values such as human rights and democracy should not come to mind. Areas that are not very close to each other such as crime rates, divorce rates, job security and social security opportunities in a country should also be evaluated in this context because they have a significant effect on a country's positive or negative image. (Nye, 2002) For example, when the death penalty is compared between the USA and Europe, the death penalty creates a negative image for the USA, while it creates a positive image for Europe (Nye, 2002).

2.2.3. Foreign Policy

Conjectural changes in world politics cause states to make changes in the methods they follow in foreign policy. The methods followed by the states in foreign policy, the current international system also affect soft power to a certain extent. As it can be understood, soft power also presents a dynamic structure, not a static one. (Sancak, 2016). The development of technology in the 21st century has increased the importance of the internet and mass media. Now people can access information in seconds. An event that takes place in one corner of the world can find wide repercussions in the other. When this is the case, the results of the strategies followed by the countries in their foreign policies may cause positive or negative reactions by others. For example, surveys conducted after the Iraq war in 2003 realized that the attractiveness of the United States was declining rapidly. People and countries with negative thoughts said that their reaction was generally against the Bush administration, not the United States. The people of many countries continued to admire America's technology and popular culture. However, in most countries, a large part of the public stated that they did not like the increasing influence of the USA on their country. (Iron, 2012). In order for foreign policy to be a soft power, first of all, the foreign policy followed by a country must be seen as legitimate by other countries.

Today, the reason why states implement these policies and what they will achieve as a result of the policies are more important than the methods, tools and resources applied in foreign policy. Nye took the war in the Balkans in 1999 as an example. He drew attention to the soft power created by the international public appreciation of the attacks against the Serbian forces in order to protect the Kosovars, although there was no United Nations resolution. (Nye, 2004). As seen in the example

above, although the attacks created problems under international law, the purpose of the attacks was to protect Kosovars and prevent the massacre of Serbs. Because of this perception in the public, the action was deemed legitimate, and as a result, it contributed positively to soft power.

The importance of economic factors in foreign policy in achieving the political goals of states is undoubtedly another important issue. Economic power is an element of power that can be used in both hard power and soft power monitoring. In hard power, a coercive or deterrent effect can be created by using economic factors. States sometimes use economic factors to get what they want or to punish them. The US's application of economic embargoes to some countries at various times, and the United Nations Security Council's (UNSC) decision to cut off trade with Iraq following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait are examples of the use of economic factors as a hard power tool. Economic factors are not only used as coercive, deterrent or punitive in foreign policy but as a soft power element, it is also used for the purpose of creating soft power through various programs such as grants and aid. In this regard, some programs carried out by the European Union (EU) can be given as an example. Within the framework of Regional Policies for EU candidate countries, the Special Accession Program for Agriculture and Rural Development (SAPARD) stands as a noteworthy initiative. With an annual allocation of 520 million Euros, SAPARD aims to bolster agriculture and rural development in beneficiary nations such as Poland and Hungary. In addition to supporting their economic restructuring efforts, these countries also benefit from pre-accession programs that seek to enhance their institutional capacity. Notably, the Instrument for Structural Policies for Pre-Accession (ISPA) has been established to provide financial assistance specifically in the areas of environmental initiatives and transportation infrastructure. Through these strategic financial programs, the EU endeavors to foster sustainable growth and development in candidate countries (Ülger, 2015). Foreign policy has two soft power tools, resources form the bedrock of a country's soft power.

2.2.3.1. Foreign Aid

Although cultural and social issues are mainly dealt with in studies on soft power, in fact, economic support activities are also an important resource in the application of soft power. Foreign aid can be both an attractive and a deterrent for a state to get what it wants through others. (Ozmutlu, 2010). In general, these aids are

used to make them dependent while affecting them through foreign policy. When necessary, hard force can be applied with the threat of withdrawing aid. Foreign aid is generally provided in the form of humanitarian aid, direct or indirect foreign investments, loans and grants. Since aid was made by powerful states to states that were economically and militarily weak, it was often easy to keep that state under control. (Ozmutlu, 2010) As dependency increases, the range of freedom decreases. States have purposes for foreign aid. First of all, it is to spread the ideology to the target country, to attract socially, to make religious activities or economically dependent. Of course, they are putting various development programs into action to achieve these. (Ozmutlu, 2010) Underdeveloped countries become more and more dependent every day when they are caught in an unscheduled debt flow, affecting future governments and generations as well as their own power. (Ozmutlu, 2010). The purpose of foreign aid is not always to create dependency. In this context, the humanitarian aspect assumes great significance. Various actors, including states, non-governmental organizations, and international bodies, extend their support through foreign aid in response to natural disasters like earthquakes, floods, and fires, as well as to regions grappling with challenges such as hunger, thirst, and disease. This collective effort underscores the global commitment to address pressing humanitarian crises and alleviate the suffering of affected communities. It exemplifies the collaborative spirit in which diverse entities come together to provide assistance and relief to those in need.

2.2.3.2. Cultural Diplomacy

Cultural diplomacy stands out as another approach employed by states when harnessing soft power. It entails the skillful expression of one's identity while attaining a deep understanding of the recipient audience through the exchange of ideas, thoughts, worldviews, lifestyles, aesthetic appreciation, and shared pleasures and tastes. By engaging in cultural diplomacy, states can effectively communicate their values, perspectives, and unique attributes to foster mutual understanding and forge connections with other nations. This method allows for the cultivation of meaningful relationships and the promotion of shared interests through the power of cultural exchange. (Purtaş, 2013). The aim of cultural diplomacy is to increase the prestige of the state and the values it represents in the eyes of the international community and to provide a positive outlook.

According to Nye, the attractiveness of a country's culture, facilitates other countries to follow it. According to this explanation, cultural diplomacy is “managing the international environment with cultural resources and facilitating cultural transformation and the policies of the country by exporting cultural examples” (Cull, 2008). Cultural diplomacy accomplishes the foreign policy objectives of a country in an effort to promote a positive image that will facilitate its diplomatic affairs. Cultural diplomacy provides the ability to attract through culture. In fact, cultural diplomacy is the first example of soft power (Sancar, 2012). Culture is the set of values that a society has. As every society has its own values, it also shares some common values. These are values such as freedom, democracy, human rights, honesty and benevolence (Bahar, 2009). If the values that a state has are universal, it is more likely to have the desired outputs from the diplomacy it carries out with the attractive effect of the values it shares and the other soft power resources it has. Cultural diplomacy, as well as state institutions and organizations, non-state organizations, non-governmental organizations, media, and individuals take on very important tasks. Cultural diplomacy covers a very wide area from education to art. That is why the actors I have mentioned above also have important tasks. States carry out cultural diplomacy mostly through public diplomacy, exchange programs and cultural institutions and associations abroad. Other powers such as Yunus Emre Institutes, which Türkiye uses in many regions, and organizations such as the French Cultural Center, Alliance Française, British Council can be cited as examples.

In cultural diplomacy, there are two basic elements that states prioritize. These are language and education. The more common the language of a culture is in a region, the more active that state can be in that region. Through education, it is aimed to further establish and teach the culture. We see this mostly in regions that are exploited by colonialist states. Like France spreading French through international school networks. It is a good example that the French settled under "Francophonie" in order to be protected from the influence of English in French-speaking areas (Cull, 2008). Cultural exchange programs and student exchange programs are also very important in this regard. Thanks to various scholarships, students benefiting from these activities have the opportunity to both promote their own culture and learn about other cultures wherever they go. In addition, thanks to these programs, information exchange is ensured in activities such as various academic studies and conferences. Since these programs are mainly aimed at young people, those who study in a country for a long

time also benefit from increasing the sympathy by leaving positive impressions by keeping the daily life, culture, language and religion of that country alive. Media, written and visual media are also very important cultural tools. With globalization, what is happening in the world arouses curiosity in people in every region. That's why international news channels and newspapers have been an important source of information. For example, when the steps taken by a country in foreign policy are shown as positive, beautiful and legitimate in the media, and when it is published or published after being attractive, it can create sympathy for others who read it. Television series and movies are also good tools for cultural activities. Hollywood movies of the USA are a good example in this regard. Desired messages and attracting arguments are used through films broadcast in many parts of the world.

Recently, Turkish TV series have reached serious viewing rates, especially in Arab countries and the Balkans. Thanks to these series and movies, popularity is increasing and is used to influence large audiences. We have mentioned popular culture before, to mention without further emphasis, food, beverage and clothing brands are important tools in creating popular culture. Music is also a part of popular culture. Today, we see the effects of today's Turkish music in the places where the Ottoman Empire dominated. Again in the 1960s, the US Department of State created a program called "jazz ambassadors" in order to benefit from the impact of jazz music on the world, and they gave concerts in many parts of the world with the funds allocated by the state from the budget (Karadağ, 2016). Cultural diplomacy is an important genre in the use of soft power by states. In addition, cultural diplomacy makes a great contribution to obtaining the desired outputs when applied successfully in a wide area and with the participation of many actors other than the state and the state, and when universal values are brought to the fore. Although these strategies progress in the long term, the positive results are permanent and continuous. The implementation of public diplomacy, which we will focus on in the future, includes the implementation of cultural diplomacy by institutions and organizations.

2.2.4. Public Diplomacy

Public diplomacy, commonly known as soft power, has played a pivotal role in shaping global perceptions and advancing a country's values and interests. The roots of public diplomacy can be traced back to World War II, when the U.S. Government embarked on efforts to counter German propaganda, particularly in Latin America,

with the aim of influencing public opinion and fostering positive perceptions of the United States. Subsequently, during the post-war era, public diplomacy further evolved as a tool to counter Soviet propaganda in the Cold War and enhance America's global appeal. The practice of public diplomacy operates within two main frameworks: "State-to-public" and "public-to-public." State-to-public activities encompass strategic communication of a state's policies and initiatives through official channels, with the goal of engaging and informing the public about the government's stance. These activities seek to shape public opinion, foster understanding, and build constructive relationships.

On the other hand, public-to-public engagements focus on fostering direct interactions and exchanges between individuals and groups from different countries. These initiatives aim to facilitate dialogue, cultural exchanges, and grassroots collaborations, enabling people to connect, share ideas, and develop a deeper appreciation for diverse perspectives. Through public diplomacy, countries endeavor to project a positive image, build bridges of understanding, and cultivate enduring relationships that transcend political boundaries.

By utilizing various tools and platforms, governments seek to shape narratives and create a favorable image internationally. Public-to-public initiatives, on the other hand, foster direct interactions and dialogue among different societal groups, promoting mutual understanding and cultural exchange. These two frameworks work together to strengthen a country's soft power and influence, enabling effective engagement with global audiences. (Kalın, 2011). Public diplomacy includes a wide range of actions that go outside the formal channels of communication between countries and international populations. It entails the participation of several civic organizations and groups, including NGOs, research facilities, media outlets, opinion leaders, academic institutions, exchange programs, alliances, and foundations. These organizations are essential in influencing public opinion and promoting cross-cultural interaction. Programs for overseas visitors, language instruction, cultural events and exchanges, radio and television broadcasts, and the use of social media platforms are all examples of public diplomacy endeavors. By employing these diverse approaches, public diplomacy aims to enhance the reputation and image of the "sending" country, thereby influencing the broader policy environment in the "receiving" country. It recognizes the significance of engaging with different societal actors and promoting mutual understanding on a grassroots level. By leveraging civil society networks and

fostering people-to-people connections, public diplomacy endeavors to foster goodwill, bridge cultural gaps, and promote dialogue and cooperation between nations. (Melissen 2005). Public diplomacy extends beyond the realm of traditional diplomatic communication. It encompasses a broader scope of activities and initiatives aimed at engaging with international audiences. The term "public diplomacy" was first introduced by Edmund Gullion, a distinguished American diplomat and former dean of the Tufts University Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, in 1965. Gullion's conception of public diplomacy emphasized the importance of reaching out to the public, building relationships, and fostering mutual understanding on a global scale. This notion marked a significant departure from the narrow confines of traditional diplomacy, highlighting the need to engage with various actors and utilize different channels to shape perceptions and influence public opinion in international affairs. (Sancak,2016). In the beginning, public diplomacy activities, which were generally extended to the seventeenth century, were witnessed mainly with the Cold War period. After the World War II, it started to gain an important place by using it at the point of obtaining the demands that could not be obtained with the tired economy and military resources. (Bostanci, 2012).

In her book "Rethinking Public Diplomacy," Nancy Snow, offers a comprehensive analysis of public diplomacy and its evolving role in a globalized world. The book presents an in-depth exploration of the challenges and opportunities faced by public diplomacy practitioners, policymakers, and scholars in the 21st century. The author argues that public diplomacy has become a critical tool in international relations, as it helps countries build relationships, influence public opinion, and promote their interests in the global arena. (Snow, Rethinking Public Diplomacy 2008) She stresses out that in a world characterized by interconnectedness, where communication and information technologies are increasingly prevalent, public diplomacy must be rethought and reimagined. One of the central themes of the book is the need to move beyond the traditional top-down approach to public diplomacy, which focuses on governments and elites, and adopt a more inclusive and collaborative approach. Snow contends that public diplomacy should involve civil society organizations, individuals, and other stakeholders, as they play a vital role in shaping public opinion and promoting dialogue between nations. She asserts that public diplomacy should be based on mutual respect, transparency, and authenticity to foster

trust and build lasting relationships (Snow, “Rethinking Public Diplomacy”, Handbook of Public Diplomacy 2008).

Moreover, the author highlights the importance of cultural diplomacy, which involves promoting cultural exchanges, arts, and literature to enhance understanding and appreciation between different cultures. She emphasizes that cultural diplomacy is an essential component of public diplomacy, as it promotes dialogue and mutual respect, and helps overcome cultural barriers. The author argues that digital diplomacy has become a vital tool in international relations, as social media platforms and other digital tools have transformed the way people communicate and share information. She stresses that public diplomacy practitioners must be adept at using digital technologies to engage with audiences and communicate their messages effectively. (Snow 2008)

In his groundbreaking work, "The New Public Diplomacy," Jan Melissen provides an insightful and all-encompassing examination of the dynamic transformation occurring within public diplomacy. Melissen astutely captures the unfolding of a fresh paradigm, one that embraces the evolving global panorama and acknowledges the pivotal role of non-state actors in shaping public opinion. In this compelling analysis, Melissen contends that the traditional model of public diplomacy, predicated solely on state-to-state communication, can no longer suffice in a world where non-state actors—ranging from civil society organizations and multinational corporations to individuals—have emerged as influential forces, wielding the power to shape public sentiment and sway policy decisions. (Melissen 2005)

According to Melissen, the new public diplomacy is characterized by a more inclusive and participatory approach that recognizes the importance of engaging with a diverse range of actors, including NGOs, think tanks, media outlets, and ordinary citizens. This approach is based on the idea that effective public diplomacy requires a two-way dialogue between actors, rather than simply broadcasting messages from one state to another. Melissen argues that the new public diplomacy is not just about "winning hearts and minds" but also about building trust, fostering understanding, and creating opportunities for cooperation and collaboration (Melissen 2005).

One of the key challenges facing the new public diplomacy is the proliferation of digital technologies and the rise of social media, which have dramatically altered the way people consume and share information. Melissen argues that these technologies have created new opportunities for engagement and communication but

have also made it more difficult for states to control the flow of information and shape public opinion. He notes that the new public diplomacy must therefore be agile and adaptable, able to respond quickly to changing circumstances and leverage new technologies to reach and engage with target audiences (Melissen 2005).

Within Melissen's insightful analysis, an additional pivotal theme emerges, shedding light on the profound significance of soft power within the realm of public diplomacy. Melissen compellingly posits that soft power, encompassing a state's capacity to exert influence through attraction and persuasion rather than coercion or brute force, serves as a fundamental pillar within the new paradigm of public diplomacy. This influential force can be bolstered through a state's cultural and educational riches, its economic prowess and prosperity, and its commendable reputation in championing democratic principles, human rights, and the rule of law. Illuminatingly, Melissen underscores the imperative for the new public diplomacy to embrace strategic approaches, adroitly harnessing these resources to amplify a state's soft power and realize its foreign policy objectives. In doing so, Melissen's analysis underscores the indispensable nature of engaging a diverse array of actors, leveraging cutting-edge technologies, and fortifying a state's soft power as essential components in the pursuit of foreign policy goals throughout the twenty-first century. (Melissen 2005).

The concept of public diplomacy can be defined as the establishment of closer relations between countries by providing the public opinion, governments, all persons, institutions and organizations of foreign countries, with correct content, in order to protect and develop the national interest and image of a state, and to support classical diplomatic activities. (Yılmaz, 2012). With the gradual increase in technological developments, inter-communal communication has become an important dimension. Societies have begun to be heavily influenced by other cultures through communication tools such as the internet, radio and smartphones, which are indispensable for life. As a result of this interaction, opinion and organization of the public has become important. Over time, the importance of public opinion has not been limited to the national dimension, but its international dimension has emerged. Therefore, one of the most important aspects of public diplomacy is that it is a foreign policy technique (Karadağ, 2016). Regarding public diplomacy, first of all, the target audience is the public and the civilian structure. In addition, there are people who use the concept of propaganda very often with public diplomacy. However, propaganda

and public diplomacy are not the same thing. They need to be considered separately from each other. In public diplomacy, the source of information is clear and its accuracy is certain. But in propaganda, the situation is different. Unproven rumors are produced and used as propaganda material. While there is full state control in propaganda, public diplomacy differs from it with a more civilian structure. Public diplomacy is public relations activities. Information that gives the impression of propaganda is far from being reliable, therefore it is necessary to distinguish public diplomacy activities from propaganda (Sancak, 2015).

The USA is the one that uses public diplomacy most effectively in the world. However, as an institutional example of public diplomacy, we encounter the French establishment of the Alliance Francaise (the institution that teaches French language and culture in France and various countries in the world) in Europe in 1883 before the USA (Nye, 2008). Public diplomacy consists of three intertwined phases. These are the short, medium and long-term phases. Short-term communications are mostly the period of less than one year's activities of the affected country. It includes activities such as organizing sports competitions, having a famous person appear in a television program in other countries, concerts and exhibitions. Medium-term communications are expressed as activities lasting up to ten years. In this period, the country's charm is being operated slowly. It includes reaching into the subconscious through broadcasts such as radio broadcasts, television series, films, documentaries and advertisements in the target country. In this regard, famous TV series stars, athletes, singers playing in advertisements in other countries is also an important type of activity. The third phase, long-term communications, covers activities that take more than ten years to make an impact. Educational scholarships and various funds are within this scope. While mutual information exchange increases thanks to the programs, cultural interaction occurs over time. The leaders of many developing countries have completed their education in leading states such as the USA or England (Karadağ, 2016).

Public diplomacy encompasses a very wide area and actor. We can list the application areas of public diplomacy as education, culture, art, sports, technology and religion. Today, technology is an important area for the reputation of countries, as the internet has become important. Media organs, non-governmental organizations and social media channels are important for a state to achieve its goals in the fields of public diplomacy. These tools have a significant impact especially on the young population. Those who will carry out policy in the cultural field in public diplomacy

want to influence the target country in a comfortable way by using the media or internet resources by putting the youth at the center. For example, Wikileaks revealed in its documents in 2008 that Ben Ali and his family were corrupt, and as a result, the people rebelled against this corruption incident and took to the streets and there was a Jasmine revolution in Tunisia (Engin, 2011).. Some segments have named this revolution as the "social media revolution"(Engin, 2011). Likewise, many news channels broadcast in English from Central Asia to Africa, from the Far East to the Middle East, from the USA to the Caucasus. These broadcasting media organizations are to some extent the missionaries of ideological and cultural hegemony (Erzen, 2014). Public diplomacy has three dimensions in its realization as short, medium and long term. The short term is usually the daily dimension. It is aimed to respond quickly to international developments and crises. The important point here is the statements to be made to the public. Considering that the statements made to the domestic public will not remain within the political boundaries with the technological developments, it should also be taken into account how these statements will be perceived by the international public. It should not be forgotten that a conversation that is thought to be beneficial inside can lead to negative thoughts outside. (Yılmaz,2012).

The second period, the middle period, is strategic communications, such as advertising campaigns, which target a one-year period and create simple themes. Here, symbolic events and communications are planned that will take place over the course of a year. In the third period, there are activities to be carried out in the long term. These are listed as scholarships, exchange programs, internships and similar educational activities. (Sancak,2015) Public diplomacy activities play an important role in creating attractiveness for a country. The attractiveness and positive image obtained as an output increase the soft power potentials of the country. Although soft power resources are available, it is difficult to gain from soft power if there are no public diplomacy activities to put it into practice correctly. (Sancak, 2015).

Public diplomacy is a soft power tool, and with it, it is tried to achieve results with very different means on very different issues. The soft power potentials of each country are different, and therefore the public diplomacy that will market them also differs in each country. Likewise, the characteristics of the countries determined as targets are also different from each other, and the methods and tools of public diplomacy to be developed against them must be different (Sancak, 2015).

In general, there is no standard public diplomacy model that is valid in all situations and conditions. Countries should determine appropriate methods and tools, taking into account the characteristics of themselves and the countries they have determined as a target. There are discussions on the relations between public diplomacy and soft power. Although there are certain differences between the two concepts, they cannot be considered separately from each other. First, public diplomacy is exercised by the state. In fact, the state can use all kinds of institutions in line with its purpose. Soft power, on the other hand, can be exercised by multinational companies, non-governmental organizations. While no tangible result can be achieved as a result of soft power, foreign policy goals, public diplomacy provides tangible benefits. Finally, we can express public diplomacy as "a goal-oriented form of soft power" (Karadağ, 2016).

2.2.5. Media And Communication

Media and communication serve as powerful sources of soft power for nations, allowing them to influence and shape perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors of international audiences. Here's a more detailed explanation of how media and communication function as sources of soft power:

Cultural Export: Media, such as films, television shows, music, literature, and art, can carry a country's cultural identity and values to a global audience. When these cultural products resonate with people from different backgrounds, they foster a sense of connection and familiarity, promoting a positive image of the country. For instance, K-pop from South Korea and Bollywood from India have contributed significantly to shaping global perceptions of these nations' cultures.

Narrative Shaping: Through media and communication channels, countries can shape narratives that highlight their achievements, contributions, and positive aspects. This narrative-building allows nations to present their values, policies, and actions in a way that appeals to international audiences, potentially swaying opinions in their favor.

Information Dissemination: By sharing information about scientific breakthroughs, technological innovations, economic successes, and societal advancements, countries can showcase their capabilities and expertise. This sharing of knowledge not only enhances a nation's reputation but also positions it as a credible source of information and a leader in various fields.

Language and Accessibility: Using a widely spoken language in media content increases accessibility to global audiences. Countries that can effectively communicate in languages like English, Spanish, or Mandarin have an advantage in reaching broader populations and exerting influence.

Public Diplomacy: Media and communication tools provide avenues for public diplomacy efforts, enabling countries to engage in dialogue, cultural exchanges, and collaborative projects with other nations. This fosters understanding, trust, and goodwill, all of which contribute to a country's soft power.

Cultural Diplomacy: Promoting cultural exchanges, festivals, exhibitions, and other cultural events fosters cross-cultural understanding and appreciation. This showcases a country's diversity and openness, which in turn enhances its soft power appeal.

Digital Platforms and Social Media: The rise of digital platforms and social media has democratized communication, allowing countries to directly engage with global audiences. These platforms provide opportunities for cultural expression, diplomacy, and the dissemination of information on a global scale.

Storytelling: Compelling stories presented through media can evoke emotions and create connections with audiences. Stories that portray a nation's achievements, resilience, and contributions to global issues can generate admiration and positive perceptions.

Human Connections: Media allows countries to portray their citizens as relatable, humanizing figures. By showcasing the everyday lives and experiences of people, countries can create empathetic connections with audiences worldwide.

In conclusion, media and communication are vital sources of soft power that enable nations to project their cultures, values, and ideas across borders. By leveraging these resources strategically, countries can build positive relationships, shape perceptions, and exert influence on the international stage without resorting to coercive measures. Soft power tools and resources play an increasingly pivotal role in shaping global influence. A nation's culture, values, diplomacy, and reputation form the bedrock of its soft power. Leveraging these sources through tools like cultural diplomacy, educational exchanges, and crisis response, nations can cultivate positive images, build relationships, and achieve foreign policy objectives. There are In the next chapter, I will explain the Turkish Soft Power and Turkish Soft Power Tools in this context.

2.3. Contemporary Debate About Soft Power

As mentioned earlier, the concept of soft power encompasses a wide range of elements, encompassing culture, history, values, domestic and foreign policies pursued by states, institutions, economic development, as well as advancements in science, art, and literature. These elements collectively serve as potent sources of soft power (Kalathıl, 2011). When it comes to foreign policy, there exist specific approaches for effectively implementing a soft power strategy by leveraging these resources. For instance, countries can uphold and promote values that have the potential to become global or regional norms, utilize well-known celebrities or heroes as messengers to convey messages, and craft captivating national or global narratives (Lee, 2011). Each nation possesses its unique set of soft power resources and thus develops distinct strategies that align with these resources, showcasing their individuality in the realm of soft power.

It is seen that Türkiye's order-building role and economic-humanitarian aids, Lee's strategy of "creating or manipulating its own image" and its regulatory role are examples of the "network effect strategy".

In an increasingly interconnected world, the concept of soft power has gained significant prominence as a means for nations to project their influence beyond military and economic might. Turkey, a country with a rich history and a strategic geographic location, embarked on a journey to establish its soft power and enhance its public diplomacy efforts over the past decades. (Ekşi 2018)

The Rise of Turkish Soft Power: Ekşi's analysis begins with an exploration of Turkey's rise as a regional and global player, fueled by its historical, cultural, and economic assets. The early 2000s witnessed Turkey's "zero problems with neighbors" policy, aiming to foster positive relationships with neighboring countries through economic interdependence and diplomatic initiatives. This approach, alongside the revitalization of cultural diplomacy through the promotion of Turkish soap operas, music, and cuisine, contributed to Turkey's increasing appeal in the Middle East, the Balkans, and beyond. (Ekşi 2018)

Furthermore, Turkey's humanitarian efforts during times of crises, such as its response to the Syrian refugee crisis, showcased the country's commitment to addressing global challenges and promoting stability. The combination of economic

growth, cultural outreach, and humanitarian assistance set the stage for Turkey to emerge as a rising soft power in the early 21st century. (Ekşi 2018)

Ekşi also highlights the challenges and setbacks that led to the decline of Turkey's soft power and public diplomacy efforts. One notable factor is the evolving domestic political landscape. The shift towards a more centralized governance model and the erosion of democratic institutions raised concerns among international observers, casting doubts on Turkey's commitment to democratic values and human rights. These developments led to a tarnished image and diminished credibility in the eyes of global audiences. (Ekşi 2018)

Additionally, Turkey's involvement in regional conflicts, such as the Syrian civil war and tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean, strained its relationships with neighboring countries and weakened its role as a mediator and peacekeeper. The transformation of the "zero problems with neighbors" policy into a more confrontational stance hindered Turkey's ability to build and maintain alliances, impacting its diplomatic outreach and soft power projection. Ekşi presents a comprehensive analysis of Turkey's ambitious journey to establish itself as a prominent soft power player on the global stage. The rise of Turkish soft power was marked by cultural diplomacy, economic growth, and humanitarian efforts. However, challenges such as domestic political shifts and regional conflicts contributed to the decline of Turkey's soft power influence and its ability to effectively engage in public diplomacy. (Ekşi 2018)

In the complex landscape of international relations, Turkey has occupied a unique position as a bridge between Europe and Asia, a NATO member, and a pivotal actor in regional geopolitics. Philip Robins' seminal work, "Suits and Uniforms: Turkish Foreign Policy since the Cold War," delves deep into the intricacies of Turkey's foreign policy evolution from the Cold War era to the present day. (Robins 2003)

Cold War Legacy and Strategic Shifts: Robins begins by contextualizing Turkey's foreign policy within the global dynamics of the Cold War. As a pivotal NATO member, Turkey stood at the crossroads of East and West, facing the challenge of balancing its Western alliance commitments with its regional interests and concerns. The book elaborates on how Turkey's role within NATO granted it a strategic significance, while the threat of the Soviet Union influenced its policy decisions, contributing to the militarization of its foreign policy. (Robins 2003)

However, with the end of the Cold War, Turkey faced the need to redefine its foreign policy priorities. The book explores Turkey's attempts to recalibrate its focus towards economic integration, soft power diplomacy, and regional engagement, reflecting a shift from its earlier military-centric approach. (Robins 2003)

Identity, Democracy, and Regional Dynamics: An important aspect discussed in the book is Turkey's domestic identity struggles and their impact on foreign policy. The question of Turkey's identity as a secular state with a predominantly Muslim population has underpinned many of its foreign policy decisions. Robins delves into how this internal debate influenced Turkey's stance on issues like its relationship with the European Union, its role in regional conflicts, and its interactions with its neighbors in the Middle East. (Robins 2003)

Furthermore, Turkey's complex relationships with its neighbors and regional actors. From its involvement in conflicts in the Balkans to its attempts to manage tensions with Iran and Syria, Robins highlights how Turkey's foreign policy decisions have been shaped by its immediate geopolitical environment. (Robins 2003)

He also underscores the challenges that have marked Turkey's foreign policy trajectory. The Kurdish question, for instance, has posed significant challenges to Turkey's domestic stability and its relations with neighboring countries. Robins analyzes how Turkey's responses to the Kurdish issue have influenced its regional alliances and interactions. (Robins 2003)

Moreover, the He delves into Turkey's efforts to play a role as a mediator and peace broker in various conflicts, such as the Israel-Palestine conflict. It also examines Turkey's attempts to diversify its partnerships beyond the West, seeking engagement with Russia, China, and the Gulf states. (Robins 2003)

Philip Robins' "Suits and Uniforms: Turkish Foreign Policy since the Cold War" offers a comprehensive exploration of Turkey's foreign policy evolution in the dynamic post-Cold War era. The book navigates through Turkey's shifting strategic priorities, its complex identity debates, and its endeavors to establish its presence in regional and global affairs. (Robins 2003)

Ultimately, Robins' analysis provides valuable insights into the factors that have shaped Turkey's foreign policy choices, highlighting the intricate interplay between domestic politics, regional dynamics, and global exigencies. As Turkey continues to grapple with new challenges and opportunities, the lessons gleaned from

Robins' work remain pertinent in deciphering the trajectory of Turkish foreign policy in an ever-changing world. (Robins 2003)

Soft power stands as a stark contrast to the notion of "hard power," which revolves around the use of military force or economic coercion to achieve political goals. This juxtaposition emphasizes the significance of persuasive and non-confrontational strategies in shaping the dynamics of international relations. In recent times, there has been a growing recognition of the pivotal role played by soft power in the realm of global affairs. Many proponents contend that in an increasingly interconnected world, where information flows freely and collective action is imperative to address global challenges, soft power emerges as a more effective instrument for attaining foreign policy objectives compared to hard power. Conversely, there are those who argue that soft power is exaggerated and that military might and economic strength retain their primacy as the most crucial factors in international relations. The ongoing debate surrounding the relative merits of soft power and hard power reflects the evolving landscape of diplomacy and the complex interplay of diverse perspectives

One of the key debates surrounding soft power has been about the role of culture in international relations. Some argue that culture is a key source of soft power, as it allows countries to share their values and ideas with others. For example, Hollywood movies and American pop music are seen as important sources of soft power for the United States, as they help to spread American culture and values around the world. Others argue that culture is not enough, and that countries must also have strong institutions and policies if they want to wield soft power effectively.

Another debate has been about the relationship between soft power and democracy. Some argue that democratic countries are inherently better at using soft power, as their values of openness, freedom, and human rights are more attractive to others. Others point out that authoritarian countries like China and Russia have been successful in using soft power to achieve their foreign policy goals, despite their lack of democratic institutions.

In recent years, the rise of China has also led to a debate about the future of soft power. Many analysts argue that China's economic and cultural influence is growing rapidly, and that this will allow it to wield significant soft power in the years to come. Others are more skeptical, pointing out that China's human rights record and

authoritarian political system may limit its ability to attract others to its values and ideas.(Nye,2017)

In conclusion, the debate about soft power in international relations between 2002-2023 has been lively and multifaceted. While there is no consensus on the relative importance of soft power compared to hard power, most analysts agree that in an interconnected and globalized world, soft power is an increasingly important tool for achieving foreign policy objectives. The role of culture, democracy, and rising powers like China will continue to be important areas of debate in the years to come.

Between 2002-2023, an ongoing discourse has unfolded surrounding the significance of soft power in the realm of international relations. Soft power, characterized by its ability to sway and shape others through attraction, persuasion, and cultural allure rather than resorting to coercion or brute force, has garnered considerable attention. This concept has captured the spotlight against the backdrop of a shifting global landscape, the ascent of emerging powers, and the growing prominence of non-state actors in the realm of international affairs. As the dynamics of power and influence continue to evolve, the exploration of soft power's role has become a focal point in understanding and navigating the complexities of contemporary global relations.

One of the most significant developments in the debate about soft power has been the growing recognition of its importance by policymakers and scholars alike. While traditional notions of power have emphasized military might, economic clout, and political influence, soft power has emerged as a complementary tool for achieving national objectives. As a result, there has been a renewed focus on the cultural and ideological dimensions of international relations, and the role that values, norms, and ideas play in shaping the behavior of states.

However, there is also a continuing debate about the effectiveness of soft power. Some critics argue that it is a vague and ill-defined concept that lacks clear metrics and tangible results. Others contend that soft power is only effective when combined with hard power, and that it cannot be relied upon as a standalone tool for achieving strategic objectives.

Furthermore, there are differing opinions about which countries are most successful in using soft power. The United States has long been regarded as a leader in this area, due to its global cultural influence and its ability to promote democratic values and human rights. However, the rise of China and other emerging powers has

challenged this perception, with some arguing that these countries are increasingly using soft power to promote their own interests and challenge Western hegemony.

Another area of debate is the role of non-state actors in the exercise of soft power. Civil society organizations, media outlets, and individual activists are increasingly seen as important actors in shaping public opinion and influencing policy decisions. This has led to a greater emphasis on public diplomacy and people-to-people exchanges as means of building relationships between nations.

Overall, the debate about soft power in international relations is likely to continue in the years ahead, as the world becomes increasingly interconnected and complex. While there is no consensus on the effectiveness or definition of soft power, it is clear that it will continue to be an important aspect of global politics, and that states will need to master its use in order to achieve their strategic objectives.

On the flip side, an additional debate revolves around the distinctive attributes of soft power. It is contended that states not only utilize soft power to persuade others to act in accordance with their desires but also to enhance their national branding effects. Within the realm of international relations and diplomacy, two frequently discussed concepts are national branding and soft power. National branding entails the deliberate construction of a favorable image of a country in the global arena. Soft power, on the other hand, encompasses a nation's ability to exert influence over others through non-coercive means, such as culture, values, and ideas. Thus, the interplay between national branding and soft power emerges as a pertinent subject of analysis and discussion, as countries seek to shape their international perception while harnessing the persuasive capacities inherent in soft power dynamics.

Akıllı points out that many nations use soft power tactics, such as country branding, to improve their favorable reputation on the world stage. Joseph Nye's idea of "nation branding," which has its roots in soft power, is the process of fostering positive thoughts and feelings about a country in order to increase its standing abroad. Many nations throughout the world use the presence of foreign students to enhance their public perception. Türkiye focuses its foreign student programs as a proponent of soft power in international relations. Türkiye spends money in initiatives like the Great Student Project, Türkiye Scholarships, and the Mevlana Exchange Program to help build and project a strong and good national brand with the assistance of foreign students.. National branding is an important tool for countries to enhance their soft power. When a country has a positive image, it is more likely to be viewed as a

desirable partner in trade, investment, and other forms of cooperation. A good national brand can help to attract tourists, students, and businesspeople, and can create a positive reputation that can be leveraged in international diplomacy. For example, countries like Japan and South Korea have used their national branding to promote their cultures and products, which in turn has helped to increase their soft power. (Akıllı, 2018)

National branding can also have an impact on a country's ability to project its soft power. A strong national brand can provide a platform for a country to showcase its values, ideas, and culture to the world. This can be particularly important for countries that may not have significant military or economic power, but still want to have a voice on the international stage. For example, countries like Denmark and Finland have used their national branding to promote their reputation as progressive, socially responsible nations, which has helped to increase their influence and soft power.

On the other hand, a negative national brand can undermine a country's soft power. Countries that are viewed as corrupt, authoritarian, or unstable may find it difficult to attract international partners or to have their ideas and values accepted on the global stage. Negative perceptions can also make it more difficult for a country to project its soft power, as it may be viewed as hypocritical or insincere. For example, countries like Russia and North Korea have struggled to project their soft power due to negative perceptions of their political systems and human rights records.

In conclusion, national branding and soft power are closely intertwined concepts in the realm of international relations. National branding can help to enhance a country's soft power by creating a positive image and platform for projecting its values and culture. Conversely, a negative national brand can undermine a country's soft power and make it more difficult to be taken seriously on the global stage. As such, national branding is an important tool for countries seeking to enhance their soft power and influence in the world. (Günek,2018)

Günek said that *Nation branding can be an important tool in the development of a nation's soft power. A successful nation branding campaign will help create a more favorable image among the international audience thus further enhancing a country's soft power. Branding a nation is much more than just finding a catching slogan or window-dressing but requires the study of a nation's soft power sources in order to exploit them effectively to promote the national image. (Fan, 2008: 17)*

Türkiye with national branding in Central Asia, has good impact because of their ethnicity and religion commonality. These countries have imported many TV shows and they have exchange student programs and many agreements with Türkiye. They also choose Türkiye as a mediator country in their international crises. That is proof of Türkiye's good national branding in this regions. In this concept, good country index is important phenomena. Simon Anholt is the visionary behind the development of the Good Country Index. This index serves as a measure of countries' contributions to the collective welfare of humanity, while soft power encompasses a nation's ability to influence others through non-coercive means such as culture, values, and ideas. The Good Country Index evaluates a country's impact on the common good across seven categories, including science and technology, culture, international peace and security, and global governance. By focusing on a country's global influence rather than just its domestic performance, this index offers a fresh perspective on evaluating nations' contributions to the world. Notably, the Good Country Index can significantly influence a country's soft power by providing a tangible measure of its global contributions and thereby enhancing its reputation as a responsible and proactive global citizen.. (Anholt, 2016)

Anholt said that Soft Power, on the other hand, refers to a country's ability to influence others through non-coercive means, such as culture, values, and ideas. Soft Power can be used to achieve foreign policy objectives, by creating a positive image of a country and its values, and by promoting the country's cultural, economic, and political interests. Soft Power can also be used to foster cooperation and partnership with other countries, by building trust and relationships based on shared values and interests.(Anholt, 2016)

The Good Country Index and Soft Power share a close relationship, with a country's endeavors to advance the common good of humanity amplifying its soft power influence. When a nation is perceived as a responsible global citizen, actively contributing to the betterment of the world, it becomes more appealing as a partner for trade, investment, and various collaborative efforts. A high-ranking position on the Good Country Index further bolsters a country's reputation and influence, as it serves as a metric showcasing the extent of a nation's positive contributions to the global community. By actively engaging in actions that benefit humanity as a whole, a country can harness the power of its soft power and establish itself as an attractive and influential player on the international stage (Anholt, 2016).

However, it is important to note that the Good Country Index and Soft Power are not always aligned. Countries that are ranked highly on the Good Country Index may not necessarily have high levels of Soft Power, as Soft Power is also influenced by factors such as economic and military power, and the appeal of a country's culture and values. For example, a country like China may rank low on the Good Country Index, but it has been successful in building its Soft Power through investments in cultural diplomacy and by promoting its cultural and economic interests abroad.

The Good Country Index and Soft Power are two important concepts in the realm of international relations and diplomacy. The Good Country Index provides a measure of a country's contributions to the world and can enhance its reputation as a responsible global citizen. Soft Power, on the other hand, refers to a country's ability to influence others through non-coercive means and can be used to achieve foreign policy objectives and foster cooperation with other countries. While the Good Country Index and Soft Power are related, they are not always aligned, and both are influenced by a range of factors that must be taken into consideration when analyzing a country's global impact and influence. (Anholt, 2016)

Within this framework, Türkiye has exerted a significant influence, earning a commendable ranking in the overall standings of the Good Country Index. Akıllı contends that Türkiye's positive image can be effectively reconstructed and projected abroad through the concept of nation branding, with international students playing a pivotal role in this transformative process. While the cultivation of an international student culture in Türkiye initially gained momentum with Turkic countries, facilitated by initiatives such as "the Great Student Project," the nation has evolved into a secure haven for approximately 138,000 students hailing from 172 different countries. This remarkable feat has been made possible by programs like Türkiye Scholarships and the Mevlana Exchange Program (Akıllı 2018). The reflection of this positive portrayal is evident in Türkiye's Impressive 38th position in the esteemed Good Country Index.

Nonetheless, despite the upward trajectory in the overall rankings over the years, Türkiye's standing in the "Science & Technology" category has remained relatively stable in recent times, closely intertwined with the presence and impact of international students. Through their diverse representation, Türkiye's favorable image and national brand permeate across the globe, positioning the country as a prospective hub for higher education and an appealing center of attraction in the years to come. This phenomenon underscores Türkiye's dedication to fostering an inclusive and

dynamic learning environment, further bolstering its reputation as an emerging force in the realm of global education and solidifying its position as a promising destination for international students (Akıllı 2018).

Türkiye has made significant progress in recent years in terms of its global impact and contributions to the common good of humanity. The country has invested heavily in science and technology, with a focus on innovation and research, and has made significant strides in the areas of renewable energy and sustainable development. Türkiye has also taken a leading role in the refugee crisis, hosting more than 4 million refugees, and providing aid and support to refugees in neighboring countries.

In terms of culture, Türkiye has a rich and diverse cultural heritage, with a long history of contributions to the arts, literature, and music. Turkish cuisine is renowned around the world, and the country has made efforts to promote its cultural exports, such as Turkish TV shows and movies. Türkiye's location at the crossroads of Europe and Asia has also allowed it to play a role in promoting international peace and security, as it is a key player in regional diplomacy and has been involved in efforts to resolve conflicts in neighboring countries.

Despite these achievements, Türkiye still faces significant challenges in terms of its ranking on the Good Country Index. The country's human rights record and its democratic institutions have been called into question in recent years, with concerns about freedom of the press and the independence of the judiciary. Türkiye has also been involved in conflicts in neighboring countries, such as Syria, and has been criticized for its role in the conflict.

In conclusion, Türkiye has made significant progress in terms of its global impact and contributions to the common good of humanity. The country has invested in science and technology, culture, and international peace and security, and has taken a leading role in the refugee crisis. However, there are still challenges to overcome, particularly in the areas of human rights and democratic institutions, and in its role in regional conflicts. Türkiye's progress on the Good Country Index will depend on its ability to address these challenges and to continue to make positive contributions to the world. One of the questions that arise when discussing soft power is whether it can be measured or not. Some argue that soft power is intangible and cannot be quantified, while others believe that it is possible to measure the impact of soft power on international relations. (Yukaruç, 2017)

On one hand, soft power is often seen as a subjective and qualitative concept that cannot be measured. Soft power is rooted in the culture, values, and identity of a country, and it can be difficult to quantify these factors. For example, how can we measure the impact of American music or Hollywood movies on global perceptions of the United States? These are intangible elements that are difficult to quantify.

Moreover, soft power is often a long-term strategy that may not yield immediate results. It takes time for a country to build its soft power and influence others through its culture, values, and policies. Soft power is a complex and multifaceted concept that can be challenging to assess and evaluate.

On the other hand, there are those who argue that soft power can be measured, albeit in a more indirect way. One approach is to look at indicators such as the number of international students studying in a country, the popularity of a country's culture and media, or the level of trust that other countries have in a particular nation. These factors can give an indication of a country's soft power and its ability to influence others. (Yukaruç, 2017)

Another approach is to look at the impact of a country's soft power on specific policy outcomes. For example, the success of China's Belt and Road Initiative can be seen as a result of China's soft power strategy. Similarly, the United States' ability to build alliances and partnerships with other countries can be attributed to its soft power. (Layne, 2010)

In conclusion, whether soft power can be measured or not is a matter of debate. While some argue that it is an intangible and qualitative concept that cannot be easily quantified, others believe that it is possible to measure the impact of soft power on international relations. Regardless of which side one takes, it is clear that soft power has become an increasingly important tool in international relations, and countries are seeking to leverage their soft power to gain influence and shape global perceptions.

Gray defined hard power as the use of military force and economic coercion to achieve a country's objectives. He believed that hard power was necessary to maintain a country's security and to deter potential threats. Gray also acknowledged that hard power had its limitations, particularly in achieving long-term goals and building relationships with other countries. (Gray,2011)

In contrast, Gray defined soft power as the ability to influence others through attraction and persuasion, rather than through coercion. Soft power is based on a country's culture, values, and policies, and it can be used to build relationships and

alliances with other countries. Gray argued that soft power was essential in achieving long-term goals and in promoting a country's interests without resorting to military force. (Gray,2011)

According to Gray, the key to success in international relations was to strike a balance between hard power and soft power. He believed that a country should have a strong military and economic power to protect its interests and deter potential threats, but also use soft power to build relationships and influence other countries. Gray argued that a country that relied too heavily on hard power risked alienating other countries and creating resentment and mistrust, while a country that relied too heavily on soft power risked being perceived as weak and ineffective.

Gray's work has contributed to the field of International Relations by highlighting the importance of both hard power and soft power. He recognized that both types of power were necessary in achieving a country's objectives, and that a balance between the two was crucial. Gray's work also emphasized the importance of building relationships and alliances with other countries, rather than relying solely on military force or economic coercion.(Gray,2011)

The origins of soft power can be traced back to the tumultuous era of the Cold War, characterized by a fierce ideological rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union. In this global standoff, both superpowers employed different means to assert their influence. The United States leveraged its cultural prowess and economic dominance to champion the virtues of democracy and capitalism, while the Soviet Union relied on its military strength and economic stature to promote the ideals of communism. However, as the Cold War gradually subsided, the world witnessed an unprecedented level of interconnectivity and interdependence. In this evolving landscape, the significance of soft power emerged as a prominent force, surpassing the traditional tools of military might and economic clout. The power to persuade and attract others through cultural appeal, shared values, and diplomatic finesse gained newfound prominence. As global interactions intensified and the need for cooperation became increasingly apparent, soft power assumed a central role in shaping international relations and influencing the course of global events (Nyadera, 2021).

In the age of globalization and information technology, soft power has become a critical tool for states to achieve their foreign policy objectives. With the rise of social media and other digital technologies, it has become easier than ever for states to reach a global audience and shape public opinion. As a result, soft power has become an

essential component of modern diplomacy. Several key components of soft power, including culture, values, and ideas. He argues that these components are essential for states to attract and persuade others. For example, a state that promotes democracy and human rights is likely to be more attractive to other nations than a state that does not. (Nyadera,2021)

The future of soft power and argues that it will continue to play an important role in international relations. He notes that as the world becomes more interconnected, the competition for influence will only increase. Therefore, states that can effectively wield soft power will be better positioned to achieve their foreign policy objectives. (Nyadera,2021)

Overall, Israel Nyaburi NYADERA's article provides valuable insights into the evolution and future of soft power. The author's analysis highlights the importance of soft power in contemporary international relations and offers a roadmap for states seeking to effectively wield this critical tool of diplomacy. (Nyadera,2021)

In the realm of international relations, hard power denotes the traditional reliance on military and economic resources to achieve political objectives. It has long been the go-to approach for states seeking to exert influence. However, the application of hard power often carries unintended consequences, such as the erosion of legitimacy and the cultivation of lasting adversaries. In stark contrast, soft power encompasses the captivating ability to sway and persuade others through cultural, ideological, and normative means. In our increasingly interconnected and globalized world, where the power of ideas and values holds tremendous sway, soft power is assuming an unprecedented role. Its potential lies in forging alliances, bolstering legitimacy, and shaping public opinion—a dynamic and persuasive approach to international affairs. As the dynamics of power and influence continue to evolve, soft power offers a compelling alternative, highlighting the importance of cultural appeal, shared ideals, and normative influence in shaping the course of global events (Raimzhanova, 2017). Concept of smart power, which is defined as the combination of hard and soft power. Smart power involves using a range of different tools to achieve political objectives, including military force, economic incentives, and cultural diplomacy. Smart power is the most effective form of power in international relations because it allows states to achieve their objectives without resorting to the use of force. (Raimzhanova,"Power in IR: Hard, Soft, and Smart,2017)

There are several examples of how different types of power have been used in international relations. For example, the author notes that the United States has traditionally relied on hard power to achieve its foreign policy objectives, such as the use of military force in Iraq and Afghanistan. However, the United States has also used soft power to promote democracy and human rights around the world. (Raimzhanova,2017)

Overall, Aigerim Raimzhanova highlights the advantages and disadvantages of each type of power and underscores the importance of using a range of different tools to achieve political objectives. The concept of smart power is particularly valuable, as it provides a framework for states to achieve their objectives without resorting to the use of force. (Raimzhanova,2017)

There is important article provides insights into the changing dynamics of international relations and how countries are using soft power to increase their influence and prestige on the world stage. The ranking, which is based on a survey of over 75,000 people across 100 countries, assesses the soft power capabilities of 30 countries, including their cultural appeal, political values, and diplomatic engagement. (The Soft Power 30 Global Ranking of Soft Power, 2018)

According to the article, the United States, which has traditionally been seen as a leader in soft power, has slipped to third place in the ranking, behind France and the United Kingdom. The authors note that this is partly due to the policies of the Trump administration, which have been seen as isolationist and inward-looking. This has damaged America's reputation abroad and undermined its soft power capabilities.

France, on the other hand, has climbed to the top of the ranking due to its cultural appeal, particularly in the areas of fashion, art, and cuisine. The authors note that France's soft power has been bolstered by the election of Emmanuel Macron, who has sought to position France as a leader on issues such as climate change and human rights. (The Soft Power 30 Global Ranking of Soft Power, 2018)

The United Kingdom, which has traditionally been a strong performer in the ranking, has also seen its soft power capabilities eroded by the Brexit vote. The authors note that the UK's reputation for openness and tolerance has been damaged by the divisive nature of the Brexit debate, which has raised questions about the country's commitment to internationalism.

Other countries that performed well in the ranking include Germany, Japan, and Canada, which were praised for their commitment to liberal values and their efforts

to promote international cooperation. China, meanwhile, has been making significant strides in soft power, particularly through its Belt and Road Initiative, which aims to boost trade and infrastructure development across Eurasia.

In the broader context, the article emphasizes the intrinsic value of soft power in our interconnected world, underscoring the imperative for nations to invest in and cultivate their soft power capabilities to bolster their influence and prestige on the global stage. It illuminates the consequential impact of shifts in political and economic power on a country's soft power and underscores the necessity for countries to adapt to evolving global realities to maintain a competitive edge in the realm of soft power (The Soft Power 30 Global Ranking of Soft Power, 2018).Expanding the scope of soft power analysis, the understanding of this concept is explored in the context of other nations, such as the United Kingdom (UK). The authors conduct a comprehensive examination of soft power and its profound significance in the realm of international relations, with a specific focus on the UK's adept utilization of soft power as a driving force behind the nation's global reputation and influence (Hill and Beadle, 2014).

Commencing with a precise definition, the article characterizes soft power as the capacity to allure and persuade others through cultural, political, and social avenues. It highlights the mounting importance of soft power in today's interconnected world, where the influence of ideas and values has assumed unprecedented significance. The authors contend that soft power serves as a potent tool for forging alliances, augmenting legitimacy, and molding public opinion—a multifaceted approach that empowers nations to realize their foreign policy objectives.

The authors go on to provide several examples of how the UK has used soft power to increase its influence on the world stage. They note that the UK has a rich cultural heritage, which has been a major source of its soft power. The country is known for its literature, music, and film, which have helped to promote British values and ideas around the world. Additionally, the UK has a strong tradition of democracy and human rights, which have helped to bolster its soft power credentials. (Hill and Beadle, 2014)

The authors also highlight the role of the British Council, which has been instrumental in promoting British culture and values abroad. The British Council has a presence in over 100 countries and offers a range of cultural and educational programs to promote dialogue and understanding between different cultures. The

authors note that the British Council has been particularly successful in promoting the English language, which has become the global language of business and diplomacy.

Overall, Hill and Beadle's article provides a valuable insight into the importance of soft power in international relations, and how the UK has used soft power to increase its influence on the world stage. The authors' analysis underscores the importance of cultural heritage, democracy, and human rights in shaping a country's soft power, and highlights the role of institutions such as the British Council in promoting these values abroad. The article provides a compelling argument for the continued importance of soft power in today's globalized world, and highlights the potential benefits that can be gained from investing in a country's soft power capabilities. (Hill and Beadle, 2014)

Different types of power in international relations and their potential uses and limitations. The article begins by providing a brief overview of the traditional understanding of power in international relations, which has been focused primarily on military and economic capabilities. This traditional view of power has been increasingly challenged in recent years, with the emergence of new forms of power such as soft power and smart power. Brito argues that these new forms of power are becoming increasingly important in shaping international relations, and that countries need to understand their potential uses and limitations in order to remain competitive on the world stage. (Brito, 2010)

Delving into an intricate examination of diverse power dynamics, we embark on a comprehensive exploration, commencing with the realm of hard power. The author meticulously defines hard power as the utilization of military force and economic coercion to attain foreign policy objectives. Brito astutely observes that hard power has long reigned as the dominant form of power in international relations throughout much of the 20th century. However, she aptly highlights the increasingly apparent limitations of hard power. The author argues that the deployment of military force can exact significant costs and often fails to yield the desired outcomes, while economic coercion can be swiftly countered by other nations (Brito, 2010).

Continuing the discourse, the author proceeds to illuminate the realm of soft power, encapsulating its essence as the capacity to allure and persuade others through cultural, political, and social avenues. Brito astutely acknowledges the potency of soft power in shaping public opinion and fostering alliances, but also underscores its inherent limitations. She posits that measuring soft power can be a challenging

endeavor, and its effectiveness is often contingent upon a slow and incremental process. Consequently, soft power may encounter difficulties in times of crisis when immediate action is crucial (Brito, 2010).

The article concludes by recognizing the efficacy of employing a combination of hard and soft power, giving rise to the concept of smart power, which is gaining increasing prominence in our interconnected globalized world. Brito astutely asserts that in today's landscape, where the influence of ideas and values holds unprecedented importance, smart power emerges as a more effective and adaptable approach to foreign policy. By embracing smart power, nations can adeptly navigate the changing global realities and concurrently pursue multiple objectives, showcasing a flexible and nuanced approach (Brito, 2010).

In its entirety, Brito's article serves as an invaluable resource, delving into a comprehensive examination of the various forms of power in international relations and their potential applications and limitations. The author's astute analysis sheds light on the significance of comprehending the shifting dynamics of power in our globalized world, emphasizing the potential advantages that can be derived from adopting a smart power paradigm in foreign policy. The article compellingly argues for the reevaluation of conventional power paradigms in international relations, urging the development of new strategies to effectively achieve foreign policy objectives (Brito, 2010).

In the realm of contemporary international relations, the concepts of public diplomacy and soft power hold paramount significance. According to Nye, these two components are integral to a country's foreign policy strategy, as they wield increasing influence in shaping global public opinion and achieving desired outcomes on the international stage (Nye, 2009). Nye commences his exploration by providing a comprehensive definition of public diplomacy as the dynamic process through which governments engage with foreign publics, aiming to establish a dialogue that informs and influences. Notably, he emphasizes that public diplomacy extends beyond intergovernmental communication, encompassing interactions between governments and citizens, as well as fostering citizen-to-citizen exchanges. Nye asserts that in the contemporary landscape, public diplomacy plays an ever-growing role in shaping global public opinion, serving as a potent instrument in driving foreign policy outcomes (Nye, 2009).

Nye embarks on a captivating exploration of soft power, encapsulating it as the art of "achieving desired outcomes through allure rather than coercion." He astutely

recognizes that soft power hinges upon a nation's capacity to mold the inclinations of others through the captivating magnetism of its culture, political values, and foreign policies. In a world dominated by globalization, Nye asserts that soft power assumes an increasingly prominent role, as the potency of ideas and values eclipses conventional measures of might. Notably, Nye elucidates the symbiotic relationship between public diplomacy and soft power, underscoring the pivotal role of public diplomacy as a cornerstone in cultivating and projecting a nation's soft power prowess. By deftly harnessing the tools of public diplomacy, nations can shape global public opinion and propagate their cultural and political values on the international stage. Nye persuasively contends that public diplomacy plays an especially vital role in fostering connections with foreign publics, thereby facilitating the advancement of a nation's interests and objectives. (Nye, 2009)

Finally, Nye offers some recommendations for how countries can improve their public diplomacy and soft power capabilities. He argues that countries need to invest in cultural and educational programs, to promote their cultural and political values abroad. Nye also notes that countries need to be more strategic in their use of public diplomacy, and to develop more effective communication strategies that can engage foreign publics. (Nye, 2009)

In the vast realm of contemporary international relations, Nye's article emerges as an invaluable discourse, delving into the realms of public diplomacy and soft power, and illuminating their profound significance. Through his analysis, the author resoundingly underscores the imperative of comprehending the ever-evolving dynamics of power in our interconnected world, while shedding light on the immense benefits that can be reaped from nurturing a nation's public diplomacy and soft power capabilities. By challenging conventional notions of power in international relations, Nye compellingly advocates for the formulation of innovative strategies that can effectively navigate the complex terrain and achieve foreign policy objectives in this rapidly changing landscape. (Nye, 2009).

CHAPTER 3
INTRODUCTION TO TÜRKİYE'S SOFT POWER PRACTICES AND TÜRKİYE-CENTRAL ASIAN COUNTRIES RELATIONS

3.1. An Overview of the Relations Between Türkiye and the Central Asian Countries

The political history between Türkiye and the Central Asian countries is characterized by a deep-rooted connection stemming from historical, cultural, and linguistic ties. As both regions share a common heritage through Turkic languages and a historical background, their interactions have been marked by cooperation, diplomacy, and a sense of solidarity. The foundation of the relationship between Türkiye and the Central Asian countries is laid upon their shared Turkic heritage. (Türk 2009) Throughout history, various Turkic tribes migrated and settled across the vast Eurasian steppes, connecting these regions culturally and linguistically. This common heritage has fostered a sense of camaraderie and affinity between the peoples of Türkiye and Central Asia. (Aydın 2001)

Following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923, Türkiye embarked on a journey of modernization and nation-building under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Meanwhile, the Central Asian countries were engulfed in the turmoil of the Soviet Union's expansionist policies. Despite geographical distance and political barriers, Türkiye maintained cultural and emotional ties with its Central Asian brethren. (Bal 2005)

The disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991 opened a new chapter in the relationship between Türkiye and the newly independent Central Asian countries – Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. Türkiye swiftly recognized the sovereignty of these nations and established diplomatic relations, reaffirming the cultural bonds that had endured despite decades of separation. (Djalili ve Thierry, 2009)

Türkiye's foreign policy towards Central Asia has been driven by mutual respect, economic cooperation, and a commitment to promoting regional stability. Türkiye initiated several initiatives to enhance diplomatic relations, such as the Turkic

Council, an intergovernmental organization that aims to promote political, economic, and cultural cooperation among Turkic-speaking countries.

To reinforce their shared cultural bonds, Türkiye and Central Asian countries have encouraged educational exchanges and cultural programs. Türkiye has been a popular destination for Central Asian students pursuing higher education, facilitating the transfer of knowledge and ideas between the regions. (Djalili ve Thierry, 2009)

Despite the historical and cultural ties, the relationship between Türkiye and Central Asia has encountered challenges, including competition from other global powers and differences in political systems. Moreover, the Central Asian countries' diverse priorities and geopolitical alignments have occasionally strained their cooperation. (Djalili ve Thierry, 2009)

However, the future prospects remain promising. Türkiye's "Middle Corridor" vision, aimed at enhancing connectivity and trade along historic Silk Road routes, aligns with the Central Asian countries' aspirations for increased regional integration and economic diversification. Moreover, cultural exchanges, people-to-people interactions, and joint ventures can further solidify the bonds between these regions.

The political history between Türkiye and the Central Asian countries underscores a narrative of shared heritage, diplomatic engagement, and economic cooperation. From their early cultural connections to the modern era of diplomatic initiatives and economic partnerships, the relationship continues to evolve. The resilience of this bond speaks to the enduring strength of cultural affinity and the potential for greater collaboration in the future. As global dynamics shift, the ties between Türkiye and Central Asia serve as a reminder of the power of historical connections to shape contemporary international relations (Gürbey 2011)

In 1987, when Türkiye's full membership application to the European Union was rejected two years later, Türkiye was shocked. In the aftermath of the dissolution of the Soviet Union (USSR), which led to a decrease in its geostrategic significance, Türkiye redirected its focus towards the Turkic world. For Ankara, the end of the USSR meant the rediscovery of a "Turkic world" that, as Jeanne Besson stated, had never been completely lost from the Turkish ideological realm but had been relegated to a level of neglect. The legal dissolution of the USSR presented Türkiye with a new region called the "Turkic world," and this development was seen as a significant diversification and direction shift in Turkish foreign policy. (Aydın 2004)

The Central Asian countries, where the majority speak Turkish languages, entered the sphere of interest for Turkish foreign policy, especially during the 1990s when political relations gained momentum. Cultural aspects were given particular importance during this time. Türkiye was among the first countries to recognize the regional states in December 1991 and established diplomatic relations with these new states in the first three months of 1992. Between April 27 and May 3, 1992, then-Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel visited Central Asia, followed by President Turgut Özal, who visited four republics in the region a year later. Up until 1993, more than 140 bilateral agreements were signed between Türkiye and the Central Asian countries. During this period, both Turkish decision-makers and international actors exhibited similar approaches towards Türkiye and the Turkic world.

Prominent American statesman Henry Kissinger spoke of a "Turkic world" extending from the Adriatic to China, while Turgut Özal of that time expressed the belief that the 21st century would be the "Turkish century." With support from Western countries, Türkiye presented itself as a model country for the Central Asian republics to look up to during their transition processes, showcasing its secular, democratic, and free-market economy. During this period, intellectuals began to express more vigorously the existence of a "Turkic world." (Bal 2005)

Türkiye's political and economic relations with the Central Asian Republics began in 1991 following the collapse of the USSR. Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev visited Türkiye in September 1991 and expressed that the "21st century will be the Turkish century." However, the Turkish government faced difficulties with the declarations of independence by Azerbaijan (August 30, 1991), Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan (August 31, 1991). This situation required Türkiye to make bold and swift political decisions that might be considered radical in terms of Turkish foreign policy. Türkiye thus became the first country to recognize all Central Asian and Caucasian states. (Dilaver 2020)

Only one day after the official dissolution of the USSR in the Almaty meeting on December 21, 1991, Kyrgyz President Askar Akayev came to Türkiye and signed the Friendship and Cooperation Treaty. A similar agreement was signed in January 1992 with Azerbaijan in Ankara. TÜRKİYE's relations with the Central Asian Republics are developed within the framework of mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity. In the first year of their independence, over 1200 Turkish delegations visited the Central Asian states. Between 1991 and 1993, the concept of

"Turkic-speaking peoples from the Adriatic to the Great Wall of China" became more widespread. During this process, the distinction between Anatolian Turks and Central Asian Turkic peoples became blurred. (Djalili ve Thierry, 2009)

Between December 16 and 19, 1991, Uzbekistan's President Islam Karimov visited Ankara, and between December 22 and 26, Kyrgyzstan's President A. Akayev also came to Türkiye, openly expressing their expectations of support from Türkiye. These declarations further increased Ankara's obligations. Islam Karimov referred to Türkiye as a "big brother" and urgently requested economic, political, and cultural assistance. Akayev likened Türkiye to the "morning star." However, it was soon understood that the Central Asian countries did not desire a new "big brother." Nevertheless, it's important to note that during the early stages, these states strongly needed Türkiye's support to ensure their independence and international recognition, which they had somewhat forgotten due to their focus on their "Turkic" identity. (Bal 2005)

Türkiye initiated cooperation efforts with these countries, striving to establish a relationship with the Central Asian and Caucasian states based on mutual sovereignty and territorial integrity. Türkiye facilitated the membership of these states in international organizations such as the United Nations (UN) and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). Türkiye also supported their participation in NATO's "Partnership for Peace" program. (Aydın 2001) Türkiye's foreign policy toward Central Asia aimed to contribute to the strengthening of state structures, maintaining political and economic stability, promoting regional cooperation, supporting economic and political reforms, facilitating integration into the global community and European-Atlantic institutions, and enabling the transportation of energy resources from the region to international markets. (Kadioglu 2022)

Establishing a "Turkic Unity" by bringing together Türkiye and the Central Asian countries proved to be a challenging and difficult path. Türkiye lacked in-depth knowledge of the historical, social, economic, and ideological structures of the region it sought to engage with. Türkiye approached the region with more of a "Big Brother State" profile, making hasty and emotionally driven commitments. However, the Central Asian countries, having lived for years under Soviet rule suppressing their identities, were reluctant to come under the administration and protection of another state. (Gürbey 2011)

After President Turgut Özal's death, Türkiye's focus on Central Asia diminished due to various factors such as coalition governments, terrorism incidents, and prioritization of European Union (EU) policies. However, with the advent of the Justice and Development Party (AK PARTY) in 2002, relations between Türkiye and the region began to rekindle, particularly focusing on energy and trade policies with Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan. This policy aimed to strengthen bilateral relations and create a trilateral framework among these countries, especially those with coastlines along the Caspian Sea. (Gürbey 2011)

Under President Abdullah Gül, starting from 2007, relations with countries bordering the Caspian Sea gained momentum. High-level visits and engagements were conducted, and the importance of the region was emphasized. President Gül's visits to Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan, as well as Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's visit to Turkmenistan in 2008, demonstrated Türkiye's renewed interest and commitment to the region.

The positioning of Central Asia as an area prone to conflicts of interest among major powers in the coming period, along with the challenges faced by the countries in the region, necessitates Türkiye's active involvement and leadership in developments as a requirement. This situation calls for Türkiye to become a central power that formulates effective policies and strategies towards the region's countries. Türkiye should not adopt a passive "wait and see" approach by merely observing developments from a distance. Without a doubt, recent developments have pushed Türkiye and the regional countries towards seeking new forms of cooperation in their strategic depths, essentially compelling Türkiye to develop a policy termed the "New Turkic World Policy." In this context, the predominance of the Turkish world in Central Asia compels Türkiye to enhance its existing power and influence for strategic reasons. This region is reemerging as an area where Türkiye's strength and influence can be reinforced. (Aydın 2001)

The importance of Central Asia regions is significant for the future of Turkish foreign policy and for expanding its sphere of influence. In this regard, the fundamental characteristics of the policy that Türkiye should pursue in the medium and long term can be outlined as follows:

Similar to the recent emphasis on the Middle East in Turkish foreign policy, Central Asia regions should also be given priority. First, bilateral relations such as

Türkiye-Uzbekistan, Türkiye-Turkmenistan, Türkiye-Kazakhstan, etc., should be strengthened, and then these relations should be structured within supranational organizations. For Türkiye to establish such a structure, it needs strong organizational capabilities, a robust economy, and armed forces. Additionally, the financial infrastructure to support these activities should also be developed. (Djalili ve Thierry, 2009)

Within the Turkish world, educational unity should be achieved, leading to the urgent establishment of a union of Turkish world academies, fostering cooperation among civil society organizations in the Turkish world. Furthermore, a collective platform for media representation in the Turkish world should be formed. More effective written and visual media initiatives targeting the Turkish world should be launched, creating a sort of "Turkic BBC." The future of Turkish foreign policy and the enhancement of its influence would benefit from prioritizing Central Asia regions. This involves strengthening bilateral relations, establishing supranational structures, fostering educational and civil society cooperation, and creating a unified media presence within the Turkish world. (Aydın 2001)

3.2. Soft Power and Public Diplomacy Practices in Turkish Foreign Policy

Soft power encompasses the capacity of a nation or culture to exert influence on others through attraction, rather than relying on coercion or force. It is often linked with cultural diplomacy and the dissemination of a country's values, ideas, and cultural heritage on a global scale. Both Türkiye and the Ottoman Empire have a noteworthy history of leveraging soft power to shape the perceptions and influence the actions of their neighboring countries and the broader international community. Their diverse and rich cultural legacies have played a pivotal role in establishing their soft power, enabling them to leave a lasting impact and foster connections across borders. (Özkan,2022) The Ottoman Empire was a vast and powerful empire that lasted from the 14th century until the early 20th century. Throughout its history, the Ottoman Empire used soft power to extend its influence across three continents. One of the most prominent examples of Ottoman soft power was the empire's tolerance of different religions and cultures. The Ottomans welcomed Jews and Christians who were fleeing persecution in Europe, and they allowed them to live and practice their religions freely in Ottoman territory. This policy of tolerance helped to attract traders, scholars, and

artisans from across Europe and the Middle East, which helped to strengthen the Ottoman economy and cultural influence. (Özkan,2022)

Another example of Ottoman soft power was the empire's use of art and architecture to project its power and prestige. The Ottomans built magnificent mosques, palaces, and public buildings that were admired by people around the world. These buildings were not only beautiful but also functional, serving as centers of worship, administration, and culture. The Ottoman Empire also produced some of the finest examples of calligraphy, ceramics, textiles, and other arts, which were highly sought after by collectors and connoisseurs in Europe and Asia. (Özkan,2022)

One of the most significant examples of Turkish soft power in the 20th century was the Turkish film industry. Turkish filmmakers produced hundreds of films in the 1950s and 1960s that were popular not only in Türkiye but also in the Middle East and Europe. These films depicted the struggles of ordinary people, the joys and sorrows of family life, and the beauty of Turkish landscapes and traditions. (Özkan,2022). In the 21st century, Türkiye continues to use soft power to project its influence around the world. The country has a rich cultural heritage, and it is home to some of the most significant historical sites in the world. The Turkish government has invested in preserving and promoting these sites, which attract millions of tourists every year. Türkiye is also a leader in the fields of cuisine, fashion, and music, which are popular around the world. (Özkan,2022)

The allure of diverse cultures and the grandeur of art and architecture served as potent instruments through which the Ottoman Empire projected its power and eminence. Embracing this tradition, modern Türkiye has diligently carried forward the legacy, fervently promoting its cultural heritage, investing in education and the arts, and meticulously crafting a favorable image on the global stage. As Türkiye continues its trajectory of growth and development, there is no doubt that soft power will retain its pivotal role within its diplomatic arsenal. In her meticulous exploration, Fulya Özkan delves into the realm of soft power within the historical context of the Ottoman Empire, unraveling its significance within the international system of the era. Özkan compellingly argues that the Ottoman Empire emerged as a consequential player in the international arena, largely owing to its astute utilization of soft power—a potent force that facilitated the establishment and nurturing of diplomatic ties with other nations while advancing its own interests abroad. Özkan initiates her discourse by illuminating the essence of soft power, encapsulating a state's ability to influence the behavior of

others through attraction rather than coercion. While acknowledging the significance of military might and economic prowess in international relations, Özkan astutely asserts that soft power, too, wields profound efficacy in achieving foreign policy objectives. Her analysis underscores the Ottoman Empire's exceptional adeptness in harnessing the potential of soft power, which, in turn, paved the way for the establishment and sustenance of diplomatic relations with other states, thereby cementing its global standing. (Özkan,2022)

Ottoman Empire used the various tools and strategies to project soft power abroad. She notes that the Ottoman Empire was particularly effective in promoting its cultural and religious values, which helped to establish it as a leader in the Islamic world. The Ottomans also used their strategic location at the crossroads of Europe, Asia, and Africa to establish trade and diplomatic relationships with other states. Additionally, the Ottomans were skilled in the use of diplomacy, and were able to negotiate treaties and agreements with other states that helped to secure their interests. Ottoman Empire's use of soft power was particularly effective in the context of the international system of the time. She notes that the Ottoman Empire was able to establish itself as a significant player in international relations. She argues that the Ottoman Empire's success in projecting soft power demonstrates the importance of understanding the role of non-material factors in international relations. (Özkan,2022). The author's analysis underscores the importance of understanding the role of non-material factors in international relations, and highlights the potential benefits that can be gained from investing in a state's soft power capabilities. The article provides a compelling argument for the need to re-think traditional notions of power in international relations and to develop new strategies for achieving foreign policy objectives. (Özkan,2022)

Türkiye has an important role in world politics, and that its cultural and historical ties to the Balkans have helped to strengthen its influence in the region. (Alpan,2022) Türkiye uses of "soft power" in the Balkans, particularly in the context of cultural diplomacy. The author argues that Türkiye has been successful in using cultural diplomacy to build stronger relationships with Balkan countries, and to promote Turkish culture and values in the region. (Alpan,2022). She argues that Türkiye needs to adapt to this changing environment, and to find new ways to project its influence in the region. (Alpan,2022)

The 21st century is a period of rapid economic, political, technological and social change. While the political developments in the early 1990s led to the formation of a different international system, the phenomenon of globalization has also changed the classical diplomacy understanding since this period, and a different diplomacy with different actors has emerged. (Demiray, 2009). 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 used 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. In order to activate soft power resources, it is necessary to have strong economic data. Due to the problems that Türkiye has experienced in its domestic politics from 1990 to 2002, it cannot be said that it has fully implemented the desired policies. The recovery of the economy in the post-2002 period enabled Türkiye to open up again in foreign policy. Institutions and organizations play an important role in the execution of Türkiye's foreign policy. Türkiye carries out policies towards other countries and peoples with these institutions and organizations, and through these institutions, it carries out economic aids and various projects in the fields of aid in natural disasters, culture and education.

During the AK Party period, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was restructured and tried to adapt it to the new foreign policy understanding and the changing global system. Again in this period, 10 new general directorates were opened within the body of Foreign Affairs. Of these, Foreign Promotion and Cultural Relations, General Directorate of Economic Relations with Neighboring Countries and General Directorates of Global and Humanitarian Issues are important institutions in the management of soft power (Ekşi, 2014). Türkiye's cultural, historical, religious and linguistic wide geography, as well as its desire to be a center of attraction in the Middle East, the Balkans and the Caucasus, which are its geographical hinterland, help to implement soft power and public diplomacy in foreign policy.

After the 2002 Türkiye has multiregional international foreign politics in the region and in the international environment, Türkiye's role and voice are increased with using of soft power instruments more in the last fifteen years (Gözen,2009). After the AK Party came to power, Türkiye followed policies aiming to have a greater say in the international arena. It carried out these policies by putting soft power at the center. The President, Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs have expressed in various platforms that Türkiye has or carries out soft power policies (Sancak,2015)

Türkiye epitomizes a unique and harmonious fusion of values, deftly weaving together secularism, democracy, modernization, and Islam. Bolstering its stature further, the nation's resurgent economy has propelled it to a position of prominence within the region. Examining the diverse facets that contribute to Türkiye's repertoire of soft power resources—ranging from culture, education, art, media, film, literature, and architecture to higher education, non-governmental organizations, science and technology infrastructure, tourism, economic cooperation platforms, and diplomacy—one cannot help but acknowledge that Türkiye stands ahead of its fellow Muslim states. From this vantage point, it becomes evident that Türkiye boasts an awe-inspiring image within the realm of Muslim states, an image built upon its remarkable accomplishments and contributions across a spectrum of domains. (Anas, 2010). Türkiye's negative image has improved in recent years in various parts of the world. 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 (KDK 2017). In addition, Turkish Airlines (THY) reaches almost every point in the world with its flights to 249 destinations abroad. As of 2013, THY increased the number of aircraft by 259 percent and the number of passengers by 363 percent in the last ten years, and increased the number of countries it flies from 55 to 120 in the same period. In addition, THY has managed to become the airline that flies to most countries in the world. (Dışişleri Bakanlığı 2015)

As Türkiye develops in every field, the reputation of the Turkish brand in branding also increases. THY has increased both its brand value and the country's reputation through sponsorship agreements, advertising and marketing campaigns. THY has made a positive contribution to Türkiye's tourism as a result of its success. There has been an increase in the number of tourists coming to the country. (Sancak,2015) The increase in the importance of mass media with globalization has undoubtedly caused Türkiye to take steps in this field. The media has also been an important tool in Türkiye's execution of public diplomacy. With the Turkish Radio and Television Corporation (TRT), they reach other countries, related communities, communities in Central Asia and the Caucasus, the Arab audience in the Middle East and the whole world by broadcasting, and they watch Türkiye through the eyes of Türkiye. Türkiye, taking into account other communities in its own country, has ensured that these communities broadcast on their channels broadcasting in their

languages. The effort to expand the address area with TRT-Avaz and TRT-Türk constitutes the most serious steps possible in the field of public diplomacy. (Basar,2011). Türkiye's television broadcasting and Turkish series also play an important role in increasing the interest in Türkiye.

Turkish TV series especially attract a lot of attention in a wide area. Turkish TV series are watched in many areas from Central Asia to the Middle East, from the Balkans to Latin America and the Far East. In a way, this is Türkiye's soft power source as well as the result of soft power. Turkish TV series have become exportable. This increases the Turkish brand value. Türkiye is the second country in the world to export TV series after the USA. (NTV 2017) 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 view of the people living in the region towards Türkiye. While the sympathy of Christians for 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. (Bilgic and Akyürek, 2012).

The endeavors of prominent institutions such as TIKA, Türk Kızılay, TÜRKSOY, and AFAD have assumed a pivotal role in shaping the global perception of Turks, their actions resonating with both positive and negative reverberations. Türkiye's altruistic contributions in humanitarian aid have effectively crafted a favorable image in numerous regions, particularly in Central Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and the Balkans. TIKA, in particular, has emerged as a cornerstone institution, amplifying Türkiye's impact through its diverse array of projects and activities across numerous countries, notably within the Central Asian Republics. A glimpse into the annual reports of TIKA, as exemplified by the year 2016 alone, reveals a tapestry of accomplishments. These range from the construction of the Mosque and the Mazar-i-Sharif Orphanage and dormitory building in Kabul International Airport Command in Afghanistan, undertaken in collaboration with the Azerbaijan Presidency State Agency for Citizens Service and Social Innovations (ASAN Service), to the successful completion of studio construction for a radio project established within the scope of cooperation. Further projects encompassed the renewal of the technical infrastructure

of the Albanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, while spanning the domains of health, social welfare, culture, and education across various countries such as Georgia, Mongolia, Kyrgyzstan, Montenegro, Kosovo, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. These commendable endeavors collectively epitomize Türkiye's commitment to uplifting communities and fostering positive relationships on a global scale. (TİKA 2017). The Turkish Red Crescent is one of the most important institutions in Türkiye in humanitarian aid. From Kyrgyzstan to Sudan, from Sri Lanka to Syria, in many needy countries such as housing, schools, community centers, places of worship, construction of public facilities, providing and supporting livelihoods, health, education, social assistance, agriculture and irrigation carries out projects in the fields.

The Turkish Red Crescent has extended its assistance to 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. (TİKA.org 2017). Organizations such as YTB, TÜRKSOY and Yunus Emre Institutes also undertake important tasks in the execution of soft power activities in Türkiye. 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 people who came to Türkiye to receive education increased with the positive development of the 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. By coming to Türkiye, he finds the opportunity to study 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 positions in the country's politics, economy, education, health and culture, having a positive Turkish image will enable them to have close relations with Türkiye. In addition, as a result of the activities of the institutions we have mentioned, 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. (Hürriyet 2017)

Türkiye's efficient use of soft power resources coincides with the post-2002 period. This situation has been affected by the process that Türkiye has gone through, and the developments in the regional and international environment.

3.3. Türkiye's Soft Power Relations With Central Asian Countries and its Soft Power in the Region

The disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991 heralded a momentous global shift, particularly for the nations nestled within Central Asia, marking a turning point in their relations with Türkiye. Throughout history, Central Asia and Türkiye have been intertwined by a tapestry of shared historical, cultural, and linguistic bonds, harking back to the migration of Turks from the Ural Altai regions to the Central Asian expanse between the 6th and 7th centuries. Subsequently, the movement of Turks from Central Asia to Anatolia during the 11th century engendered the birth of the illustrious Great Seljuk State, ultimately paving the way for the mighty Ottoman Empire in 1299. Extending its influence across vast swathes of Europe, Asia, and Africa, the Ottoman Empire played a defining role in disseminating Turkish language, culture, and traditions. As the empire thrived, these elements transcended its borders, leaving an indelible legacy that continues to shape Türkiye's profound ties with Central Asia. In the wake of the Soviet Union's collapse, Türkiye astutely seized the moment, embarking on a journey to foster even deeper connections with the nations of Central Asia. Nurturing the bedrock of shared heritage, Türkiye forged a renewed sense of partnership and cooperation, strengthening the bonds that bind these nations together. (Aydın, Foucault's Pendulum: Turkey in Central Asia and the Caucasus 2004).

Following the demise of the Soviet Union, Türkiye astutely recognized a window of opportunity to fortify its diplomatic bonds with the recently independent states of Central Asia. With unwavering intent, Türkiye's foreign policy honed in on fostering robust connections with the Turkic-speaking nations of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. Embracing the historical, cultural, and linguistic affinities that bind these countries, Türkiye embarked on a strategic trajectory aimed at cultivating enduring partnerships, laying the groundwork for mutually beneficial collaborations and meaningful engagement in the realms of politics, economics, culture, and beyond. (Aydın, Foucault's Pendulum: Turkey in Central Asia and the Caucasus 2004). Türkiye established diplomatic relations with these countries in 1991, and since then, the two sides have been working to enhance their cooperation. One of the key areas of cooperation has been trade. Türkiye has become a significant trading partner for Central Asian countries, with bilateral trade reaching billions of dollars annually. Türkiye has also invested heavily in Central Asia, with Turkish companies involved in construction, energy, and

infrastructure projects. In return, Central Asian countries have been exporting oil, gas, and other natural resources to Türkiye (Aydın, Foucault's Pendulum: Turkey in Central Asia and the Caucasus 2004).

Another area of cooperation has been education. Türkiye has been providing scholarships to Central Asian students to study in Turkish universities. This has helped to promote cultural and linguistic ties between the two regions. Türkiye has also been providing training to Central Asian diplomats, military personnel, and other officials, helping to strengthen their institutional capacity. Türkiye has also been working to enhance its cultural ties with Central Asia. Turkish cultural centers have been established in the region, and Turkish music, films, and television shows have become increasingly popular. Türkiye has also been involved in preserving the cultural heritage of Central Asia, with Turkish experts working to restore ancient monuments and historical sites. In recent years, there have been some challenges to Türkiye's relationships with Central Asia. Russia, which has historically had strong ties with the region, has been seeking to increase its influence in Central Asia. China, which shares a border with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, has also been increasing its engagement with the region through its Belt and Road Initiative. Despite these challenges, Türkiye's relationships with Central Asia remain strong, and the two sides are working to enhance their cooperation in various fields.

According to Hunter, Türkiye played a significant role in supporting the newly independent states of the region during their transition to independence. Türkiye's support was not only motivated by cultural and historical ties but also by economic and strategic interests (Hunter 2001). Türkiye saw Central Asia as potential market for its exports and as a way to diversify its energy sources. One of the key ways that Türkiye supported the newly independent states was through cultural and educational initiatives. Türkiye offered scholarships for Central Asian students to study in Turkish universities, established Turkish-language schools in the region, and facilitated exchanges of artists and intellectuals. (Hunter 2001) Türkiye facilitated trade relations between the newly independent states and the Middle East and Europe. Türkiye also supported regional infrastructure development, such as the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline, which carries Caspian Sea oil to Türkiye and on to Europe. However, according to Hunter, Türkiye's support was not without its challenges. Central Asia was struggling to establish their own identities as independent states and balance the influence of external powers, including Russia, Iran, and China. Türkiye's involvement

in the region was seen by some as a potential challenge to their sovereignty and identity. Additionally, Hunter notes that Türkiye's own political situation was changing during this time. Türkiye was undergoing a period of political instability, with several coalition governments and a military intervention in 1997. This instability made it difficult for Türkiye to maintain consistent policies towards Central Asia in the 1990s. (Hunter 2001).

Central Asia has historically been the cradle of Turkish culture and the birthplace of Turkic peoples, making it a region of significant importance to Türkiye. Türkiye places great emphasis on its relations with the Central Asian Turkic states, basing them on historical, cultural, and economic ties. (Şeyban 2022)

Türkiye's approach to the Central Asian Turkic states is deeply entrenched in a tapestry of shared historical legacies and cultural affinities. The Turkic peoples inhabiting Central Asia, encompassing the Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, Uzbeks, and Turkmen, bear profound historical connections with their Anatolian Turkish counterparts. These ties are woven together by linguistic parallels, a shared heritage, and a resounding sense of Turkic identity. This intrinsic bond serves as the cornerstone of Türkiye's policies, fostering a sense of kinship and forging a path towards strengthened collaboration, mutual understanding, and sustained cooperation between these interconnected Turkic nations.. (Şeyban 2022) Türkiye wholeheartedly acknowledges and treasures the profound historical and cultural bonds that lay the groundwork for forging closer ties with the Central Asian Turkic states. These intrinsic connections form the very bedrock upon which Türkiye's approach to these nations is built, nurturing a sense of shared heritage and fostering a path towards deepened relations. Guided by this recognition, Türkiye's policies towards the Central Asian Turkic states have been marked by an unwavering commitment to bilateral cooperation. Embracing the spirit of collaboration, Türkiye seeks to amplify mutual understanding, strengthen partnerships, and cultivate a future of shared prosperity and growth in tandem with its Central Asian counterparts. (Şeyban 2022) Türkiye has embarked on a steadfast journey of cultivating mutually advantageous partnerships with the Central Asian nations, with a particular focus on trade, investment, education, and cultural exchange. Striving for collaborative success, Türkiye has fostered robust economic cooperation as a pivotal pillar of its bilateral relations. This concerted effort has yielded tangible results, evidenced by escalating trade volumes and a surge in investment flows between Türkiye and the Central Asian states. Embracing a role as an active facilitator of progress, Türkiye has proactively supported infrastructure development

projects throughout the region, laying the groundwork for enhanced connectivity and fostering a conducive environment for thriving trade relations. In doing so, Türkiye bolsters its commitment to nurturing prosperous and enduring bonds with its Central Asian partners, forging a path of shared growth and collective achievement. (Şeyban 2022).

Furthermore, Türkiye has placed emphasis on educational and cultural exchange programs to strengthen ties with the Central Asian Turkic states. Scholarships, academic collaborations, and cultural events have facilitated the exchange of knowledge and ideas, fostering a sense of shared identity and understanding between Türkiye and the Central Asian nations (Şeyban 2022). These bilateral efforts have contributed to the deepening of cooperation and the strengthening of relations between Türkiye and the Central Asian Turkic states. In addition to bilateral cooperation, Türkiye has also pursued multilateral avenues for engagement with the Central Asian Turkic states. The Cooperation Council of Turkic-Speaking States (Turkic Council) has played a crucial role in facilitating regional cooperation and integration. Founded in 2009, the Turkic Council serves as a platform for dialogue and coordination among its member states, namely Türkiye, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan (Şeyban 2022).

Through the Turkic Council, Türkiye has actively promoted regional economic integration, cultural exchanges, and political cooperation among the Central Asian Turkic states. Joint initiatives and projects have been implemented in various sectors, including energy, transportation, agriculture, and tourism, to foster regional development and cooperation (Şeyban 2022). The Turkic Council has also provided a forum for addressing common challenges and promoting peace and stability in the region. Türkiye's policies towards the Central Asian Turkic states have evolved into a comprehensive framework of bilateral and multilateral cooperation. Recognizing the historical and cultural affinities between Türkiye and the Central Asian nations, Türkiye has sought to strengthen ties through various avenues. Bilateral cooperation in trade, investment, education, and cultural exchange has deepened relations between Türkiye and the Central Asian Turkic states. Furthermore, multilateral engagement through the Turkic Council has facilitated regional integration and cooperation. As Türkiye continues to prioritize its relations with the Central Asian Turkic states, these evolving partnerships hold the potential for further collaboration and mutual benefit in the years to come. (Şeyban 2022)

Turgut Özal, implemented a distinctive foreign policy approach towards Central Asia, also known as Türkistan, during his tenure from 1989 to 1993. Özal's policy towards Central Asia aimed to revitalize historical and cultural ties, enhance

economic cooperation, and establish Türkiye as a regional leader. Turgut Özal recognized the historical and cultural affinities between Türkiye and the Central Asian nations. He emphasized the common Turkic heritage shared by Türkiye and the countries of Central Asia, which trace their roots to the ancient Turkic civilizations. Özal sought to reestablish and strengthen these historical and cultural ties, positioning Türkiye as a bridge between Central Asia and Europe. (Şeyban 2022)

A significant aspect of Özal's Central Asian policy was the promotion of economic cooperation between Türkiye and the Central Asian countries. Özal recognized the economic potential of Central Asia, particularly in the fields of energy, trade, and transportation. He sought to establish economic partnerships and increase trade volumes between Türkiye and the Central Asian nations. Özal's policy included the development of transportation networks, such as the construction of roads and railways, to facilitate trade and connectivity between Türkiye and Central Asia. Additionally, he supported energy projects, aiming to tap into the rich energy resources of Central Asia and establish energy corridors that would benefit both Türkiye and the Central Asian countries. (Şeyban,2022)

Özal also encouraged cultural exchanges through festivals, exhibitions, and artistic collaborations. These cultural initiatives aimed to celebrate the shared heritage and values of Türkiye and the Central Asian countries, fostering a sense of unity and strengthening the bond between the peoples of these regions. Turgut Özal sought to establish Türkiye as a leading regional actor in Central Asia. He actively engaged with the Central Asian countries diplomatically, forging strategic partnerships and promoting regional cooperation. Özal's policy aimed to position Türkiye as a mediator in regional conflicts and contribute to the stability and development of Central Asia. Özal's initiatives, such as the establishment of the Turkish Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA) and the Turkic Council, aimed to enhance political, economic, and cultural cooperation among the Turkic-speaking nations. These organizations provided platforms for dialogue, coordination, and collaboration, strengthening Türkiye's influence and leadership in the region. Özal's initiatives paved the way for significant trade and investment flows between Türkiye and Central Asia, contributing to economic growth and development in both regions. Cultural and educational exchanges fostered a sense of shared identity and understanding between Türkiye and the Central Asian countries, promoting people-to-people connections. Özal's vision and initiatives have had a lasting impact on Türkiye's relations with Central Asia, creating a foundation for continued cooperation and

collaboration in various domains. As Türkiye continues to build on Özal's legacy, the Central Asian nations remain important partners in Türkiye's pursuit of regional connectivity, economic integration, and cultural exchange. (Şeyban 2022)

Türkiye's diplomatic efforts have played a crucial role in fostering international cooperation in its relations with Central Asia. As an active participant in regional and international organizations (Dilaver 2020).

Within these organizations, Türkiye has advocated for the interests and concerns of Central Asian countries, contributing to regional stability, peace, and development. Türkiye's diplomatic engagement has included addressing common challenges such as terrorism, extremism, and regional conflicts, as well as promoting economic cooperation, human rights, and democratic values (Budak 2012).

In recent years with AK Party Government, Türkiye and Central Asian countries have experienced both positive and challenging periods in their relations. Economic cooperation has witnessed growth, with increasing trade volumes, investments, and joint projects in sectors such as energy, infrastructure, and agriculture. Political dialogues and high-level visits have aimed to strengthen diplomatic ties and regional cooperation. However, challenges have also emerged, including geopolitical complexities, regional conflicts, and divergent priorities. The presence of external actors, economic competition, and varying degrees of political and economic reforms have impacted the pace and depth of relations between Türkiye and Central Asian countries. The historical process of Türkiye and Central Asian countries relations has been a journey of ups and downs, influenced by various factors and historical events. From ancient Turkic connections to the disruptions of the Soviet era and the subsequent revival of relations, the relationship between Türkiye and Central Asian countries has faced both periods of close cooperation and moments of strained ties. Understanding the historical dynamics of this relationship helps to navigate the complexities of the present and future interactions between Türkiye and Central Asian countries. Despite challenges, the shared Turkic heritage, cultural affinities, and common interests provide a solid foundation for ongoing efforts to deepen cooperation, strengthen partnerships, and build a mutually beneficial relationship between Türkiye and the countries of Central Asia. (Budak 2012).

Cultural Affinity: Türkiye’s shared Turkic heritage and linguistic ties with Central Asian countries have played a crucial role in fostering cultural affinity. Turkish soap operas, music, and films have gained popularity in the region, contributing to a sense of familiarity and shared identity.

Economic Cooperation: Türkiye's economic growth and regional influence have allowed it to offer economic cooperation to Central Asian countries. Trade agreements, investment projects, and development assistance have helped strengthen economic ties and increase Türkiye's presence in the region.

Educational Exchanges: Türkiye's provision of scholarships and educational opportunities to Central Asian students has been instrumental in promoting people-to-people contacts and enhancing mutual understanding. This has contributed to the emergence of a network of Central Asian graduates who have studied in Turkish universities and returned to their home countries, further disseminating Turkish values and ideas.

The nucleus of Türkiye's soft power encompasses humanitarian aid, geopolitical position, natural beauty, cultural dynamics, conceptualization of civilization, and technology. Within the hinterland of Türkiye's soft power lies not only an Islamic perspective but also Western living standards. Türkiye's foreign policy is supported by the actions of public diplomacy, aiming to achieve five objectives: The first objective is to globally narrate Türkiye's 'new narrative'; the second objective is to preserve the Ottoman heritage, revitalizing historical connections by fostering past friendships; the third objective is to collaborate with countries where Turkish is spoken, nurturing linguistic affinity and shared cultural values; the fourth objective is to restore Türkiye's global image and manage foreign public perceptions; the fifth objective is to become a prominent voice and Leader among Muslim countries through the common denominator of Islam. Türkiye's soft power policies are guided by culture, humanitarian assistance, values of civilization, tourism, and history. The focal point of Türkiye's soft power hinterland seems to be directed towards the Turkish Republics, driven by national sentiments.

Relationships with roots in history play a key role in the development of trade in the region.' (TRT Haber 2020). In return President of Turkhmenistan Gurbangulu Berdimuhammedov said "I would like to particularly emphasize the personal contribution of my dear brother, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, to the development of bilateral relations. We are building the future of Turkmen-Turkish relations together, realizing that our inseparable historical ties and our goals in our relations are similar." (TRT Haber 2020). In his address to the Oliy Majlis of Uzbekistan, President Erdoğan expressed Türkiye's unwavering commitment to fostering cooperation and solidarity among the nations in Central Asia, with whom we share deep bonds of brotherhood. Emphasizing the rich historical significance of this ancient region, President Erdoğan

extended Türkiye's wholehearted support to initiatives aimed at fortifying these ties. He firmly believed that by joining forces, we could restore this remarkable cradle of civilizations to its former glory, ensuring it becomes a beacon of peace and serenity once again, just as it has been throughout history". (TCCB Web Sayfası 2021). This indicates that there were good soft power relations between two sides.

In recent years, Türkiye's adept utilization of soft power diplomacy has emerged as a driving force behind the flourishing relations between Türkiye and Central Asia. During AK Party Government Türkiye has deftly harnessed its deep-rooted cultural and historical ties to Central Asia, strategically leveraging them to amplify its international standing and forge closer bonds within the region (Sharipov, 2020). Türkiye's soft power outreach in Central Asia has been prominently manifested through the promotion of cultural affinity. Drawing upon shared cultural and linguistic kinships with numerous Central Asian countries, Türkiye has adeptly employed these connections as a catalyst for building enduring relationships. Notably, Türkiye has actively pursued strengthened cooperation in Central Asia through the facilitation of agreements and treaties mediated by institutional organizations. Moreover, Turkish universities and joint educational institutions have emerged as beacons of attraction for Central Asian youth, further cementing cultural ties between the two regions and cultivating a sense of shared identity. In essence, Türkiye's astute utilization of soft power resources has paved the way for deeper engagement, fostering a bond of mutual respect, understanding, and collaboration between Türkiye and Central Asia.. (Sharipov,2020)

Türkiye has utilized its soft power in Central Asia through the economic sphere. Although Türkiye has a relatively small share in Central Asia's foreign trade, it is a major importer. As such, Türkiye has been working to enhance economic ties with Central Asia, viewing the region as a stable supplier of energy resources and raw materials. While Türkiye's economy is ultimately dependent on its relations with the West, the country recognizes the importance of building economic ties with Central Asia as well. (Sharipov,2020,14)

Over the years, Türkiye has entered into various agreements with Central Asian countries, in an effort to strengthen bilateral ties and increase cooperation. The followings are just some of the agreements signed between Türkiye and Central Asian countries, as of 2023. (Sharipov,2020,14)

1. Türkiye-Kazakhstan Strategic Partnership Declaration (2009) The Türkiye-Kazakhstan Strategic Partnership Declaration was signed in 2009, between

Türkiye and Kazakhstan, with the aim of strengthening political, economic, and cultural ties. The agreement focuses on cooperation in the energy, transportation, and construction sectors. It also promotes collaboration in the field of education, culture, and tourism.

2. Türkiye-Kyrgyzstan Strategic Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (2012) The Türkiye-Kyrgyzstan Strategic Partnership and Cooperation Agreement was signed in 2012, between Türkiye and Kyrgyzstan. The agreement aims to enhance cooperation in various fields, such as politics, security, economy, culture, and education. The agreement also includes provisions for cooperation in the areas of tourism, transportation, and agriculture.
3. Türkiye-Tajikistan Joint Declaration on Strategic Partnership (2012) The Türkiye-Tajikistan Joint Declaration on Strategic Partnership was signed in 2012, between Türkiye and Tajikistan. The agreement focuses on strengthening cooperation in the fields of politics, economy, trade, culture, and education. It also promotes collaboration in the areas of transportation, energy, and tourism.
4. Türkiye-Turkmenistan Joint Declaration on Strategic Partnership (2013) The Türkiye-Turkmenistan Joint Declaration on Strategic Partnership was signed in 2013, between Türkiye and Turkmenistan. The agreement aims to enhance cooperation in various fields, such as politics, economy, energy, and culture. The agreement also includes provisions for collaboration in the areas of transportation, education, and tourism.
5. Türkiye-Uzbekistan Joint Declaration on Strategic Partnership (2013) The Türkiye-Uzbekistan Joint Declaration on Strategic Partnership was signed in 2013, between Türkiye and Uzbekistan. The agreement focuses on strengthening cooperation in various fields, such as politics, economy, trade, and culture. The agreement also includes provisions for cooperation in the areas of transportation, energy, and tourism.

As stated above, Türkiye has entered into several agreements with Central Asian countries over the years, with the aim of strengthening bilateral ties and increasing cooperation. These agreements cover various fields, such as politics, economy, culture, and education, and promote collaboration in areas such as transportation, energy, and tourism. These agreements are a testament to the strong historical and cultural ties between

Türkiye and Central Asian countries, and the commitment of all parties to further strengthen their relations. Türkiye's soft power diplomacy has played a significant role in the current development of Central Asia. Through the promotion of cultural and the enhancement of economic ties, Türkiye has been able to increase its influence in the region. Ultimately, Türkiye's soft power diplomacy in Central Asia will continue to evolve as the country seeks to balance its interests in the region with its broader foreign policy goals under AK Party governments.

The AK Party era marked a notable policy shift in Turkey's approach towards the Central Asian region. This transition encompassed a series of strategic adjustments and diplomatic maneuvers that aimed to enhance Turkey's engagement and influence within the Central Asian countries. The policy shift was characterized by a multifaceted approach, involving economic, political, and cultural dimensions, which collectively contributed to the augmentation of Turkey's soft power projection in the region.

Politically, Turkey's policy shift towards Central Asia involved active diplomatic efforts to strengthen bilateral relations and multilateral partnerships. The creation of the Turkic Council in 2009 served as a platform for dialogue and cooperation among Turkic-speaking countries, fostering shared political interests and objectives. Turkey's engagement in regional organizations such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) as a dialogue partner further exemplified its commitment to expanding its diplomatic presence in Central Asia.

Culturally, the AK Party era witnessed the implementation of various cultural diplomacy initiatives aimed at deepening people-to-people connections between Turkey and the Central Asian nations. Educational and cultural exchange programs, scholarships for Central Asian students to study in Turkey, and the establishment of cultural centers facilitated the dissemination of Turkish language, culture, and values. These endeavors not only promoted cultural understanding but also contributed to the cultivation of a positive image of Turkey in the eyes of Central Asian populations.

In summation, the AK Party era brought about a notable policy shift in Turkey's approach to Central Asia, encompassing economic integration, political engagement, and cultural outreach. This comprehensive strategy allowed Turkey to exercise its soft power effectively, fostering stronger ties, mutual understanding, and influence across the Central Asian region.

CHAPTER 4
TURKISH SOFT POWER IN CENTRAL ASIA BETWEEN 2002-2023

Türkiye's engagement with Central Asia traces its roots to the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, which created an opportunity for the newly independent states of the region to establish their own identities. Turkish soft power initiatives in Central Asia emerged as a means to reconnect with Turkic-speaking nations and assert influence in the region. Türkiye's historical, linguistic, and cultural affinities with Central Asia provided a solid foundation for the development of soft power relationships.

Soft power entails the capacity of a nation to sway others through alluring cultural appeal, persuasive influence, and attraction, rather than relying solely on military or economic coercion. In the context of Türkiye, its engagement with Central Asia has witnessed the deliberate cultivation of a soft power strategy, dedicated to nurturing profound cultural, economic, and political ties with the region. Delving into the genesis of Turkish soft power in Central Asia, this exploration unravels the pivotal factors that have propelled its emergence, while simultaneously evaluating the current landscape of Turkish soft power in the region. Through a unique prism of influence, Türkiye artfully wields its soft power, deftly navigating the terrain of shared heritage, cultural resonance, and mutual aspirations to cement enduring bonds that transcend mere geopolitical interests. The present state of Turkish soft power in Central Asia can be characterized as a mix of successes and challenges. Türkiye's cultural influence remains strong, with Turkish TV shows, music, and cuisine continuing to resonate with Central Asian audiences. The popularity of Turkish educational institutions among Central Asian students has also increased, fostering closer educational ties. In the economic sphere, Türkiye has made significant investments in the region, particularly in sectors such as construction, energy, and transportation. These economic ties have contributed to closer cooperation and increased Türkiye's presence in Central Asia. However, competition from other regional and global powers, such as China and Russia, presents challenges to Türkiye's economic influence. Furthermore, political developments in Central Asia and regional complexities pose challenges to sustaining and expanding Turkish soft power. Geopolitical factors, domestic considerations, and

shifting alliances among Central Asian nations may impact Türkiye's influence and require continuous adaptation of its soft power strategy.

Türkiye's engagement in Central Asia has witnessed the emergence of a soft power strategy aimed at building cultural, economic, and political ties. The historical, linguistic, and cultural affinities between Türkiye and Central Asia have served as a foundation for the development of Turkish soft power in the region. While Türkiye has achieved considerable success in fostering cultural connections and economic cooperation, challenges such as geopolitical dynamics and competition from other global players remain. To maintain and enhance its soft power in Central Asia, Türkiye should continue to prioritize cultural exchange, economic cooperation, and adapt its strategy to address evolving regional dynamics.

The Central Asia region has arguably been the foremost and most crucial area for TÜRKİYE in terms of public diplomacy and soft power projection. Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, TÜRKİYE found itself compelled to exhibit interest in and formulate policies towards this region. Whether the country was adequately prepared for this situation remains a subject of debate; nevertheless, strides have been taken. In this context, the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA) emerges as the pioneering institution. The establishment, evolution, and operational domains of this agency can, in themselves, serve as indicative of the advancement of TÜRKİYE's public diplomacy. In addition to state institutions, civil society organizations have exhibited a pronounced interest in the region as well. Various groups have engaged in activities within the region, driven by ethnic and religious affinities or ideological motivations. It is also noteworthy to mention the endeavors of investors and laborers who ventured into the region for commercial purposes, carrying out diverse undertakings.

Türkiye has actively pursued economic cooperation and connectivity projects with Central Asian countries. The initiation of the "Turkic Council" and the "Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation" framework are examples of Türkiye's commitment to fostering economic integration and trade links with the region. AK Party’s Government emphasis on infrastructure development, energy cooperation, and cultural exchanges has contributed to the deepening of economic ties between Türkiye and Central Asia.

There have been numerous instances of cultural and educational exchanges between Central Asian countries and Türkiye. Here are a few examples:

Türkiye Scholarships: Türkiye Scholarships is a government-funded scholarship program that provides opportunities for students from Central Asian countries to pursue higher education in Türkiye. This program offers scholarships for undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral studies in various academic fields. It facilitates cultural exchange and strengthens educational ties between Türkiye and Central Asia.

Cultural Festivals and Events: Türkiye regularly organizes cultural festivals and events in Central Asian countries, promoting Turkish arts, music, dance, and cuisine. These festivals serve as platforms for cultural exchange, allowing Central Asian communities to experience Turkish traditions and fostering a deeper understanding of Turkish culture.

Turkish Language Education: Türkiye has established Turkish language education centers, known as TÖMER, in Central Asian countries. These centers provide language courses for local residents, allowing them to learn Turkish and gain proficiency in the language. This initiative strengthens cultural bonds and facilitates communication between Central Asian countries and Türkiye.

Educational Partnerships: Turkish universities collaborate with universities in Central Asian countries to establish academic partnerships, exchange programs, and joint research projects. These partnerships facilitate knowledge sharing, academic collaboration, and faculty/student exchanges, promoting educational cooperation between the regions.

Student Exchange Programs: Turkish universities and educational institutions participate in student exchange programs with Central Asian countries. These programs enable students to study abroad and experience a different academic and cultural environment. Students from Türkiye and Central Asia have the opportunity to learn from each other's perspectives, fostering mutual understanding and friendship. These examples represent the efforts made by Türkiye to promote cultural and educational exchange with Central Asian countries. They aim to strengthen ties, enhance mutual understanding, and create long-lasting partnerships in the realms of education, culture, and language. Erdoğan recognizes the significance of cultural and educational exchange in building strong relationships between nations. His government has supported initiatives that promote Turkish language education, exchange programs, and academic collaborations between Türkiye and Central Asian universities. These efforts aim to strengthen cultural understanding, knowledge sharing, and people-to-people interactions. Some examples of cultural and educational

exchanges between Central Asian countries and Türkiye during the tenure of the Erdogan government:

Yunus Emre Institutes: The Yunus Emre Institute, named after the renowned Turkish poet Yunus Emre, has been instrumental in promoting Turkish culture and language in Central Asia. The institutes have branches in various Central Asian countries, offering Turkish language courses, organizing cultural events, and facilitating academic and artistic collaborations. These initiatives strengthen cultural ties and promote understanding between Türkiye and Central Asia.

Educational Collaborations: Turkish universities have actively engaged in educational collaborations with Central Asian counterparts under the Erdogan government. This includes student and faculty exchange programs, joint research projects, and the establishment of academic partnerships. These collaborations aim to share knowledge, expertise, and resources, contributing to the development of higher education in both Türkiye and Central Asia.

Turkish Language Education Centers: The Erdogan government has established Turkish language education centers, such as the Turkish Maarif Foundation, in Central Asian countries. These centers offer Turkish language courses, enabling local residents to learn Turkish and develop proficiency in the language. By promoting language education, these initiatives enhance communication and cultural understanding between Türkiye and Central Asia.

Cultural Centers and Institutes: The Turkish government has established cultural centers and institutes in Central Asian countries to promote Turkish culture and facilitate cultural exchange. These centers offer a range of activities, including language courses, art exhibitions, film screenings, and music performances. They serve as platforms for interaction and dialogue, fostering cultural understanding and cooperation. There are some examples;

Turkish-Kazakhstani Cultural Center: The Turkish-Kazakhstani Cultural Center, located in Nur-Sultan (formerly Astana), Kazakhstan, is a collaborative effort between Türkiye and Kazakhstan. The center aims to strengthen cultural ties between the two countries by organizing language courses, cultural events, exhibitions, and seminars. It serves as a hub for promoting Turkish language, arts, and traditions.

Turkish-Uzbek Cultural Center: The Turkish-Uzbek Cultural Center, based in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, works to enhance cultural understanding and exchange between Türkiye and Uzbekistan. The center offers Turkish language courses, organizes

cultural events, hosts exhibitions, and supports artistic collaborations. It serves as a platform for promoting Turkish literature, music, and other cultural aspects.

Turkish-Kyrgyz Cultural Center: The Turkish-Kyrgyz Cultural Center, situated in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, plays a significant role in promoting Turkish culture and fostering cultural cooperation between Türkiye and Kyrgyzstan. It offers Turkish language courses, organizes cultural festivals, supports academic and artistic exchanges, and provides resources on Turkish literature and history.

These examples illustrate the AK Party government's efforts to strengthen cultural and educational ties between Türkiye and Central Asian countries. By promoting educational scholarships, language education, cultural events, and institutional collaborations, these initiatives aim to enhance mutual understanding, friendship, and cooperation between the two regions.

The region's history and culture have positioned Türkiye as a significant actor in Central Asia through soft power diplomacy. Türkiye's rich cultural heritage, shared religious values, and historical connections to foster closer relationships with Central Asian countries. Solidarity and cooperation has resonated with the leaders and people of the region.

4.1. Türkiye's Relations With Central Asian Countries and its Soft Power Tools in the Region

4.1.1. TIKA

The disintegration of the Soviet Union and the subsequent emergence of the New Turkish Republics ushered in a transformative era for Türkiye's foreign policy, accompanied by a series of opportunities and corresponding needs. Amidst this shifting landscape, a prominent actor stepped forward to seize the moment: the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA). Originally established as the Turkish Cooperation and Development Agency, it was later renamed through Decree Law No. 656 on October 24, 2011. TİKA has emerged as a dynamic force, actively engaged across a diverse array of domains encompassing education, healthcare, culture, art, history, archaeology, and even extending to the realms of classical diplomacy. Operating within the framework of Technical Assistance Activity, TİKA initially assumed a multifaceted role but eventually streamlined its focus, delegating certain responsibilities to newly formed institutions, and sharpening its focus on technical

assistance. With a wide-ranging perspective and an unwavering commitment to fostering progress, TİKA embodies Türkiye's dedication to international cooperation and stands as a testament to its proactive endeavors in shaping a brighter future for all.

TİKA organizes the country's foreign aid under the Prime Ministry. In 1999, then Prime Minister TIKA became independent of government ministries related to the legal entity status in 2001, so it can behave in a different form from the State bureaucracy institutions and Türkiye has become a top policy coordination institution in soft power. In addition, TİKA also undertakes the task of maintaining inventory of foreign aid and ensuring inter-institutional cooperation and coordination for the effective use of TİKA for foreign policy principles and requirements. Thus, TİKA is equipped with new powers to find funds for foreign aid and where to transfer them (E. Denizhan 2010,). TİKA is structured as 8 service units; Office of Legal Counsellor and one of them is Central Asia and Caucasus Department. TIKA's has offices in Central Asian countries such as Kazakhstan Astana, Kyrgyzstan Bishkek, Mongolia Ulaanbaatar, Uzbekistan Tashkent, Turkmenistan Ashgabat, Tajikistan Dushanbe, Afghanistan Kabul, Mezar-i Sharif, Herat (TİKA 2008)

In the spirit of fostering mutual understanding and collaboration among local governments, the inaugural Turkish Republics Local Governments Congress convened from 16th to 18th June 1998. This historic gathering was a tangible manifestation of the resolution made during the 4th Turkish Republics Summit Meeting happened October 1996 in Tashkent, where the exchange of ideas among local government entities was deemed essential. Spearheading the implementation of decisions made at this congress and the establishment of the Turkic States of Union, TIKA played a pivotal role in driving forward various initiatives. One notable undertaking was the development of a comprehensive project aimed at advancing the insurance sector in the Turkish Republics. Through this project, emphasis was placed on exploring collaborative chances with administrators associated with the insurance business area in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Georgia and Turkmenistan. These concerted efforts were driven by the shared vision of strengthening ties and fostering growth within the Turkic nations. (Republics. 2009). TİKA has published a journal called Eurasia File to announce its activities. Eurasia File changed its name after the 156th issue of July 2002 and started to be published as TİKA Turkish World Journal. The new bulletin, which started as number 1, was referred to as five issues with this name, and continued its way as the Eurasia Journal with its sixth issue published in January

2004. Undoubtedly, the change of TİKA's coverage area affected the changing power ın Turkish government. It can be said that with the process that started in this period, the activity center of TİKA, which operates mainly in the Turkish republics, has turned into Africa and the Middle East. Türkiye's current increase in global influence and organization using an agency and TIKA was less needed in Central Asia. These reasons demonstrated why Türkiye turned its face to Africa and the Middle East. The most important cultural cooperation study of TİKA, which was directly related to the region, was the Turcology Project.

TİKA has opened and 18 Turcology Departments and strengthened the infrastructure of existing ones in Kosovo and 14 countries, 3 autonomous republics. Mausoleum of Khoja Ahmed Yasawi built by Timur Great Timurid Empire period in 1389 the renovation of the complex undertook the Republic of Türkiye and has started its work in 1993, as a result of Kazakhstan an agreement, made between states. The tomb, which was renovated with TİKA expertise during the presidency of Öner Kabasakal, was accepted as a world heritage site. (H. Murat Terzi Ocak 2013,) One of TİKA's first Program Coordination Offices was opened in Bishkek in 1993 and the other was opened in Ashgabat. Kyrgyzstan's Office during this period said office have spent this article many projects of life that has served as an expert in Ayhan Nuri Yilmaz, one of the writers and experts brought from Türkiye has conducted studies in the areas of local institutions and have worked for the new system to the integration of the country. These offices have implemented 86 projects in the year they were opened ("TİKA 14. Yılında…" , Ekim 2005,). The Government of the Kyrgyz Republic between the Government of the Republic of Türkiye signed on the Agreement on the TIKA's activities in the Kyrgyz Republic 05.09.2006 PVO and determined the legal status of the TIKA office. Since 1992, TIKA (Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency) has successfully executed a total of 761 projects in Kyrgyzstan, spanning a wide range of fields including cultural cooperation, communication, emergency assistance, and humanitarian aid. These projects have made a significant impact on the development and well-being of the country. Out of the total projects, 117 have focused on improving healthcare, 166 on enhancing educational facilities, 180 on various infrastructure and related services, on economic infrastructure and services, on cultural cooperation and communication, 40 on water supply and hygiene, and 40 on production-related initiatives. Additionally, 14 projects have been registered as emergency response and humanitarian aid efforts, demonstrating TIKA's commitment

to providing timely assistance during critical times. Through its comprehensive project portfolio, TIKA has played a crucial role in fostering progress, improving living conditions, and strengthening the bilateral ties between Türkiye and Kyrgyzstan. (TİKA.org 2018)

Türkiye and the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan signed between the Government of the legal status of TIKA in the Operations Agreement on the date 10.25.2017 in the Turkish International Cooperation and status of Coordination Agency of the Republic of Uzbekistan has been determined. TİKA has demonstrated training activities in many fields. Health is one of these areas. TIKA has supported hospitals, providing health equipment etc. In addition to such services, TIKA provided training to doctors and healthcare professionals. For example, between 18.11.2002-01.12.2002, doctors from Uzbekistan were trained by cardiologists and surgeons at Gazi University. Other areas have the same opportunities as Türkiye. TİKA Dushanbe Program Coordinator was established with a memorandum of understanding signed in 1995, but due to the civil war, it had to end its activities in 1996. It started to work again with the 5-year "Technical Cooperation Protocol" signed in 2000. Harvesting machines were delivered by TIKA to the Minister of Agriculture of Tajikistan Tursunboy Rahmatov with a ceremony. Such activities contribute to the development of the agricultural economy in the region, and also help prevent problems such as unemployment.

Finding clean drinking water in Central Asia is seriously important in some regions, although not as difficult as on the African continent. The Government of the Republic of Turkmenistan between the Government of the Republic of Türkiye Development Cooperation Agreement was signed on 16.03.1993. The TİKA refurbished the mausoleum of the Sultan of Seljuk Sultan Sencer in Merv in Turkmenistan ("TİKA 14. Yılında…" , Ekim 2005,).The tomb whose project was completed was opened on November 14, 2004 with the participation of Minister of State Beşir Atalay ("Sultan Sencer Türbesi Açıldı" Aralık 2004,). In fact, this was a sign of change for TIKA, which is working mainly on technical education and projects, and many such cultural restoration projects were implemented in the following period, mainly in the Balkans. Also, 79 scientists from 23 countries participated in the International Sultan Sencer Symposium. This symposium, organized with the support of TİKA, was probably the most comprehensive Sultan Sencer symposium ever held (Uluslararası Sultan Sancar Sempozyumu" Aralık 2004). Since Sultan Sencer

expressed the most important of the symbols of the common past of the two countries, it meant a much greater meaning in terms of the effects of this activity. Many historical figures can be used to enhance the soft power influence in Central Asian countries. There is no doubt that Türkiye use these in the future.

TIKA's development assistance programs have played a significant role in promoting Türkiye's image abroad. TIKA's development assistance programs focus on providing technical assistance and financial support to developing countries. TIKA has implemented projects in various sectors such as health, education, agriculture, and infrastructure. These projects have helped to improve the lives of people in recipient countries, and they have also created goodwill towards Türkiye. (Akıllı,2019)

TIKA's development assistance programs have been particularly successful in countries in Africa, the Balkans, and Central Asia. For instance, TIKA has implemented projects to provide clean water to communities in Somalia and Burkina Faso, to build schools and hospitals in Kosovo, and to construct roads and bridges in Kyrgyzstan. These projects have helped to create positive perceptions of Türkiye in these countries, and they have enhanced Türkiye's soft power in these regions. (Akıllı,2019)

Moreover, TIKA's development assistance programs have also been instrumental in promoting Turkish culture abroad. TIKA has sponsored various cultural events, such as film festivals, music concerts, and art exhibitions, in different countries around the world. These events have helped to showcase Turkish culture and art, and they have created a platform for Turkish artists and intellectuals to interact with their counterparts from other countries. (Akıllı and Çelenk,2019)

In addition to promoting Turkish culture, TIKA has also played a critical role in promoting the Turkish language abroad. TIKA has established Turkish language schools and centers in many countries, particularly in Central Asia, where the Turkish language has historical and cultural significance. These language schools and centers have helped to promote the Turkish language and culture and have enhanced Türkiye's influence in these regions.

TIKA's development assistance programs have been essential in promoting Türkiye's soft power and enhancing its image abroad. TIKA has helped to create goodwill towards Türkiye by providing assistance to developing countries and promoting Turkish culture and language. However, TIKA faces several challenges in implementing its programs. For instance, the lack of adequate resources and staff has

limited TIKA's capacity to implement projects effectively. Moreover, TIKA's programs have sometimes been criticized for lacking transparency and accountability. (Akıllı and Çelenk,2019)

4.1.2. The International Turkish Cultural Organization (TÜRKSOY)

TÜRKSOY was established by an agreement which was signed between Turkmenistan and Türkiye's minister of culture in 1993 in order to strengthen the Turkish people the peace of unity and brotherhood, to pass on to future generations a common Turkish culture and to introduce the world to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan (TURKSOY 2010)In addition to six founding members, the agency also has eight observer members. It is meaningful to have members outside the independent states. It can be considered as an indicator that this organization is an organization that can develop relations not only at the state level but also at the people level. Relations with communities that are not in a Turkish State but are culturally and historically located within the axis of Turkishness are also an important factor.

In their first foundation process, its name was called Turkish Culture and Arts Associated Management. After taking common decisions, it is named as the International Turkish Cultural Organization. Since 2008, Düsen Kaseinov has served as the General Secretary of TÜRKSOY representing Kazakhstan. TÜRKSOY facilitates the exchange of experiences among scientists and artists from the Turkish World through its traditional events, including gatherings of painters, opera days, and literary congresses.

One notable achievement of TÜRKSOY has been the promotion and celebration of Nevruz, a shared holiday of the Turkish World, in various parts of the world. The organization is actively involved in efforts to strengthen bonds within the Turkish World and promote Turkish culture. One of the traditional activities is to decide memorial years for important people in the field of art, science, culture etc. in Turkish history. Symposiums, scientific and artistic meetings are organized about the people determined during the memorial year; written and visual materials are prepared. These activities will contribute to the development of the common Turkish culture and art and the relationship of Turkish language peoples. Another remarkable activity of TÜRKSOY is the application of the Turkish World Cultural Capitals. Memorial programs, city-specific events, concerts, theater shows, exhibitions, etc. are realized in the determined cities of the Turkish World. It is aimed to socialize and to get to know

the people coming from the different places of the Turkic World. This project adds color to the cultural and artistic life of cities. Kastamonu was selected as culture capital city in 2018. (Anadolu Agency 2018) Looking at the cities chosen as the Capital of Culture of the Turkish World, it is seen that the selection is accurate and includes a wide geography. Although new studies are predominant in TÜRKSOY activities, there are also studies undertaken by adding Turkish culture vision to existing cultural studies. he most accurate example of this is the Türkvizyon song contest. Türkiye decided to withdraw from the area of Eurovision song contest in 2012, the Turkish-speaking states could participate with the TRT's organization having launched an international song contest. It can be thought that this was designed as an alternative and reaction to the Eurovision song contest. As a matter of fact, these competitions were held in Eskişehir, which received the title of Turkish World Culture Capital in 2013, and started to be performed within the framework of the activities of the Cultural Capitals (Sevin 2015).

TÜRKSOY, a prominent organization dedicated to culture and arts, spearheads remarkable initiatives that transcend borders. Among its notable endeavors, TÜRKSOY has curated special projects that celebrate the rich tapestry of Culture and Arts. For instance, it orchestrated the grand premiere of Mersin Uzeyir Hajibeyov's mesmerizing Koroglu opera, captivating audiences across six countries with its enchanting melodies.In a groundbreaking feat, TÜRKSOY introduced Mukan Tölebayev's captivating opera "Birju and Sara" to the distinguished opera repertoire in Türkiye, leaving an indelible mark on the cultural landscape. Furthermore, the organization orchestrated the awe-inspiring performance of Adnan Saygun's Yunus Emre Oratorio, bringing together a chorus of talented artists from nine countries, including the United States and Türkiye, for a breathtaking showcase of harmony and unity. These momentous cultural exchanges exemplify TÜRKSOY's unwavering commitment to fostering cross-cultural understanding and appreciation. By seamlessly blending artistic excellence with cross-border collaborations, TÜRKSOY transcends boundaries, enriches lives, and showcases the vibrant cultural heritage of the participating nations. Through such endeavors, TÜRKSOY cultivates a global platform for artistic dialogue, promoting intercultural exchange, and nurturing a deeper appreciation for the arts across diverse communities. (Hayati Asılyazıcı 2014). TÜRKSOY Youth Chamber Orchestra has won 3 Gold medals in the European Choral Games. TÜRKSOY Youth Chamber Orchestra and TÜRKSOY, Folk Instrument

Orchestra, which was founded on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the independence of the Turkish Republics, are examples of TÜRKSOY's successful works in the field of music (Altın Miras 2018). These orchestras and choirs include participants from Central Asian countries. TÜRKSOY has established a publishing house under the name of Türksoy Publications, where many authors and poets from the Central Asian Turkish Republics published their works and included scientific studies on cultural and historical issues. He has a periodical publication titled "TÜRKSOY: International Turkish Culture Organization Turkish World Culture and Art Magazine" where he describes his activities and includes news from the Turkish World. TÜRKSOY cooperates with many municipalities, universities and non-governmental organizations as well as international organizations such as the Turkic Council, 108 Turkish Academies, 109 Turkish Culture and Heritage Foundation and ISESCO 112. Although the activities of the institution are predominantly culture and art, it is sometimes affected by political turmoil. The most obvious example of this is the pressure of the Russian Government to suspend the relations of TÜRKSOY member countries within the Federation with the institution after the aircraft crisis with Russia.

Türkiye's increased focus on the region and its efforts to project its cultural and political influence through sports diplomacy. The Nomad Games, held every two years, feature traditional Central Asian sports such as horseback archery, eagle hunting, and traditional wrestling. Türkiye hosted the 3rd Nomad Games in 2018, which saw participation from over 1,500 athletes from 80 countries. The event was a major success, drawing attention to Türkiye's efforts to enhance its soft power in Central Asia. (Türkiye boosts soft power in Central Asia with Nomad Games, Ertan,2022). Türkiye's engagement in the region has been driven by strategic interests, including its desire to strengthen its economic and political ties with Central Asian countries. The Nomad Games have become an important platform for promoting Türkiye's cultural heritage and strengthening its relationship with the region.

Türkiye's strategic pursuit of soft power in Central Asia forms a pivotal component of its broader regional influence strategy. The nation's substantial investments in Central Asian countries, encompassing economic aid and loans, exemplify Türkiye's commitment to fostering sustainable development and growth in the region. Concurrently, Türkiye has been diligently expanding its cultural and

educational bonds with Central Asia, establishing Turkish language programs and cultural centers, thus fostering deeper connections.

Nevertheless, Türkiye encounters formidable challenges in its quest to augment its soft power in Central Asia. Notably, the presence of competing regional powers such as Russia and China adds complexity to Türkiye's efforts, potentially engendering perceptions of rivalry. The pursuit of Türkiye's soft power projection in the region, demonstrated through initiatives like the enthralling Nomad Games and other cultural and sporting events, has yielded considerable success. However, navigating the intricate geopolitical landscape of Central Asia necessitates astute diplomacy, particularly as Türkiye endeavors to share its invaluable experiences and guide these countries based on its own journey in the region. Crucially, Turkic cultural organizations like Türksoy and the Turkic Council have emerged as vital catalysts in promoting cultural diplomacy and bolstering the soft power of the Turkic world. By nurturing cultural exchange, facilitating dialogue, and amplifying the shared heritage of Turkic nations, these organizations effectively project a unified voice that resonates beyond borders. Their endeavors contribute significantly to enhancing the soft power of the Turkic world, while also facilitating the consolidation of mutual bonds and fostering a sense of collective identity among Turkic communities.

Cultural diplomacy is the use of cultural resources to promote a country's image and interests in the international community. In the case of the Turkic world, cultural diplomacy has been instrumental in enhancing the soft power of the region. TÜRKSOY, established in 1993, is an international organization that aims to promote Turkic culture and art. TÜRKSOY has implemented various programs to promote Turkic culture and art, including organizing cultural events such as concerts, exhibitions, and festivals. (Akıllı,2019)

The Turkic Council, established in 2009, is a regional intergovernmental organization that aims to promote political and economic cooperation among Turkic-speaking countries. The Turkic Council has also been instrumental in promoting cultural diplomacy among its member states. The organization has implemented various programs to promote Turkic culture and art, including establishing cultural centers and organizing cultural events. (Akıllı,2019). The transactional nature of cultural diplomacy in the Turkic world is based on the idea of reciprocity. In this sense, cultural diplomacy is seen as a tool for promoting economic and political interests among member states. TÜRKSOY and the Turkic Council have implemented cultural

diplomacy programs to promote economic and political cooperation among member states. (Akıllı,2019)

For instance, TÜRKSOY has implemented various cultural diplomacy programs in partnership with the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA). These programs have focused on promoting Turkic culture and art and enhancing economic cooperation among member states. TÜRKSOY has also worked with other international organizations such as UNESCO to promote Turkic culture and art on the global stage. Similarly, the Turkic Council has implemented various cultural diplomacy programs to promote economic and political cooperation among member states. The organization has established cultural centers in member states and organized cultural events such as festivals, concerts, and exhibitions. These programs have helped to promote Turkic culture and art and enhance economic and political cooperation among member states. (Akıllı;2019). However, the transactional nature of cultural diplomacy in the Turkic world has also faced several challenges. For instance, there have been concerns about the unequal distribution of benefits among member states. Some member states have criticized the dominance of Türkiye in cultural diplomacy programs and have called for greater participation and representation in these programs. (Akıllı;2019)

TÜRKSOY and the Turkic Council have played a critical role in promoting cultural diplomacy and enhancing the soft power of the Turkic world. The transactional nature of cultural diplomacy in the region is based on the idea of reciprocity and has been instrumental in promoting economic and political cooperation among member states. However, there are challenges to be addressed, such as the unequal distribution of benefits among member states. The Turkic world needs to continue investing in cultural diplomacy programs to enhance the region's influence in the global community. (Akıllı;2019)

4.1.3. The Presidency For Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB)

Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities was founded on 6 April in 2010. Turkish citizens living abroad constitute the first field of study of the Presidency. The Presidency carries out the tasks of developing strategies for Turkish citizens who have migrated abroad for various reasons over the years and coordinating the studies carried out at home or abroad. The Presidency of Turks Abroad and Relative Communities (YTB) has undertaken the task of coordinating the services offered in different ways by different

institutions for different groups of citizens and relatives in line with this basic purpose and making the services offered effective and efficient. The other study area of the Presidency is to constitute international students by inviting them to Türkiye in order to educate them in Türkiye. It has undertaken tasks that are deemed appropriate to seek scholarship in Türkiye to determine the principles for running a successful educational process and after international students learn together such as ensuring the continuity of the relationship. The last working area of the Presidency is supporting and integrating three other areas as non-governmental organizations. They provide Turkish people to participate and find that management more actively in society, they maintain their ties with Türkiye in every field of life support in the direction of making successful efforts. The Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB Presidency) diligently extends its support to diverse Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) across various countries and regions, aligning with the specific needs and priority areas outlined in financial support programs. This far-reaching commitment has resulted in support rendered to an impressive 73 different states and regions. Demonstrating its dedication, the YTB Presidency has provided substantial financial assistance, with an allocation of 217,950,000 Turkish Lira to Kyrgyzstan, 130,815.000 Turkish Lira to Kazakhstan, and 192,000.000 Turkish Lira to the broader Central Asian region, as of 2014. Through these targeted efforts, the YTB Presidency fervently nurtures partnerships and endeavors to uplift communities, promoting cooperation, and reinforcing the bonds that bind Türkiye with its diverse global network. (YTB 2015).

Public diplomacy resources of a country are the culture, political values, foreign policy, economy, education level, media and promotion activities of that country. One of the projects focused on Central Asia supported by YTB is “İpekyolu Cities Poetry Line Project”. The project aims to bring together academicians, cultural people, poets, writers and artists in countries such as China (East Turkestan), Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Iran on the Silk Road. Within the scope of the study, it was aimed to print 1000 CDs and 100 poetry books (YTB 2015). Another organization supported by YTB became the 4th International Turkish World Economy Form. The purpose of the forum, which was organized in cooperation with Hitit University, is to bring together Turkish scientists to produce science and thought, and to contribute to the development and strategies of Turkish communities in all areas (YTB 2015). A similar project is the 3rd Turkish World International Culture Congress: Dede Korkut and the Turkish World Project, organized under the leadership of the Ege University

Turkish World Research Institute. (YTB 2015). One of the scientific activities organized by YTB is International Students Social Sciences Congresses.

This congress aimed to raise the academic level of international students who are studying in Türkiye knowledge and to be offered to Türkiye's Academy to reach the wide-ranging research in the field of Social Sciences and Türkiye Academy by the supporting of the international students who have different cultures and members of the civilizations to enrich. 16-17 May 2015, Hacettepe University, a total of 99 applications were made, including the collaboration with organized 70 different universities and 29 different universities from abroad international students 37 different nationalities from different disciplines of social sciences to the First Congress in Türkiye. 100 papers were presented for two days in parallel sessions throughout the day in the form of reports of parallel sessions. Kazakhstan with 50 applications (participants), Kyrgyzstan with 35 applications, Uzbekistan with 19 applications, Tajikistan with 1 application, Turkmenistan with 3 applications participated in the congress with (YTB 2015).

The 2nd International Students Social Sciences Congress was held on 29-30 April 2016 in cooperation with Necmettin Erbakan University, and the 3rd International Students Social Sciences Congress was organized between 2-3 December 2017 in cooperation with the Scientific Studies Association (İLEM). The 4th International Students Social Sciences Congress will be held between 22-24 November 2018 in cooperation with İLEM, hosted by Nevşehir Hacı Bektaş Veli University. "Türkiye-Kazakhstan Ahmet Yesevi from past to the Present Civilization Bridge Project" includes various symposiums and training programs held in Kazakhstan and Türkiye. Under the project, 20 students were accepted from Türkiye to Kazakhstan for summer language courses in 2016. 9 students from Ahmet Yesevi University completed their education in Türkiye. In May 2017, a group of 16 academics organized various symposiums at Ahmet Yesevi University. III. The project of Turkish World University Youth Summer School is organized in collaboration with YTB and Ahmet Yesevi University, and is aimed to develop awareness of common culture, history and civilization. Within the scope of the project, seminars and cultural excursion programs were carried out in Turkestan, Kazakhstan, for about 600 students from the Turkish world and related communities.In 2017, Future Youth Project gave vocational training of Holy Koran to 40 students from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Mongolia in Türkiye.

The following graph belongs to the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities showing the Cost Allocation for the Agency’s work.

Table 1: Presidency For Turks Abroad and Related Communities

6. MALİYETLENDİRME TABLOSU						
	2019 Yılı (TL)	2020 Yılı (TL)	2021 Yılı (TL)	2022 Yılı (TL)	2023 Yılı (TL)	Toplam Maliyet (TL)
A1: Yurtdışı vatandaşlarımızın kültürel ve sosyal bağları güçlendirilecektir.	**24.000.000**	**34.000.000**	**48.000.000**	**54.000.000**	**60.000.000**	**220.000.000**
A1.H1. Yurt dışında yaşayan çocuk ve gençlerimizin anadillerini öğrenmeleri ve kültürel değerlerimizi tanımaları sağlanacaktır.	18.000.000	23.000.000	17.000.000	18.000.000	19.000.000	95.000.000
A1.H2. Yurt dışında yaşayan vatandaşlarımızın akademik, sosyal ve kültürel gelişimlerine destek olunacaktır.	6.000.000	11.000.000	27.000.000	31.000.000	35.000.000	110.000.000
A1.H3. Yurt dışında yaşayan vatandaşlarımıza ve mavi kartlılara sunulan hizmetler iyileştirilecektir.	-	-	4.000.000	5.000.000	6.000.000	15.000.000
A2: Ülkeler arasındaki ilişkilere katkı sağlamak amacıyla tarihî ve kültürel bağlarımız olan kişi ve topluluklarla işbirlikleri geliştirilecektir.	**7.250.000**	**8.000.000**	**9.000.000**	**10.000.000**	**10.750.000**	**45.000.000**
A2.H1 Türkiye Mezunlarının birbirleriyle ve ülkemizle ilişkileri geliştirilecektir.	1.750.000	1.750.000	2.000.000	2.250.000	2.250.000	10.000.000
A2.H2 Kardeş topluluklarla kültürel etkileşimi güçlendirecek çalışmalar yapılacaktır.	1.500.000	1.750.000	2.000.000	2.250.000	2.500.000	10.000.000
	2019 Yılı (TL)	2020 Yılı (TL)	2021 Yılı (TL)	2022 Yılı (TL)	2023 Yılı (TL)	Toplam Maliyet (TL)
A2. H3. Kardeş topluluklara yönelik eğitim iş birliği çalışmaları gerçekleştirilecektir.	4.000.000	4.500.000	5.000.000	5.500.000	6.000.000	25.000.000
A3: Ülkemizde eğitim görecek uluslararası öğrencilere yönelik burs ve rehberlik programları ile Türkiye'nin uluslararası ilişkiler vizyonuna uygun nitelikte öğrencilerin yetişmeleri sağlanacaktır.	**247.940.000**	**297.450.000**	**357.750.000**	**428.110.000**	**513.750.000**	**1.845.000.000**
A3.H1 Türkiye Bursları ülke stratejileri kapsamında planlama, tanıtım ve seçim çalışmaları geliştirilerek burslandırmanın niteliği artırılacaktır.	5.440.000	6.450.000	7.750.000	9.210.000	11.150.000	40.000.000
A3.H2 Türkiye Burslusu öğrencilere sunulan hizmetlerin kalitesi artırılarak öğrencilerin sosyal, kültürel ve mesleki donanımları güçlendirilecektir.	242.500.000	291.000.000	350.000.000	418.900.000	502.600.000	1.805.000.000

As shown in the Cost Allocation Chart above, it is observed that the budget and the number of activities of the institution have increased since 2018. Soft power is used as a foreign policy tool through YTB.

Alumni MDO project is an important study that is conducted in Türkiye. This project is intended to maintain contact with students who completed their training in Türkiye and came from the Central Asian Republics. In this context, alumni associations and alumni have come together and established the occasion in Türkiye as well as various programs in their countries. Detailed information on this subject can be found in the section titled "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)". First of all, YTB should be accessible. The official website of the institution does not contain any language other than Turkish and English. If we think in the context of Central Asia, the languages spoken in the region

must be included. It is difficult to access The institutions' official regional documents are directly related to their activity of public diplomacy. Statistical official number of how many children came in where, what is the percentage of these students according to their regions and what is the number of regional expenses of all these activities is not accessible in The official website of the institution. This makes searching and comparison about activity difficult. this data cannot be accessible except from in 2014.

4.1.4. The Yunus Emre Institution

The Yunus Emre Foundation, established under the legislation of Law No. 5653 on May 5, 2007, serves as a public foundation with a clear mission. Its primary objective is to promote Türkiye, along with its rich Turkish language, history, culture, and art, to the global stage. Through the dissemination of relevant information and valuable resources, the foundation aims to benefit the world at large. It also extends its services abroad, catering to individuals interested in studying Turkish language, culture, and art. Another significant aspect of the foundation's work lies in fostering friendships and enhancing cultural exchange between Türkiye and other nations. By facilitating these interactions, the Yunus Emre Foundation actively contributes to the growth of mutual understanding, appreciation, and cooperation among diverse cultures worldwide. (Yunus Emre Enstitüsü Web Sayfası 2019). In addition to offering Turkish language education within its cultural centers, the Yunus Emre Institute collaborates with educational institutions in various countries to support Turcology departments and Turkish language instruction. The cultural centers play a vital role in promoting Turkish culture and art, hosting numerous activities to showcase Türkiye's rich heritage. Moreover, Türkiye's cultural presence is represented at national and international events, further enhancing its global visibility. The establishment of the institute in 2009 marked a significant milestone in expanding the teaching and utilization of the Turkish language. Currently, the Yunus Emre Institute operates 55 cultural centers in 38 different countries worldwide. Notably, among the Central Asian countries, Kazakhstan stands as the sole representative with its cultural center located in Astana. While the institute's efforts are commendable, the absence of cultural centers in other Central Asian countries, where people share close linguistic and cultural ties, can be perceived as a missed opportunity. Nonetheless, the institute continues to actively promote Turkish language and culture, fostering international cultural exchange and understanding.

It can be considered as a deficiency of the Institute that it is located in only one of these countries where there are sister peoples closest to the language and culture in the world. The institution, which aims to reach 100 cultural centers globally in 2023, will be an important step to fill this gap in Central Asia. Among these countries, only Kazakhstan from Central Asian countries is located and service is provided with the only cultural center in Astana. It can be considered as a deficiency of the Institute that it is located in only one of these countries where there are people who have close relationships and same origin language and culture. The institution, which aims to reach 100 cultural centers globally in 2023, will be an important step to fill this gap in Central Asia. Similar institutions working on language and culture are based on their country's influence in the selection of places. Yunus Emre Institute has its Office only in Astana, Central Kazakhstan. As part of the visionary "Kemankeş Project" jointly implemented by the Yunus Emre Institute and the Archers Foundation, Türkiye has introduced Turkish Archery Courses in Astana, the vibrant capital of Kazakhstan. This initiative has witnessed the training of three dedicated Kazakh educators in Türkiye, paving the way for the establishment of the Alatau Sports Palace. Within its hallowed halls, approximately 40 courses have been launched, welcoming enthusiastic Kazakh students eager to delve into the art of Turkish archery. The culmination of these courses brings forth a coveted opportunity for participants who successfully complete the program—a chance to embark on a transformative summer school experience in Türkiye. This immersive journey promises to unlock new horizons, deepening their understanding of Türkish culture and fostering lasting connections.

In a remarkable display of their commitment, the Yunus Emre Institute actively participated in the EXPO Tourism Fair held in Kyrgyzstan. With infectious enthusiasm, they seized the moment to shine a spotlight on their noble mission, skillfully self-advertising the invaluable cultural treasures Türkiye has to offer. This vibrant engagement served as a testament to the Institute's dedication to fostering global understanding and forging enduring bonds between Türkiye and Kyrgyzstan. (Yunus Emre Enstitüsü İnternet Haberleri 2021). Yunus Emre Institute participated in the EXPO Tourism Fair held in Kyrgyzstan and they self-advertised themselves. (Yunus Emre Enstitüsü İnternet Haberleri 2021). It can be thought that this is the first step of an activity to open a center in Kyrgyzstan.

4.1.5. The Directorate of Religious Affairs (TDV)

In all five countries subject of our study, indigenous peoples are Muslim and belong to the Sunni sect. In this respect, Türkiye has a mission in this region. This mission is that in this geography where religion was restricted for nearly 70 years, places for people to be well informed and to live their beliefs It was the creation and training of religious officials. A different public diplomacy institution in Türkiye has been engaged at this point. It is the Directorate of Religious Affairs. Changes in the institutional structure of the Diyanet has been an indication of this. While the Presidency of Religious Affairs is an institution affiliated to the deputy prime minister, the fact that it was directly linked to the prime minister with a change made in 2014 was considered to be an element of religious diplomacy (Yılmaz and Kılıçoğlu 2016). In fact, Diyanet's overseas mandate started with the migration of workers to Europe. With the collapse of the Soviets, Central Asia and the Balkans also entered the field of activity.

The Religious Affairs Directorate has a Religious Services Consultancy in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. There is a Religious Services Attaché at the Consulate General of Almaty in Kazakhstan. There is a Religious Services Coordinator in Osh in Kyrgyzstan. These differences of opinion, both relevant to the reputation and influence of Türkiye in the eyes of the country in question, may be related to both perspectives of these countries to Türkiye and constraints of existing legislation. The Türkiye Religious Affairs and Religious Foundation has built the mosque in Kazakhstan. Belbulak (Micurin) Mosque, Hodja Ahmet Yesevi Mosque and its Complex, Hoca Ahmet Yesevi (Nikolayevka) Mosque and Talgar Mosque. It also provides personnel support to five mosques. (Ünal 2013). The Religious Affairs Department has a Religious Services Consultancy in Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan, and a Religious Services Coordinator in the city of Osh. The Religious Foundation of Türkiye has continued the construction of mosques in Kyrgyzstan. By assigning about 20 religious officials in mosques of this country, he contributes to religious services for the public. (Ünal 2013). The Religious Affairs Directorate has educational activities besides religious services. It opens and operates the Faculty of Theology and Imam Hatip High Schools in cooperation with the Ministry of National Education. In this context, an Imam Hatip High School was opened in Kyrgyzstan in 2013-2014. In the period of 2014-2015, 81 Kyrgyz students took lessons at this school (Ünal 2013). A certain number of students were sent to

Türkiye every year to be educated in their Hatip high schools and Koran courses. In 2014, 80 students were sent (Ünal 2013). Diyanet Foundation has a Faculty of Theology in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. Turkish officials guide and give some suggestions for the persistence of Kyrgyz entrepreneurs of religious institutions in terms of continuity of services to be made in these institutions, by raising awareness of the religious aspects of the Kyrgyz people will be more useful than Turkish officials giving directly their own initiative.

These suggestions of Yilmaz made specifically for Kyrgyzstan, are valid for all Central Asian countries. Mustafa Sinanoğlu, who was appointed as a consultant in 2013, served for six months, but he was not accredited and he returned to Türkiye. It was reopened in 2012 and Emrullah Kaya started working. There are no mosques, institutions, service and assigned staff that are assigned. By carrying out the project to a higher level in 2006, it has realized Twin City Projects (TDİB 2015) In this context, Provincial Mufti Offices determine a city abroad as a brother city and finance the studies there with the campaigns they organize in their provinces (TDİB 2015). In this context, Çorum Mufti Office provided financial support to the construction of Darül Erkam Quran Course and Mosque in Shymkent, Kazakhstan. Again, the Ankara Müftülüğü helped Hoca Ahmet Yesevi Mosque (TDİB 2015). There are brotherhoods of cities in Kyrgyzstan and Çankırı and Karabük. In 2008, cash aid was provided to Bishkek Central Mosque by Çankırı Mufti's Office. Similarly, Cash aid was provided to a mosque in Celalabad by the Karabuk Mufti Office in 2013 (TDİB 2015). The Çanakkale Mufti contributed to the repair of the Dushanbe Central Mosque in Tajikistan.

TDV's Educational Initiatives: One of the key soft power practices employed by TDV in Central Asia was its educational initiatives. TDV established numerous schools, educational institutions, and universities in the region, offering quality education with an emphasis on religious and moral values. These educational institutions not only provided Central Asian students with access to higher education but also fostered cultural and social ties between TÜRKİYE and Central Asia. By investing in education, TDV contributed to the development of human capital and created goodwill among the local population. (TDİB 2015).

Religious and Cultural Exchange: TDV's activities in Central Asia also focused on religious and cultural exchange. It organized conferences, seminars, and cultural events that promoted dialogue and understanding between different faiths and cultures. Through these initiatives, TDV encouraged the sharing of religious and cultural

experiences, fostering a sense of unity among Central Asian countries and Türkiye. This exchange of ideas and experiences enhanced Türkiye's image as a tolerant and inclusive society, strengthening its soft power in the region. (TDİB 2015).

Humanitarian Aid: Another significant aspect of TDV's soft power practices in Central Asia was its humanitarian aid efforts. TDV provided assistance during natural disasters, distributed food and medical supplies, and initiated development projects to address socio-economic challenges. By offering aid and support to the local communities, TDV demonstrated Türkiye's commitment to the well-being of the Central Asian people. This humanitarian assistance not only improved the living conditions of the recipients but also enhanced Türkiye's reputation as a compassionate and reliable partner. (TDİB 2015).

Capacity Building: TDV's soft power practices also focused on capacity building in Central Asian countries. It organized training programs for religious leaders, imams, and preachers, equipping them with knowledge and skills necessary for their roles. By investing in capacity building, TDV aimed to strengthen the institutional capacity of religious organizations in Central Asia and promote a moderate and inclusive understanding of Islam. These efforts helped counter radicalization and extremism, contributing to regional stability and enhancing Türkiye's soft power influence. (TDİB 2015).

From 2002 to 2023, Türkiye Diyanet Foundation's activities in Central Asian countries demonstrated a comprehensive approach to soft power practices. Through educational initiatives, religious and cultural exchange, humanitarian aid, and capacity building, TDV effectively promoted Türkiye’s influence in the region. By investing in the development of human capital, fostering cultural understanding, and providing assistance during times of need, TDV contributed to the region's socio-economic development and established long-lasting bonds between TÜRKİYE Türkiye and Central Asian countries. These soft power practices played a crucial role in enhancing Türkiye’s image as a benevolent and reliable partner, further consolidating its position as a key player in Central Asia. (TDİB 2015). While some mosques built by Türkiye Diyanet Foundation (TDV) in the Central Asian region between 2002 and 2023. Hoca Ahmet Yesevi Mosque, Turkistan, Kazakhstan: Named after the prominent Turkic poet and philosopher Ahmet Yesevi, this mosque stands as a testament to the cultural and religious ties between TÜRKİYE and Kazakhstan. Dushanbe Mosque, Dushanbe, Tajikistan: TDV's contributions include the construction of a mosque in the capital city of Tajikistan, Dushanbe. The mosque serves as

an important place of worship for the local Muslim community. Almaty Mosque, Almaty, Kazakhstan: TDV has been involved in the construction of the Almaty Mosque, located in the city of Almaty, Kazakhstan. The mosque is a significant religious and cultural landmark in the region. (TDİB 2015). Osh Mosque, Osh, Kyrgyzstan: TDV has made contributions to the construction of a mosque in Osh, Kyrgyzstan. This mosque provides a place for the local Muslim community to gather for prayers and community activities. Khujand Mosque, Khujand, Tajikistan: TDV's efforts also include the construction of a mosque in Khujand, Tajikistan. The Khujand Mosque serves as an important religious and cultural center for the local Muslim population. The Religious Affairs Department is sending religious books, brochures etc., especially in the Qur'an to Central Asian countries. In general, it can be said that the Presidency of Religious Affairs and the Diyanet Foundation is successful and effective in Central Asian geography. (Ünal, 2013).

4.1.6. Education

The role of international education is so important in Türkiye's soft power strategy and its implications for Türkiye's global engagement. International education has become an increasingly important tool for Türkiye's soft power strategy, as it enables Türkiye to project its cultural and educational values to the rest of the world. Türkiye has been investing heavily in international education programs, such as the Türkiye Scholarships program, which provides scholarships to international students to study in Turkish universities, and the Yunus Emre Institute, which promotes Turkish language and culture abroad. (Gültekin,2019). Furthermore, Gültekin notes that international education has several benefits for Türkiye's soft power strategy. Firstly, it enhances Türkiye's global image by projecting Türkiye as a modern and open society that values education and cultural exchange. Secondly, it creates a network of alumni who have a positive view of Türkiye and can promote Türkiye's interests in their respective countries. Thirdly, it helps to build people-to-people contacts and strengthen Türkiye's cultural and economic ties with other countries. (Gültekin,2019). However, Gültekin also highlights some challenges and limitations of Türkiye's international education programs. Firstly, there are concerns about the quality of education in Turkish universities and the employability of international graduates. Secondly, there are linguistic and cultural barriers that may limit the appeal of Turkish universities to international students. Thirdly, Türkiye faces competition from other countries that are also investing in international education programs. (Gültekin,2019)

The potential benefits of international education in enhancing Türkiye's global image and building people-to-people contacts, but also underscores the challenges and limitations that Türkiye faces in this regard.

4.1.6.1. The Student Exchange Programs and Educational Institutions

Student exchange programs are important for countries to get to know each other. Countries gain prestige because when students return and come to various positions as a potential friend that increase the importance of this subject. Student exchange programs are also remarkable in economic terms because they encourage foreign students to come outside these programs.

Türkiye Scholarships can be seen as both scholarship programs combined were reconsidered with a strategic vision of combining the results of implementations, are Türkiye's new international students for the 2012/13 academic year programs nominal. The Great Student Project initially involved five countries, namely Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. However, it later expanded its reach to encompass 57 states and communities. The objective of the project, initiated by the Ministry of National Education General Directorate of Abroad Education and Training, was to cultivate a generation equipped to facilitate the transition to democracy and establish enduring connections with the Turkish World.

In support of this goal, Türkiye allocated a total of 42,318 scholarship quotas until the 2011/12 academic year. However, only 31,307 of these scholarships were utilized. Within the scope of the project, 8,914 students have successfully graduated, while 6,255 students are currently pursuing their education. This represents a graduation rate of approximately 28 percent. The achievements of the 8,914 students who have graduated through this project stand as a significant contribution for Türkiye, demonstrating the positive impact of nurturing a generation-friendly approach and fostering lasting ties within the Turkish World. (Türkiye Göç Raporu 2016)

Student exchange programs are perhaps the most crucial aspect of educational activities. This is because students who leave their home country to complete their higher education in another country live there for an extended period, allowing them to learn about the traditions and cultural structure of that country. During their time abroad, students develop positive impressions and experiences that gradually increase their sympathy towards the country and its people. The number of international students studying in Türkiye was 5,378 in 1983, which increased to 55,000 in 2014, and reached 81,499 in the 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 was 14,180 as of 2016 (YÖK, 2017). The Undergraduate Scholarship Program for Turkic Speaking Countries extends its generous support to a range of nations including Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan. This program serves as a beacon of opportunity, opening doors for aspiring students from these nations to pursue higher education in Türkiye. In a remarkable display of enthusiasm and ambition, the year 2013 witnessed an impressive influx of nearly 3,900 applicants vying for the chance to embark on their academic journey in Türkiye under the auspices of this esteemed program. This resounding response reflects the enduring appeal of Türkiye as an educational hub and the deep-seated desire of young minds from the Turkic speaking countries to acquire knowledge, broaden horizons, and contribute to their nations' growth and development. (Er 2012).

In addition to its primary objective of promoting internationalization and attaining global standards in higher education, Türkiye Scholarships has been entrusted with a significant role related to Türkiye's cultural and historical responsibilities in the modern era. The program holds a crucial mission in upholding the cultural foundation of the Alliance of Civilizations initiative, a concept strongly emphasized by former Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and former Minister of Foreign Affairs Ahmet Davutoğlu. By providing educational opportunities to talented individuals from around the world, Türkiye Scholarships actively contributes to the realization of this vision, fostering cross-cultural understanding and cooperation, and promoting dialogue between different civilizations. This demonstrates Türkiye's commitment to shaping a more inclusive and harmonious global community through educational diplomacy. (Öztürk 2014). Recognizing the importance of nurturing relationships with Türkiye alumni, the Türkiye Alumni Coordinatorship was established to oversee this vital area. A total of 160 Türkiye Alumni Associations were created and actively engaged in various activities. Special training programs were conducted to empower the managers of these associations, equipping them with the necessary skills and knowledge. Moreover, to foster and fortify the bonds forged during their time in Türkiye, alumni gatherings were periodically organized both within Türkiye and in the students' respective countries or regions. Notably, one such memorable meeting took place in Almaty on June 6, 2017, providing a platform for alumni to reconnect, strengthen their connections, and share their experiences. The

establishment of the Türkiye Alumni Coordinatorship exemplifies Türkiye's commitment to maintaining lifelong relationships with its alumni community and leveraging their expertise and networks for mutual growth and collaboration..

4.1.7. Turkish Media

In the contemporary world, the media has emerged as a powerful force in shaping and empowering societies. Its influence permeates various aspects of our lives, informing individuals, shaping opinions, and facilitating judgments on a wide range of issues. Media serves as a crucial tool, providing the masses with access to information and aiding in the formation of public perspectives. Notably, the global interest in Turkish popular culture experienced a transformative shift during the late 1980s, thanks to the sudden surge in popularity of Turkish television dramas. This marked a significant milestone as Turkish cultural content gained immense traction in neighboring Balkan and Middle Eastern countries, representing a historic moment of extensive global exportation of Turkish cultural expressions.

Turkish soft power media tools refer to the various communication and media-related strategies that TÜRKİYE employs to shape perceptions, enhance its influence, and project its image on the global stage. These tools leverage media platforms and content to generate positive impressions, foster understanding, and build connections with international audiences. Here are some key Turkish soft power media tools:

Television Series: Turkish television series, known as "dizis," have gained immense popularity in various regions, particularly the Middle East, North Africa, and the Balkans. These series often offer insights into Turkish culture, societal values, and historical narratives, helping create cultural connections and fostering cross-cultural understanding.

Cinema and Films: Turkish films, both contemporary and historical, are another medium that contributes to soft power. International film festivals, film screenings, and collaborations with international filmmakers help introduce global audiences to Turkish cinematic creativity and storytelling.

News Agencies and Media Outlets: Turkish news agencies and media outlets play a role in disseminating the country's perspectives on global events. By providing accurate and balanced reporting, TÜRKİYE can shape its image and narratives, enhancing its credibility and influence.

Social Media and Digital Platforms: In the digital age, social media platforms and online content are crucial tools for soft power. Turkish government entities, organizations,

and individuals use platforms like Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube to share information, cultural content, and engage with global audiences directly.

Documentaries and Cultural Programs: Documentaries and cultural programs that showcase TÜRKİYE's history, traditions, achievements, and natural beauty can enhance the country's soft power. These programs contribute to a better understanding of Turkish culture and values.

Public Diplomacy Initiatives: Public diplomacy campaigns, including advertisements, videos, and promotional content, are designed to showcase TÜRKİYE's positive attributes and initiatives on a global scale. These campaigns aim to create a favorable perception of TÜRKİYE among international audiences..

Cultural Festivals and Events: Organizing or participating in cultural festivals, art exhibitions, music concerts, and other cultural events provides a platform to showcase Turkish arts, traditions, and talents, fostering cultural understanding and appreciation.

Language and Education Programs: Promoting the Turkish language through language courses and scholarships for international students enhances cultural exchange and facilitates communication, creating connections between Turkish and foreign communities.

International Broadcasting Services: International broadcasting services like TRT World and TRT Arabic disseminate news, information, and cultural content to diverse global audiences, contributing to TÜRKİYE's soft power by sharing its perspectives and insights.

By utilizing these media tools effectively, TÜRKİYE can amplify its soft power influence, enhance cross-cultural understanding, and foster positive perceptions among global audiences. The strategic use of media helps TÜRKİYE project its values, culture, and achievements, ultimately contributing to its global image and international relationships.

By harnessing these resources effectively, TÜRKİYE can cultivate a positive global image, foster cross-cultural understanding, and establish itself as an influential player in international affairs through the strategic deployment of soft power. The aforementioned Turkish soft power resources, effectively harnessed, will be elaborated upon in detail in the subsequent sections of the thesis. Furthermore, it will be demonstrated that during the AK Party era, the activities associated with these soft power resources have escalated and become more impactful.

The evolution of media technology, coupled with the advent of alternative platforms, and the pervasive influence of globalization, have paved the way for the

dissemination of Turkish cultural content on a broader scale. This transcultural mobility has facilitated the widespread reach of Turkish cultural productions, particularly in the form of captivating Turkish TV series. From Central Asia to the Middle East, from the Balkans to Latin America and the Far East, these TV series have garnered significant attention, becoming a dynamic element of Türkiye's soft power and a testament to its successful cultural export. The popularity and exportability of Turkish TV series have contributed to the enhancement of Türkiye's brand value, solidifying its position as the world's second-largest exporter of TV series, following the United States. Additionally, media has played a pivotal role in Türkiye's execution of public diplomacy, with the TRT (Turkish Radio and Television Corporation) and the Anadolu Agency emerging as two influential Turkish media organizations driving these efforts to a great extent.

4.1.7.1.TRT Turkish Radio Television Establishment

The broadcasting policy of TRT (Turkish Radio and Television Corporation) for international audiences can be traced back to its collective broadcasts for Turkish workers residing in Europe, which commenced in 1990. These initial TRT-INT broadcasts not only catered to the Turkish community in Europe but also reached audiences in countries such as Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. This marked the beginning of TRT's efforts to extend its broadcast reach beyond national borders, forging connections with diverse audiences across different regions.. (Hatice Başar 2012). TRT-AVRASYA channel, which includes programs for the Caucasus and Central Asia, started broadcasting in 1993 (TRT İnternet Haber 2021). The tradition of establishing foreign representatives by TRT (Turkish Radio and Television Corporation) remained unbroken over the years. It began in 1998 with the inauguration of the TRT Germany-Berlin Representative Office, marking the first overseas TRT representative. Subsequently, in 1999, representative offices were established in Turkmenistan-Ashgabat, followed by Azerbaijan-Baku, Egypt-Cairo, and Belgium-Brussels in 2000. The expansion continued with the opening of the 6th foreign office in USA-Washington in 2002, and in 2004, TRT extended its reach to Uzbekistan-Tashkent. These strategic moves exemplify TRT's commitment to fostering international connections and engaging with global audiences by establishing a physical presence in key locations across the world.. (TRT İnternet Haber 2021). In 1999, TRT_SAYTEK (Digital Broadcasting Technology Center) was established, introducing a new era of broadcasting through its website www.trt.net.tr. This online platform served as a gateway,

reaching audiences worldwide. TRT's broadcasting scope expanded significantly with the introduction of TRT AVAZ, replacing TRT-Eurasia. This transformation enabled TRT to cater to a vast geographic expanse, stretching from the Balkans to Central Asia, encompassing the Middle East, the Caucasus, and 27 countries along with 13 autonomous republics. With a potential audience of approximately 250 million individuals, TRT AVAZ served as a unifying voice for diverse communities across this expansive region. TRT-AVAZ, which started broadcasting on 21.03.2009, claims to be a "common channel" where 137 countries, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Uzbek and Turkmen programs will take place in all countries in the broadcast geography and the audience will find something from each country. Whether the programs prepared here address the region should be questioned. The specific conditions of each state must be determined and broadcasted accordingly. Attention should be paid to the ratio of Turkish dialects used in the programs.

It is important to ensure that other channels of TRT are watched in the region besides their broadcasts towards Central Asia. TRT has made such an effort to achieve this in the Turkish Republics from time to time. (İnternet Haber 2006) Come to this end, in 2012, TRT channels signed an agreement to watch the YAMAL 201 satellite from the C band, as well as the Türksat 3A satellite in the Central Asian region. Within the scope of this agreement, TRT AVAZ, TRT CHILDREN, TRT TURK and TRT ANATOLIAN channels, as well as TRT FM and TSR radio channels were broadcast from YAMAL satellite considering the trend in Asian and Central Asian satellite broadcasting. One of the works of TRT for the Turkic World is the Turkish Dialects dictionary that it has opened to use over the internet. TRT Turkish Dialects Dictionary is a thematic dictionary containing the pronunciation and emphasis of words according to dialects (campaign=nocampaign 2005). The website of TRT Foreign Publications Department is published in Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Uighur, Turkmen, Uzbek.

The absence of a single standard dialect and a single alphabet in this geography significantly reduces the followers of TRT's channels. On the other hand, we cannot say that a sufficient number of experts are used in the broadcasting regions. It would be appropriate for TRT to create a channel only for Central Asia and perhaps to name it TRT Turkistan. In addition, in the publications, common terms and phrases are selected carefully in a common understandable language that the people of the five countries will understand. An editorial policy that uses monitoring and occasionally in popular and cultural publications transitions to a joint publication with local channels can have extremely positive results and Türkiye can increase soft power and its impact

in an absolute way in this region. It would be extremely effective and useful in our opinion to create this common and understandable Turkish by adding words from other Turkish dialects to the grammar of Turkish spoken in Uzbekistan.

4.1.7.2. Anadolu Agency

The Anadolu Agency (AA) stands as a remarkable testament to the profound significance attributed to communication and public diplomacy, concepts firmly established during the War of Independence. The individuals who spearheaded this struggle recognized the criticality of a nation's presence, and AA embodies their visionary approach. Remarkably, the overseas arm of the Anadolu Agency comprises a diverse workforce of 3,272 professionals hailing from 86 countries, representing 74 different nationalities. With offices spanning across 35 countries and representative offices in 86 nations, the agency's global reach is extensive. Notably, Anadolu Agency maintains dedicated representatives in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, further strengthening its ties in these regions. One notable service provided by the agency is the Anadolu Turkic News Package, aimed at promoting Anatolian Agency's cultural heritage and the values of the Turkish world, while fostering increased interest among Turkish-speaking countries.

The creation of an analytical news package catering to Turkish-speaking states and nations reflects a significant endeavor to establish a unified and cohesive news source that bridges the Turkish state with its diverse communities. Through this initiative, these nations are brought together under a single voice. Published in three languages—Turkish, English, and Russian—this news package serves as an indispensable source of information for media agencies, NGOs, Turkish-speaking communities, universities, and research institutes across the Turkish world. Its foreign language publications pay particular attention to highlighting the endeavors of esteemed institutions such as Agency TİKA, THY (Turkish Airlines), the Turks Abroad and Related Communities Presidency, and the Yunus Emre Enstitüsü. Notably, the Anadolu Agency (AA) strives to promote a positive image of Türkiye by featuring news stories about reputable institutions, organizations, companies, civil society groups, and influential individuals. Among the various institutions, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs holds particular significance in shaping the agency's coverage of foreign news.

CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSION

One of the concepts that will not lose its importance in international relations is the concept of power. Many theorists such as Morgenthau, Mearsheimer, Dahl and Holsti have all drawn attention to the importance of power in international relations. Before and during the Cold War, the idea of making gains by taking advantage of the compelling effects of military and economic factors was dominant. However, these methods have decreased in importance due to both their high cost and the developments in technology and socio-cultural fields, and have led to the emergence of methods of using soft power instead. The concept of soft power, which can also be expressed as the ability to attract without using force has emerged. Although soft power has been used by many nations throughout the history, its conceptualization and introduction to the literature date back to the early 1990s. The concept of soft power was introduced to the literature by an American political scientist, Joseph Nye.

While initially approached from a US-centric perspective by Nye, the concept of soft power has progressively garnered scholarly attention through systematic analysis. Its significance lies in the recognition that traditional hard power methods often fail to yield desired outcomes in today's globalized world. The advent of the internet, written and visual media, and advanced communication tools has facilitated unprecedented cultural interactions, leading to the interconnectedness of events across regions. Consequently, states seeking to harness the alluring effects of power increasingly turn to soft power strategies. Notably, countries such as the USA, China, France, Germany, and Türkiye actively employ elements of soft power in their diplomatic endeavors. However, it is vital to acknowledge that the effective utilization of soft power should not overshadow the potential of hard power capabilities. Türkiye's rich soft power potential derives from its historical legacy, vibrant culture, and unique geographical position. Situated at the crossroads of the Middle East, the Balkans, and the Caucasus, Türkiye resides in a geopolitical theater renowned for monumental power struggles throughout history. Considering Türkiye's regional rivals and the complexities of its engagements, adopting a foreign policy approach anchored in soft power principles appears prudent. By skillfully navigating the realm of soft power, Türkiye can effectively advance its interests while simultaneously recognizing the significance of maintaining a balanced hard power

posture. For Türkiye, it is in a position to use its soft power potential in a wide area from the Balkans to the Caspian, from Africa to the Middle East. In addition, the Turkish people's adherence to the Muslim faith is another factor. Today, Türkiye is at an important level in terms of using its historical, cultural, religious and linguistic resources. In addition to the policies carried out by the State, the Turkish TV series and film industry also makes significant contributions.

In the implementation of Türkiye's soft power policies, public diplomacy institutions and organizations have accomplished and are succeeding. Institutions such as TIKA, TÜRKSOY, Public Diplomacy Coordinatorship, Yunus Emre Institutes, YTB and DIB contribute positively to the image of Türkiye in their operating regions by signing many projects in education, culture, health, religion and social areas. These have been the study of this thesis. After the Central Asian Republics gained their independence, Türkiye took the first steps in recognizing the countries of the region and establishing relations with them. We have divided these relationships into two periods to describe the changes and gains in Türkiye's Central Asian policy. The first period covers the times from independence to 2002. The second period, covers the process from the AK Party government to the present day.

The collapse of the Soviet Union caught Türkiye off guard during its initial phase, leaving it unprepared for the ensuing geopolitical shifts. As global dynamics underwent transformative changes, Türkiye's foreign policy landscape expanded, presenting new opportunities and challenges. Fortunately, Türkiye found itself equipped with significant historical, cultural, and linguistic affinities shared with the newly independent Central Asian Republics. These common denominators paved the way for Türkiye to forge closer ties with its Central Asian counterparts. The growing proximity between Türkiye and the Central Asian Republics gave rise to discourses espoused by Turkish politicians at the time, such as the vision of a "great Turkish world" spanning from the Adriatic to the Great Wall of China and the concept of a "Turkish Union." These discourses reflected the aspiration to strengthen bonds and cultivate a sense of shared identity within the Turkish-speaking communities.

However, due to this unrealistic rhetoric and the fact that these newly independent states did not want to be under a structure again, the desired result did not come out of the Turkish summits. Due to the erroneous policies, unfulfilled promises and unrealistic rhetoric created by Türkiye in the region without taking Russia and Russian minorities into account, this period could not achieve the desired level of gain. In the following

process, the interest in the region decreased due to reasons such as political and economic instability, ideological conflict of coalition governments, and Türkiye's interest in full membership process of the EU. 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 conduct its Central Asian policies on the basis of economy and language-culture. For this reason, technical assistance, scholarships and cooperation in various fields were provided in the fields such as education, economy, culture and religion. In the period after 2002, studies in the cultural field were focused on Central Asian policies. Especially the language issue has become an important issue. Language is a unifying factor. Therefore, the opinion of developing the issue of creating a common alphabet and written language is dominant. After this period, mutual education activities were developed. Schools and universities were opened. TIKA, TÜRKSOY, YTB, DİB, TÜRKPA activities are continuing increasingly. In the post-2002 period, the institutionalization of the projects and activities, of which steps were taken in the first period, and the creation of a common mechanism were carried out. Today, Türkiye is among the important countries that follow a soft power-based foreign policy. Türkiye managed to turn its negative image, which was formed in the past, into a positive direction during the AK Party governments. Looking at Türkiye's Central Asian policies, the recent policy shows great differences compared to the first period. After 2002, Türkiye's Central Asian policies bear more realistic traces. Considering Türkiye's economic situation and the conditions of the region, Türkiye implements its soft power potential better than in the first period.

However, the success of Türkiye's soft power politics in Central Asia is closely linked to effective using of soft power. Between 2002 and 2023, Türkiye increased its engagement with the Turkic-speaking countries in Central Asia by promoting a shared cultural and historical heritage. Türkiye also expanded its economic cooperation with the region, including energy and transportation projects. Erdoğan's emphasis on religion and cultural heritage has made Türkiye more attractive to the Central Asian countries, which share similar values and traditions. Türkiye's soft power politics in Central Asia between 2002 and 2023 have been increased by soft power tools activities. AK Party Government has played a significant role in shaping Türkiye's foreign policy towards Central Asia, and his leadership styles have had a significant impact on the effective use of Türkiye's soft power tools in the region. As the international environment changes, Türkiye may need to revise its soft power approach to meet new challenges and maintain its positive image in Central Asia.

Türkiye has also been promoting economic development in Central Asia. Türkiye has invested in infrastructure projects in the region and has been providing development assistance to Central Asian states. Türkiye has been working to increase trade with Central Asia and has been seeking to establish a free trade zone with the region. Turkish leaders have been actively promoting Türkiye's soft power in the region. AK Party Government has been particularly active in promoting Türkiye's soft power in Central Asia. Erdoğan has made numerous visits to the region and has been working to strengthen political, economic, and cultural ties with Central Asian states. AK Party Government has been advocating for closer ties between Türkiye and other Turkic-speaking states, including those in Central Asia. Erdogan's vision of a greater Turkic world has been an important component of Türkiye's soft power strategy in Central Asia. However, Türkiye's economic influence in the region has been limited. Türkiye's investments in infrastructure projects have been relatively small, and Türkiye has not been able to establish a free trade zone with Central Asian republics. Türkiye's political influence in the region has also been limited. While Türkiye has been working to strengthen political ties with Central Asian states, its impact has been limited by the presence of other actors in the region, such as Russia and China. Moreover, if these relations are analyzed in the concept of good country index, Türkiye's relations with Central Asian countries have been historically rooted in cultural and historical ties. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Türkiye has pursued a policy of deepening its relationship with the five republics in Central Asia - Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan.

Türkiye's relationship with Central Asian countries is based on mutual respect, shared cultural heritage, and economic cooperation. Türkiye has sought to strengthen its ties with Central Asia by promoting cultural exchanges, increasing trade and investment, and providing educational opportunities for Central Asian students. Türkiye has also provided technical assistance and training programs to help Central Asian countries develop their economies and infrastructure. Türkiye's cultural and historical ties with Central Asia are reflected in its policy of promoting Turkic unity. Türkiye has actively sought to promote the cultural identity of Turkic peoples and has supported efforts to preserve and promote the Turkic languages. Türkiye has also supported efforts to promote regional stability and security in Central Asia. Türkiye has been involved in efforts to resolve conflicts in the region, including the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

In conclusion, Türkiye's soft power strategy in Central Asia has been effective. The tenure of the AK Party has significantly influenced the number and nature of Turkey's soft power initiatives in Central Asia. Under AK Party Government, Turkey's foreign policy approach has undergone notable shifts, particularly in its engagement with the countries of Central Asia. This shift has resulted in a distinct expansion and enhancement of Turkey's soft power initiatives in the region. Several key factors contribute to this evolution:

Reinvigorated Foreign Policy: The AK Party's tenure marked a departure from Turkey's traditionally Eurocentric foreign policy. It led to a proactive foreign policy that emphasized engagement with regions beyond Europe, including Central Asia.

Cultural Diplomacy: The AK Party's emphasis on Turkey's historical and cultural ties with Central Asia fostered increased cultural diplomacy initiatives. Turkish television series, films, and cultural events gained popularity in the region, enhancing cultural exchanges and understanding.

Educational and Scholarly Exchange: The AK Party era witnessed an expansion of educational scholarships, exchange programs, and collaborations between Turkish and Central Asian universities. This contributed to enhanced educational cooperation and cross-cultural dialogue.

Economic Cooperation: The AK Party era saw a growing focus on economic partnerships and trade agreements with Central Asian countries. Economic collaboration not only fostered closer ties but also projected Turkey as a reliable economic partner.

Humanitarian Aid and Development: The AK Party government actively engaged in humanitarian aid and development projects in Central Asia, contributing to goodwill and showcasing Turkey's commitment to regional stability and well-being.

Cultural and Religious Ties: The AK Party emphasized shared cultural and historical ties, as well as common linguistic and religious connections, between Turkey and Central Asia. This emphasis helped create a sense of belonging and mutual understanding.

Public Diplomacy: The AK Party government effectively employed public diplomacy campaigns to promote Turkey's image and values in Central Asia. These campaigns conveyed Turkey's modernity, achievements, and aspirations.

Overall, the AK Party's tenure has led to a substantial expansion and refinement of Turkey's soft power initiatives in Central Asia. The government's strategic focus on

strengthening cultural, economic, educational, and diplomatic ties has contributed to Turkey's heightened influence, positive perception, and enhanced engagement with the Central Asian nations. The activities of state-supported institutions in Central Asia during the AK Party era underline Turkey's concerted efforts to amplify its soft power influence. By strategically focusing on education, culture, media, economic collaboration, and humanitarian endeavors, Turkey projects an image of cooperation, shared values, and responsible leadership, thus establishing itself as a respected and influential actor in the Central Asian region.

This study posits that effective utilization of soft power instruments It argues that soft power serves as a significant tool for shaping foreign policy. The focus of this thesis centers on exploring the dynamics of state relations between Central Asian countries and Türkiye through the lens of soft power politics, with a specific emphasis on these soft power instruments. The research delves into the effective using of soft power tools in the Turkish-Central Asian Republics relationship spanning from 2002 to 2023. Through my findings, it becomes evident that during AK Party Government soft power politics have played an effective and significant role in strengthening Turkish-Central Asian republics relations. Turkish soft power tools have been instrumental in fostering robust cooperation between Türkiye and the Turkic-speaking states through strategic employment of soft power approaches.

There are definitely elements of fraternity, kinship, ancestry and cultural affinity between the citizens of Türkiye and the Turkic Republics of Central Asia, and at least one of these terms is frequently used at the right time, on the right occasion when it became necessary. This thesis also argues that since the breakup of the Soviet Union, it is during AK Party governments that Türkiye, which has become one of the important actors in the regional order and the global system, has been able to use the soft power instruments the best and the most effectively in Central Asia. Institutions and organizations, which are used as soft power and public diplomacy instruments, increased their activities during AK Party Government. The interaction between Türkiye and Central Asian countries has increased at the same rate. This situation shows us that multilateral relations have developed public diplomacy primarily with the help of soft power. The period in which this development accelerated the most is during the AK Party government.

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