

Yayın Değerlendirme / Book Reviews

Organization of Turkic States: Politics, Economics, Cultural Collaborations and 2040 Vision. Edited by Yılmaz Ulvi Uzun and Hakan Kaya. Nobel, 2023.*

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The book titled “*Organization of Turkic States: Politics, Economics, Cultural Collaborations and 2040 Vision*” is a comprehensive and illuminating exploration of the intricate dynamics within the Turkic world. The 594-page book has been recently published in 2023. The editors of the book are Dr. Yılmaz Ulvi Uzun and Dr. Hakan Kaya, both are well-known for their work on international relations, politics, and economics within Turkic world. Authored by valuable academicians from the Turkic states this scholarly work delves deep into the multifaceted aspects of the Organization of Turkic States (OTS) and its role in shaping the political, economic, and cultural landscape of the Turkic nations.

Looking at the scholars of the chapters in the present work, it is seen that researchers from different institutions contributed to the book. Moreover, contributing to the interdisciplinary character of the book, academicians from different disciplines evaluate the development process of the OTS from political, economic, and cultural aspects.

There are *twenty-seven* articles in the book, which consists of three sections. In these articles the OTS as emerging international intergovernmental organization is assessed in the framework of current developments with in-depth theoretical and empirical applications to readers of all levels, including those who are just

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beginning to be interested in the Turkic world since the entire process from the beginning of the process of establishment of the Organization to its current position in the contemporary system of international relations.

It is worth mentioning that this book, which emerged as a result of a collective work, provides *inter alia* a historical overview, tracing the roots of the Turkic nations and the formation of the OTS. This foundation is essential for readers who are unfamiliar with the historical context, providing a clear lens to view the subsequent developments discussed in the book.

One of the book's most remarkable features is its in-depth analysis of the OTS's political structure and functions. Authors provide a lucid account of the Organization's decision-making processes, its internal and external challenges, and the role of its member states in regional and global politics. The authors' expertise in the subject matter is evident, as they deftly navigate complex political intricacies and offer a nuanced perspective on the OTS's influence.

In addition to the politics, the book dedicates substantial attention to the economic dimension of the OTS. The experts in this field explore the organization's efforts to promote economic cooperation and trade among member states, highlighting the potential for growth and development within the Turkic world. The discussions on trade agreements, investment initiatives, energy policies, formation of national stock markets, agriculture and economic integration provide valuable insights into the region's economic prospects.

Furthermore, academicians who contributed to this interdisciplinary work delve into the cultural aspects of the Turkic nations and the role of the OTS in preserving and promoting Turkic heritage. The book sheds light on initiatives aimed at preserving languages, traditions, and shared cultural values among Turkic nations, as well as touches upon issues of new opportunities in the field of education within member states. This exploration adds depth to our understanding of the OTS's broader mission beyond politics and economics.

Now, going into the details of the book, the first section "Politics" begins with the article written by Serdar Yılmaz. The author analyzes the regional cooperation efforts of the Turkic states located in the Central Asian region since 1991 in line with the German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer's "hedgehogs dilemma". The author claims that, just like hedgehogs, Turkic states are "neither too far nor

too close to each other”. At the same time, the author believes that the common history, culture, religion, and linguistic similarities, as well as geographical proximity and economic ties of Turkish countries provide a solid basis for the strong integration among them. This article also discusses the “Turkic World Vision – 2040” concept, adopted by OTS in Istanbul in 2021. Being the first strategic document put forward within the Organization, it enshrines the main targets of cooperation within Turkic world for the next 20 years from a geostrategic point of view. In this respect, the author indicates that this document has a full potential to make the OTS member states stronger on a national basis and as a group, without prejudice to their existing international commitments and without opposing to any other state of international community.

In the next article of the “Politics” section, Samir Humbatov provides a comprehensive analysis of the Azerbaijan-Kazakhstan-Türkiye relations and their impact on the future of the Turkic world. Starting his research with historical background rooted in the collapse of the Soviet Union and end of the Cold War, as well as the independence of 15 formerly allied states, the author analyzes the process of transition from communist system to capitalism, which required support for these countries. In this respect, Türkiye’s recognition of Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan as independent states is evaluated as a significant support to them. Humbatov continues his work with history of establishment of diplomatic relations between these countries, historical stages of developments on bilateral level among them, and finalizes it with the discussion of joint projects, in particular within the OTS. He also expresses a strong believe that the end of the Second Karabakh war that dramatically changed the political configuration in the region and the world, as well as opening of Zangezur Corridor will create new opportunities not only for Azerbaijan, but also for all Turkic states.

Fərahilə Fazil continues elaborations on Azerbaijan-Kazakhstan relations in her article on the importance of political, economic, and cultural dimensions for the future strategic vision of OTS. Alongside the issues of strategic interaction between Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan within OTS, the author also analyzes the relations of the countries from the perspectives of new challenges emerging today in the Caspian region that urge states to act together and establish a closer cooperation. In addition, Fazil emphasizes that the Middle Corridor, which is a common project of Azerbaijan and

Kazakhstan, is an important link in bilateral cooperation. She explains that crossing the Caspian Sea and connecting China and Europe, this route provides an alternative to the Northern Corridor, which was isolated and limited by the Russian war against Ukraine. Moreover, she discusses benefits of the Middle Corridor not only in terms of diversification of transport routes, but also in terms of eliminating economic and political barriers to Kazakhstan's export of energy resources.

Osman Ercan deals in his article with the significance of China's the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) that encouraged Turkic states to begin new complementary projects for the revival of the old Silk Road such as Türkiye's Middle Corridor and Kazakhstan's Bright Road Plan. He argues that emergence of revival projects within the Silk Road promises new avenues of cooperation for the Turkic states, as they are important stakeholders of the BRI and Middle Corridor. From this perspective, the author provides critical analysis of political and economic relations between Turkic states and China, indicating that Turkic counties have a full potential to negotiate a better deal with China in future and more interdependent relations with Chinese.

Türkiye and Kazakhstan political, economic, educational, social, and cultural relations are examined by Abdizhapar Saparbayev in the next article of the section. He underlines that both Kazakhstan and Türkiye, which are called by the author as "two Turkic wings of Eurasia", make a significant contribution to the dialogue of Turkic civilizations and strengthening the system of collective security in Eurasian region. Saparbayev also elaborates on development of investment and financial cooperation between two states, claiming that despite the fact it is a small market with a population around 20 million people, Kazakhstan is willing to offer Turkish businesses various opportunities in the sense of opening to other countries of the Central Asian region, given the favorable investment climate and stable banking system.

In the next article titled "*An evaluation on the government system of Türkiye and Kazakhstan*", similarly to the previous one, Gökhan Dönmez and Emiliya Uzun focus on the mentioned countries of Turkic world. In this research the unity of powers and separation of powers systems are evaluated through comparative analysis of government systems of Türkiye and Kazakhstan. The authors seek answers to questions whether the current governmental system of these countries is a presidential system or not. Hence, they provide

a comprehensive study of Turkish governmental system from 1921 to the 1982 Constitution, as well as Kazakhstan's governmental system in line with the 1995 national Constitution. According to the authors, the current system in Türkiye is the presidential system which significantly reduces the power of the national parliament and leads to disappearance of the principle of separation of powers required by democratic order. On the other hand, Kazakhstan has a semi-presidential system, where the rigid separation of powers is distorted in favor of the executive due to the head of state.

Sina Kisacik looks for the answer to the question “*How can Türkiye-Azerbaijan-Turkmenistan trio support the European efforts to decrease its natural gas dependence on Moscow after the 2022 Russian-Ukrainian war?*” The author emphasizes the importance of Russia as the main gas supplier of Europe and Türkiye, and its attempts to sustain its comparative advantage status through developing several projects relating to this issue. It is stated that as a result of Russian intervention in Ukraine in 2022, the European energy security is mostly affected by this event, the fact that urges Europe to find new gas suppliers. In this respect, author forecasts that Ankara-Baku-Ashgabat trio as potential assistants of Europe in decreasing its huge dependence on Russia gas may possible be not an easy process. However, when this trio may overcome their disagreements on this issue, this alternative way may bring win-win outcomes in terms of energy security both for these countries and European continent.

The impact of Kazakhstan-Russia relations on the security of the Turkic world is comprehensively analyzed by Zeynep Deniz Altınsoy, Ali Açıkgöz, Filiz Değer in the next article of the “Politics” chapter. The authors descriptively summarize general outlines of Russian policy towards Central Asia with in-depth analysis of Kazakhstan-Russian relations in terms of comparative politics. It is argued that currently both countries sought constructive resolution to issues of protection of state borders, joint use of Baikonur space center, and cooperation in Caspian Sea, and they show their political will to implement these solutions on common platform where mutual national interests are protected. Authors also emphasize that Kazakhstan while seeking its national interests establishes closer cooperation with Turkic world, namely Azerbaijan and Türkiye. In this respect, the authors conclude that this cooperation creates policy strategies in order

to develop collaboration and diversify its topics in its relations with other Turkic countries that may contribute to valuable interaction between them and Russia in Central Asia.

In the article titled “*The importance of the Organization of Turkic States for Turkish Foreign Policy*” written by Yücel Özden, the concept of foreign policy and the basic aspects of Turkish foreign policy are examined from the perspective of Türkiye’s membership in OTS. Thus, the establishment and development of the OTS are discussed and the special importance of this international organization for Türkiye is presented. The author defines the OTS as an initiative that will provide Türkiye with new perspectives in international arena, as well as contribute to strengthening relations with the West, in particular, within international trade and energy projects.

The last article of the “Politics” section focuses on Hungary’s return to the Turkic world. Zoltan Egeresi draws attention to a mutual rapprochement occurred after 2013 between Hungary and Türkiye which was driven by geopolitical, economic, and cultural/social factors such as Hungarian government’s need to balance its political and economic commitments alongside rising Neo-Turanism. The author also evaluates the observer status of Hungary in OTS as a great opportunity for the country to further develop and deepen its relations with other Turkic states, as well as to serve as a bridge between Turkic world and the West given its NATO and EU membership.

The second section of the book is dedicated to the economic cooperation within the Turkic world and begins with the article written by the book editors Hakan Kaya and Yılmaz Ulvi Uzun. Under the spotlight of this research is agriculture, manufacturing industry and service sectors as added value creation capability on economic growth in OTS states during 1995-2021 periods. Authors provide the panel pre-diagnostic tests and the examination of stationarity degrees of the series, as well as Pedroni cointegration test. They argue that the absence of progressive agriculture in these countries is the most important factor preventing industrialization since “it does not remove sociological obstacles in areas where capitalist enterprise can settle”. Regarding manufacturing industry, it is stated that increasing the share of medium and high technology industry added value to growth in the total manufacturing industry will contribute to a greater increase in this sector and to provide sustainability. Finally, service sector’s

analysis shows that it has negative impact on economic growth, and thus, there is a need to bring this sector in line with international standards that will facilitate economic development.

Yerkebulan Sapiyev deals with Kazakhstan energy policy and energy resources. He provides a summarized description of energy resources of Kazakhstan, including non-renewable and renewable resources alongside reflection of country's energy power to the OTS. The main conclusion of this research lies within the statement that the energy power of Kazakhstan reflects positively on the OTS bringing together the same goals and adds a different power to the existing global power of this international platform.

The next article in this section sheds light on the problems of economic and national security as a factor in the stability of the Turkic states, in particular on the case of Azerbaijan. Adalat Aliyev provides a methodology for calculating the complex national strength, the dynamics and hierarchy of the reasons and prerequisites for the patterns of development of international relations, as well as detailed assessment of regional development. According to the author, the components of indicators and the index of "national strength" of the Republic of Azerbaijan in contemporary period, considering the political and economic situation, encompasses such indicators as ability to contribute to the international community, the ability to survive, the possibility of force pressure, including military force and diplomatic means. It is stated in the conclusion that achieving a high level of the "complex national strength" index will provide an outstanding opportunity for Azerbaijan to solve its economic, financial, political, military, and diplomatic problems in the modern era of globalization.

The "Economics" section of the book continues with the article titled "*Critical minerals in energy security of Kazakhstan*". Anıl Çağlar Erkan presents analysis on the reflections of the energy security of Kazakhstan in relation to the increase in the importance of rare earth elements and critical mineral resources alongside energy revolution discussion. The author asks a question "*What is the energy transition?*" He explains that energy transformation address to the global energy sector's shift from fossil-based system of energy production and consumption – including oil, natural gas, and coal – to renewable sources like wind and solar, as well as lithium-ion batteries. Erkan also highlights threats in the energy transition process, euphuizing major obstacles such as time management, technological development, as

well as increase in demand of rare earth elements and critical minerals. In this respect, it is argued that in the light of modern developments, energy security will threaten the national security of the states for a while.

Aziza Syzdykova deals with the formation and development of national stock markets of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. She explains the process of formation of stock exchanges in these Turkic states that traced back to collapse of the Soviet Union. The main focus is made on consideration of state of the regulatory system and possible approaches for further development. The author concludes that among Turkic states financial markets and stock markets activities in Kazakhstan are much more developed in comparison with other Turkic countries. Stock market development is slightly behind in Azerbaijan, Kyrgyz Republic, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. In this respect, the author suggests creating a mechanism for state regulation of the stock market, which combines the interests of investors and the state, with the maximum possible non-interference in the practice of stock trading.

The section continues with the study of Elnur Allahverdiyev on agricultural economy of Turkic states. The author discusses the recent developments in agricultural policies, as well as provides solutions for existing problems and challenges in the mentioned area. Moreover, it is argued that Turkish states should not only fix on the cooperation within the frame of the OTS, but also increase their prosperity by exporting in cooperation with their neighbors – China and Russia. The author believes that such cooperation will reduce the effects of environmental disasters caused by shortcomings in agricultural policies and environmental programs from the past, and will prevent new threats from occurrence.

“The importance of the Silk Road since ancient times and the modern silk road initiative” is examined by Gökay Karaduman from different perspectives such as cultural exchange, economic growth, and technological innovation between the civilizations of Asia, Europe, and Africa. This article discusses the emergency and development of the Silk Road over the centuries, starting in ancient times, as well as propose modern initiatives such as the Middle Corridor that could be a contemporary version of the ancient Silk Road network. The outcomes of the research illustrate the importance of the Turkic states in the revival process of the New Silk Road that demands diplomatic initiatives to ensure peace and resolve disputes between Türkiye

and China, especially over Xinjian Uyghur Autonomous Region or East Turkestan, as well as Russia-Ukraine war with the mediation of Turkic states.

Lale Ibrahimli and Ruhengiz Aliyeva provides a comprehensive discussion on economic and financial condition of Turkic states, considering the positive dynamics in this area in line with the new geopolitical reality after the Second Karabakh war that significantly changed geostrategic paradigm both in the region and the world. The authors suggest that improving the efficiency of state regulation of business activities, further development the quality of tax and customs administration, minimizing restrictions on market entry, and at the same time, providing conditions for free competition will improve business environment in Turkic states.

Energy policy as a cornerstone of economy in Eurasian region is under the spotlight of the article titled "*Dilemma of energy power in Central Asia*". Merve Suna Özel Özcan provides in-depth analysis of the Eurasian energy policy and its impact on global energy security. The author argues that any disruption to Central Asian energy exports could significantly affect global energy prices and energy security at large. However, the region faces serious challenges in the face of dependency on Russia for energy exports, as well as environmental problems, and lack of energy infrastructure. The author concludes with provision of equitable solutions to these challenges among which are energy variety, regional collaboration, market power outside of Russia and attraction of new buyers to the region such as China, the EU and USA.

Country case of inflation is discussed on the example of Kyrgyzstan. Nurzhan Shabieva presents the results of her doctoral research on the topic of "Inflation and its economic consequences in the Kyrgyz Republic". She analyzes the reasons behind price instability and the main factors of inflation in Kyrgyzstan. It is stated that inflation in the country has neither a negative nor a positive implication on national economy in long term. Therefore, the author suggests calculating the level that will stimulate the Kyrgyzstan's economy and implement appropriate policies alongside strengthening foreign economic relations, in particular, with OTS.

The "Economics" section of the book ends with the article titled "*Unity of the Turkic-speaking countries as adaptation to the challenges of the global cyclic transition*". The collective of authors presents the outcomes of historical and logical analysis

of the patterns of change in the world economic structure, the feature of the current cyclical transition which justifies the demand for regionalization, as well as reasons of cyclic crisis in political, economic, social, and environmental spheres. Tugelenova M., Bimendiyeva L., Temerbulatova Zh. also touch upon the latest Samarkand Summit of OTS in November 2022 in the framework of new fundamental patterns and trends that have been discussed by Turkic leaders as a way for developing mutually beneficial partnerships, political stability, and dynamic economic development within Turkic world.

The third and final section of the book focuses on “Culture and Education” and includes such articles as “*Organization of Turkic States from the perspective of Heydar Aliyev’s views*” by Goshgar Aliyev, “*Traditional knowledge of Turkic-speaking peoples*” by Gulnara Botokanova, “*Cooperation of Turkic-speaking states in the field of education (as exemplified by the activities of the Bishkek State University named after Kusein Karasaev)*” by Gulnara Sadyralieva, as well as “*Sacred numbers in Turkish and Kyrgyz languages*” written by Gulshan Sadyralieva, “*Issues of teaching and researching the Turkish language in Uzbekistan*” presented by Rokhila Ruzmanova, and “*New opportunities in the education system of Uzbekistan*” prepared by Tulkin Sultanov. All the above-mentioned topics are presented by the researchers as integral aspects of fostering cultural ties and mutual development among Turkic states, as well as contribution to preserving the unique identity of Turkic-speaking peoples.

The book is well-researched and meticulously documented, with an extensive bibliography that serves as a valuable resource for those wishing to delve deeper into the subject. However, some readers may find the book’s academic tone and density challenging at times, as it assumes a certain level of familiarity with international relations, political and economic theories.

In conclusion, “*Organization of Turkic States: Politics, Economics, Cultural Collaborations and 2040 Vision*” is an authoritative and insightful exploration of an organization that plays a pivotal role in the Turkic-speaking world, and its member states from political, economic, and cultural aspects. It is a must-read for scholars, policymakers, and anyone interested in gaining a comprehensive understanding of the political, economic, and cultural dynamics within this diverse and fascinating region. The collective of authors’ remarkable expertise shines through in this well-crafted book, making it an invaluable addition to the literature on the subject.