

# INDEPENDENCE AND STATE BUILDING PROCESS IN TURKIC REPUBLICS

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**Mehmet Akif Kirecci (ed.)**, *Independence and State Building Process in Turkic Republics*. Turkistan, Almaty, Ankara, Akhmet Yassawi University Press, pp. 793

The end of the Cold War marked not only a change in international political systems, but it was also an important historical moment for the Turkic World. Since then, Turkic Republics have experienced significant waves of reform and transformation, which have contributed to their actorness in the international arena. This book is important in the sense that it evaluates this historic process in quite an extensive manner.

This book contains articles in Turkish, Kazakh, Russian and English, and it is a very valuable piece of literature for academics, experts and students interested in the development process of the Turkic Republics. The contents of the book cover a wide range of research items from numerous authors and present many solution-oriented studies which contribute to the development of the Turkic World in a scientific environment.

This book covers many issues concerning history, culture, literature, language, education, and identity construction in the post-independence period of the Turkic Republics, including foreign policy, security, economy and foreign trade. Each of the six sections, which include 37 articles in total, provides information that illustrates the diversity of topics and viewpoints.

In the first chapter of the book, *Post-Independence State-Building and Bilateral Relations*, Alkan's article discusses the dimensions of political institutionalisation in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan in terms of public governance, democratisation and functioning of political life. The second article offers suggestions for problems encountered between the connected units and institutionalisation in the field of internal security in Turkey and Kyrgyzstan. The following work examines the formation and development of local governments in Kyrgyzstan along with the democratisation process and restructuring steps. Another article that theoretically deals with the nation-building process in the Turkic world analyses Azerbaijan's post-independence experiences. In her article written in Russian, Ismayilova, evaluates the historical background of Russian-Azerbaijani relations, providing a thorough analysis

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of bilateral trade and economic relations. Otyzbai, in her article on the use of e-government in Turkey and Kazakhstan notes that the standards and characteristics of Turkey's e-government system are based on the system used by the EU. Regarding Kazakhstan, the author gives detailed information about the electronic government system e-gov.kz and says that the number of internet users exceeds 70% nowadays. Another important study that has contributed to the success of the book's aim is the *Socio-Economic Similarity Analysis in the Post-Soviet Countries*. The fact that the article's authors use cluster analysis and a SPSS program to determine the similarity levels of post-Soviet countries increases the scientific quality of the article.

The second section, which covers post-independence developments in Azerbaijan, is entitled *Azerbaijan's Achievements during the Period of Independence*. Necefoglu evaluates the works published in international peer-reviewed journals in Azerbaijan according to their fields and periods. In the paper by Hussein, Azerbaijan's capacity and advantages in the field of agriculture are evaluated with the use of extensive statistical data at the international level. The next paper addresses the language issue, which is one of the most common problems in post-Soviet countries, based on the case of language policy in Azerbaijan. The last article of this chapter, which focuses on the Karabakh conflict, examines the impact of the long-standing problem between Azerbaijan and Armenia in the context of the security of the Caucasus region and the role of international actors, particularly the OSCE, in finding a solution.

The first two articles in the third section, entitled *Kazakhstan's Achievements in the Independence Period*, examine the ethnic history in Kazakhstan and the development of Kazakh national folklore during different periods in history. The articles review the role of literature in explaining the political process in the country and the problems of introducing the Latin script to the modern Kazakh language. In the last article, Yildirim deeply examines Olzhas Suleimenov's book "Az i Ya" and describes the role of intellectuals such as Dulatov, Zhumabayev and Bukeikhanov in the formation of a national consciousness and independence for the protection of Kazakh culture.

In the fourth section, entitled *History, Culture and Literature*, Kizil touches upon the role of a common understanding of history in influencing the formation of a national history and identity. He also emphasises the study's scientific capacity and reliability by presenting a wide range of additional information at the end of the article. The research by Heshimova, a member of Azerbaijan Academy of Sciences, examines Turkey's role in the integration of the Turkic Republics into the world system. In addition, it addresses the problems and important projects in the cultural relations of these countries. The next two articles evaluate the impact of literature on cultural identity and reflections of socialism in Turkic folk literature. Finally, Erol's study aims to emphasise the unity and cooperation between Turkey and Azerbaijan by drawing attention to certain linguistic similarities and poetry.

The fifth section, entitled *Language, Education, Identity and Media*, starts with an article on the role of the horse in Kazakh culture and national identity. The second paper examines the formation of Kazakh and Kazakhstani identities and considers the establishment of the Assembly of People of Kazakhstan and the influence of ethnic groups in Kazakhstan on

identity formation. The other article in the section, which explores native language schools in the Karabakh region of northern Azerbaijan in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, deals with the efforts of Azerbaijani intellectuals in the field of education and training. The next paper presents a comparative analysis of the compulsory education system, covering elementary school, middle school and high school in Turkey, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. Considering that there are several difficulties and obstacles in accessing data on Turkmenistan when conducting research on Turkic Republics, this study can be considered valuable in terms of detailed data on the primary education system in Turkmenistan. The article on *Psychological Distance between Turkey and the Central Asian Republics* discusses trade and economic relations between the countries from the perspective of psychological distance perception, which is a concept of international marketing. The ensuing articles present opinions on the establishment of educational programmes and standards, and they explore the difficulties in writing textbooks. Moreover, the studies review articles published in Turkish newspapers about republics that have declared their independence in the Turkestan region following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Finally, Yazici mentions the inclusion of national musical instruments, national clothing, historical games and historical characters on postage stamps. The article includes pictures of all the above-mentioned postage stamps. The author states that the characters related to Turkic culture and identity in the Turkic Republics are presented only as individuals raised in their own countries and as specific objects of historical importance. Instead, he concludes that objects involving a common Turkic identity should be included more.

In the sixth and final section of the book, *Foreign Policy, Security, Economy and Foreign Trade*, Tamcelik examines Turkish foreign policy strategies in the Caucasus region and explores the methods of process analysis and the understanding of cooperation from conflicting theories. The second article compiles the search for national security in Azerbaijan, the adoption of a security doctrine and its scope. Next, Agazade's work assesses the sectoral structure of the Azerbaijani economy, the importance of oil exports in the country and stresses that energy sources are a high percentage of the exports to Turkey. The subsequent article examines separate sections on international transport lines in the Caucasus and Central Asia, particularly freight, passenger and pipeline transport. The article, which discusses Azerbaijan's views on the status of the Caspian Sea, touches upon the geopolitical and geostrategic importance of the Caspian Sea. It also presents detailed information on the legal status and natural resources of the Caspian Sea, as well as the states' different approaches. TANAP is one of the projects that has an important place among the Turkic Republics in terms of natural gas transportation. Another article in this section emphasises the importance of the project and deals with the issue of energy security. The last article of the chapter, which focuses on the relationship between public expenditures and economic growth, states that it is one of the most researched topics in the field of economics. Using a cointegration and causality analysis, the article examines five Turkic Republics (Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan).

To conclude, the fact that the authors of the book are academics and representatives of authorised institutions from various universities in the Turkic Republics makes the book more valuable as we can find different

ideas and opinions about the state-building process in the Turkic Republics in single source. The symposium, which is regularly organised in honour of the anniversary of the independence of the Turkic Republics, is the source of inspiration for the publication of this book, and it shows that the scientific basis for the solution-oriented discussions of participating authorities and academics are the result of the development and formation processes in the Turkic world . The elimination of some technical errors in the book's forthcoming editions will raise the level of the study. Organising the articles according to a common format is also important for future publications. These modifications will enhance the usefulness of such studies as scientific sources of knowledge.