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Research Article

**CAN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ACCELERATE
THE TRANSITION TO A CIRCULAR ECONOMY?**

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ABSTRACT

The world's current model of economic development is unsustainable. It promotes the inappropriate use of limited natural resources, encourages consumption and waste, causing serious damage to the environment and generating large amounts of waste. The circular economy, an economic model in which resources are recycled and reused as much as possible by following a circular path rather than a linear path during consumption, has been gaining popularity around the world in recent years. Artificial intelligence (AI), one of the most important developments of our time, can also play an important role in the realisation of the circular economy. AI can complement and extend the skills of humans. It helps people learn faster, deal with complexities more effectively, and better understand the abundance of data. AI can facilitate new circular business models within the circular economy and help design sustainable and robust products. The aim of this study is to seek answers to questions such as how artificial intelligence contributes to the transition to a circular economy and whether artificial intelligence can accelerate the transition to a circular economy. While seeking answers to these questions, we argue that artificial intelligence has significant potential in the transition to a circular economy and will play an important role in this transition.

Keywords: Sustainability, Circular economy, Artificial intelligence.

INTRODUCTION

The concepts of digitalisation in the economy, Industry 4.0 and Society 5.0, Web 3.0, and the circular economy are concepts that have been developed in recent years and are closely related to each other. Technological developments are the main factor in the development of these concepts and allow them to be evaluated and considered together in terms of their mutual functioning and interaction.

Digital technologies, which entered our lives with Industry 4.0, continue to increase their usage areas as an important tool in terms of efficiency as well as making life easier. Technologies such as IoT (Internet of Things) and big data analytics, which are used especially in production processes, show how important artificial intelligence is for our future. These technologies, which have many important features from understanding consumer behaviour to efficient use of resources, from artificial intelligence algorithms that learn from mistakes and reduce the rate of making mistakes to cost reduction, have become an important part of our lives whether we like it or not.

Society 5.0 can be defined as a human-centered approach to society that balances the solution of social problems with economic development through a system that integrates cyberspace and physical space. In the context of Society 5.0, big data analysis, artificial intelligence applications, cyber security, the internet of things, robotic solutions, web 3.0, virtual reality and augmented reality bring radical changes in economic and social life.

The circular economy aims to model a system for economic life similar to the functioning of the biological system in nature. It is based on the intelligent design of materials, products, and systems in nature. Concepts such as lifespan and economic life have been replaced by concepts of repair, improvement, waste prevention, and reproduction. Therefore, the concept of recycling needs to be considered from the outset in the design, production, and use of business models, raw materials, intermediate goods, techniques, tools, and products. Environmental sustainability is a key concept in the circular economy. The European Union monitors circular economy performance in three areas: sustainable resource management (reducing resource demand, increasing resource security, reducing pressure on the domestic and international environment); societal behaviour (citizens' awareness and engagement in the circular economy); and business operation (eco-innovation activities in line with circular economy principles).

Industry 4.0, the circular economy, Society 5.0, and digital transformation are overlapping concepts. The synergy that emerges from the interaction of these concepts enables the development of smart systems and rapid solutions in all dimensions of social life. Technological development is today's great equaliser. The fact that the development of countries depends on the quality of human resources rather than natural resources, geographical location, and historical background has never been more evident in human history.

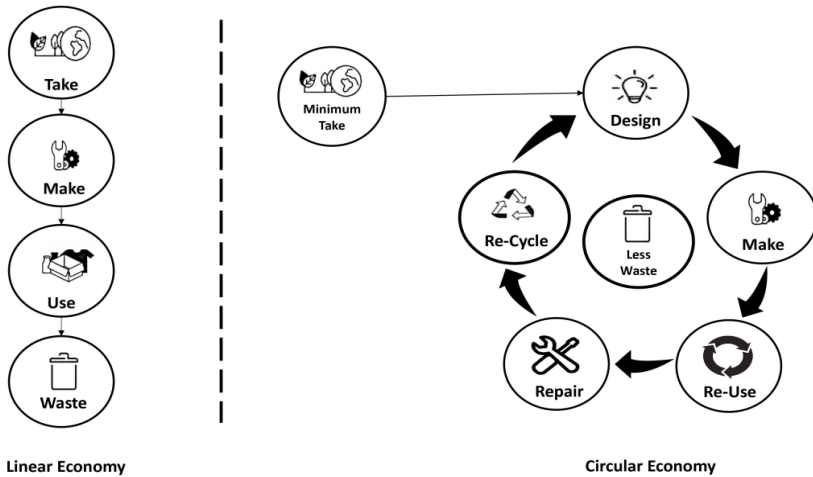
The concept of the circular economy, where resources are kept in use for as long as possible and waste is minimised, is gaining more and more attention in the business world. Have you ever thought about how artificial intelligence contributes to the transition to a circular economy? How can artificial intelligence be used in applications to prevent waste generation, which is among the basic principles of the circular economy, to ensure maximum value production by keeping resources in the cycle and to increase biodiversity? This paper seeks answers to these questions. Accordingly, this paper first outlines the general framework of the concepts of the circular economy and artificial intelligence. Then, it explains how AI contributes to the circular economy and how it can accelerate the circular economy process. With the help of technology, especially artificial intelligence, businesses and other institutions can optimise resource use, reduce waste and emissions, and increase the efficiency of resource recovery and recycling processes.

CIRCULAR ECONOMY

In order to better understand the concept of the circular economy, it would be useful to first examine the non-circular, in other words, linear economy model. In the linear economy model, new (unprocessed) raw materials are procured to obtain any product, transformed into a product through various processes, the product is offered to the consumer, and waste is generated after consumption (Onder, 2018). Legal regulations such as restrictions on carbon emissions or bans on plastic products, interruptions in access to various raw material sources, and the increasing social and environmental sensitivity of consumers (OECD, 2019) pose significant risks for the business world in maintaining the linear production and consumption model described above. For example, a business that manufactures single-use plastic products will not be able to sustain its business if the government imposes a restriction on the sale of these products.

There are various definitions of the circular economy concept by different researchers and institutions. According to Jurgilevich et al. (2016), the circular economy is the reuse, repair, renovation, and recovery of existing materials and products, and the utilisation of materials that were previously seen as waste as a resource. According to a broader definition by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2020), the circular economy aims to: i) increase the value of materials and products circulating in the economy; ii) reduce the consumption of virgin materials, harmful substances, and materials that generate significant waste, such as plastics, food, electrical and electronic equipment; iii) prevent waste generation; and iv) reduce harmful components in waste and products. The Ellen MacArthur Foundation defines the circular economy as “a restorative model that aims to maintain the availability and preserve the value of products, components and materials” (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2015). The EU Action Plan for the circular economy describes a transition “where the value of products, materials and resources in the economy is preserved for as long as possible and waste generation is minimised” (EC, 2015).

Figure 1. *Linear Economy and Circular Economy*



Source: Pathan et al., 2023

Table 1. *The Differences Between the Linear and Circular Economy*

Linear Economy	Circular Economy
The linear supply model is Buy-Build-At	The circular model is Reduce-Reuse-Recycle
The focus is to produce as much as possible quickly and at low cost	The focus is on reducing waste and maximizing the value of resources at every stage of production
Suppliers are selected based on the lowest cost and shortest lead time	Suppliers are selected based on sustainability criteria such as low waste generation, use of recycled materials and reduced carbon emissions
Products are usually disposable	Products are designed for long-term use, durability, recyclability, repairability
Transportation is designed for speed and low cost with no regard for the environment	Transportation is designed for sustainability and efficiency, with a focus on reducing carbon emissions and waste.
Consumers are responsible for waste management companies	Products and materials are repaired, reused or recycled
There is very limited communication between stakeholders at each stage in the supply chain	There are feedback loops along the supply chain with collaboration and data sharing between producers, consumers and suppliers
Waste is generated at every stage of the supply chain	Waste is minimized at every stage of the supply chain as the focus is on reuse and recycling of materials

Source: Pathan et al., 2023

The linear economic model, which dates back to the Industrial Revolution of 1760-1820, is largely framed around “consumption”, where the product is “consumed” in use and then discarded; it is therefore analyzed within the framework of a “one-way production model” (Esposito et al., 2017). However, the circular economy represents a new paradigm in which waste is not completely eliminated through consumption, but rather recycled back into the production process. The circular economy represents a fundamental alternative to the currently dominant linear economic model.

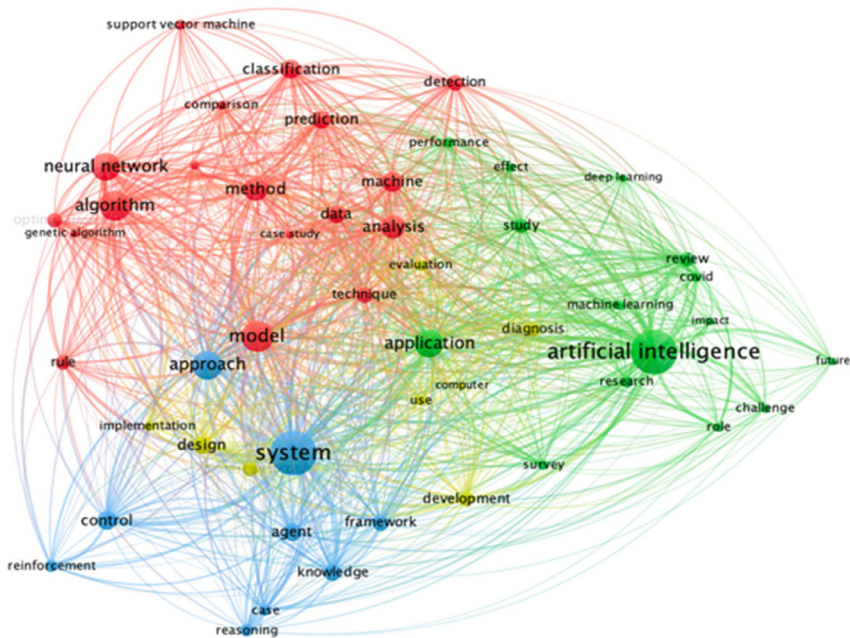
The circular economy model is defined as a model with a holistic process that enables the reuse of products and raw materials, where waste is recovered, energy and all resources are used efficiently, and clean production is carried out in a way that produces almost no waste. It is an important tool for sustainability. Based on the “cradle-to-cradle” approach, which involves an industry that operates without waste and without harming the environment, biomimetics, and industrial ecology, where the structure and function of natural systems inform industrial processes, the circular economy aims to maximise the added value of products and services in the economic value chain, minimise residual waste, and keep resources in the economy longer (Murray et al., 2017).

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Artificial intelligence is a technology that allows machines and computers to imitate the human brain, intelligence, and problem-solving abilities. AI, on its own or through sensors, geolocation, etc., can perform tasks that require human intelligence or intervention with other technologies. GPS guidance, digital assistants, and generative AI tools (like OpenAI’s ChatGPT) are just a few examples of AI in our daily lives. Artificial intelligence is a branch of computer science that includes machine learning and deep learning (IBM, 2024). Artificial intelligence, considered a basic skill for the future, is used almost everywhere and in every field. During the 2018-2025 period, the AI market is predicted to reach 190 billion dollars by 2025, with a compound annual growth rate of over 36% (Jiang et al., 2022).

Artificial Intelligence appears as an interdisciplinary branch of science with var-

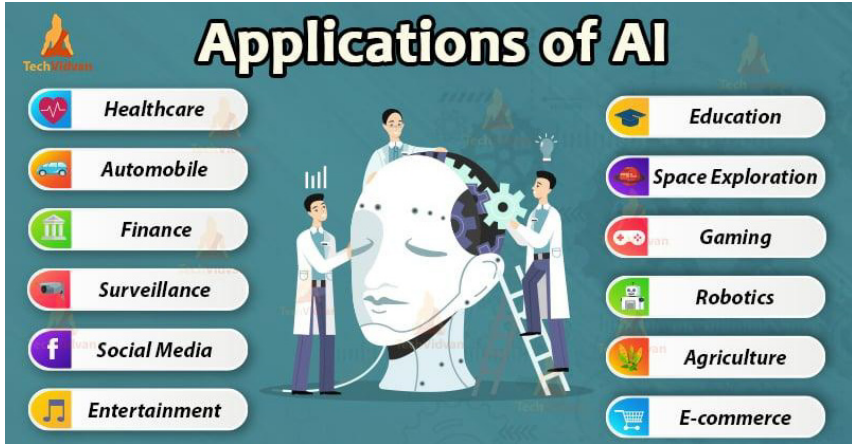
Figure 2. *Semantic Network of Artificial Intelligence*



Source: Jiang et al., 2022

ious approaches. In particular, advances in machine learning and deep learning are creating a paradigm shift in almost every sector of the industry's technological development and applying artificial intelligence to business environments. Artificial intelligence is reducing the time spent on repetitive tasks, increasing employee productivity and improving the overall customer experience (Valavanidis, 2023).

Figure 3. *Applications of AI*



Source: Valavanidis, 2023

Today, there are many real-world applications for artificial intelligence systems. Among the most common of these applications are speech recognition, customer service, computer vision, supply chain and weather forecasting.

Automatic speech recognition (ASR) uses NLP to convert human speech into a written format. Numerous mobile devices incorporate speech recognition into their systems to provide greater accessibility for making voice calls (e.g., Siri) or messaging in English or many other commonly used languages. In customer service, online virtual agents and chatbots are replacing human agents throughout the customer journey. They answer frequently asked questions (FAQs) on topics such as shipping or provide personalised advice and recommend sizes for users. An example is Autodesk Inc. using IBM Watsonx Assistant to speed up customer response times by 99% (IBM, 2024).

Artificial intelligence technology for computer vision enables computers and systems to extract meaningful information from digital images, videos, and other visual inputs and take action based on those inputs. Computer vision powered by convolutional neural networks has applications such as photo tagging in social media, radiological imaging in healthcare, and driverless cars in the automotive industry. For example, ProMare uses IBM Maximo to determine a new route for ocean research (Jiang et al., 2022). Adaptive robots act on Internet of Things (IoT) device information and structured and unstructured data to make autonomous decisions. NLP tools can understand human speech and react to

what is said. No longer just predictive, but hierarchical, search and pattern recognition algorithms analyze real-time data, helping supply chains react to machine-generated, augmented intelligence while providing instant visibility and transparency. For example, Hendrickson uses IBM Sterling to support real-time transactions. In weather forecasting, the weather models that broadcasters rely on to make accurate forecasts consist of complex algorithms run on supercomputers. Machine learning techniques improve these models, making them more applicable and accurate. We can see how Emotion uses IBM Cloud to enable weather-sensitive organizations to make more proactive and data-driven decisions (Valavanidis, 2023).

THE ROLE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY

AI's ability to help solve problems has increased dramatically since the 1950s due to increases in the availability of data and advances in processing power. Over the years, AI applications have evolved. It is now seen as a promising technology for many industries and businesses. Attracting \$26 billion in investment in 2016, AI applications are projected to contribute \$13 trillion to the global economy by 2030 (Bughin et al., 2018).

The concept of the circular economy is an important tool for reducing waste and promoting sustainable practices. In order to achieve a circular economy, it is necessary to analyse and deeply understand a multi-actor structure involving many complex processes. In addition, a successful circular economy process requires significant changes in production and consumption systems. This change includes data collection and sharing, investment in innovation, and the development of collaborative business partnerships. At this point, digital technologies are gaining prominence and attracting academic attention and empirical research. Recent studies have highlighted the growing importance of digitalisation in addressing the challenges of transitioning to a circular economy. The combination of digital tools such as artificial intelligence, blockchain, and IoT offers opportunities for the transparent realisation of the entire process of a product (Stankovic et al., 2017).

Artificial intelligence plays an important role in improving energy efficiency, supporting strategies used during the circular manufacturing process, and extending the life of products by encouraging the maximisation of resource use. Artificial intelligence helps decision-making for products and processes. It accelerates circular economy values through real-time tracking and monitoring of product residual value. In addition, artificial intelligence can help discover the still poorly understood benefits of a circular economy by enabling the creation of visual tools about data flows related to products, processes, and resources. These contributions to the circular economy can be explained by circular evolution, the development of circular infrastructure, and proactive management and maintenance approaches. In circular evolution, artificial intelligence enables a more comprehensive consideration of components and materials from a product and module-centric focus. This transformation is realised by machines through iterative learning processes. In the development of circular infrastructure, artifi-

cial intelligence has an important role in optimising the infrastructure required for the efficient circulation and reuse of materials. In proactive management and maintenance, artificial intelligence empowers businesses to adopt proactive approaches to the management of circular models, leading to increased efficiency and sustainability (Zota et al., 2023).

To explore what role AI can play in the transition to a circular economy, it is necessary to understand how AI can be used to help design, operate and optimize a circular society.

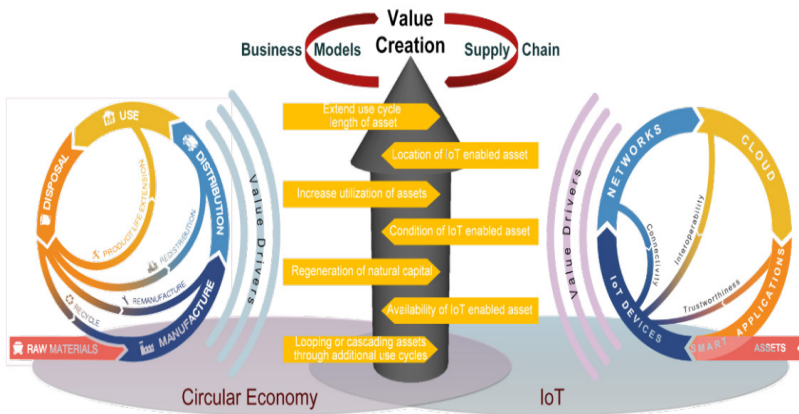
Design of circular products, materials and components

Design is essential for the circular economy to always keep products, components, and materials at their highest utility and value by distinguishing between technical and biological cycles. Through design, we can strengthen the cycles of reuse, repair, refurbishment, and recycling of technical materials and the cascading and cyclical processes of biological nutrients. AI's machine learning-assisted design process enables rapid prototyping and subsequent testing. This can accelerate the development of new products and materials for the circular economy. This is achieved in two ways.

First, in the circular economy, the parameters of a product are designed and developed through the 9Rs. However, what is important in the design process here is to ensure the longevity of products and to increase the recycling potential by separating components (e.g., cardboard) from those that are part of the technical cycle (e.g., plastic) (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2019). Furthermore, through AI, new materials can be designed to substitute resources that contain harmful chemicals. This can facilitate the recycling of products at the end of their life cycle and increase their durability. The “Accelerated Metallurgy” project, prepared by the European Space Agency using artificial intelligence, is the best example of this. With this project, new metal alloy combinations were developed by taking into account circular economy principles such as reuse, extended lifetime, non-toxicity, and minimising waste. Through artificial intelligence, not only have new materials been produced, but also faster than ever before (Gailhofer et al., 2021).

Another company accelerating the materials design process by using artificial intelligence in materials development is Citrine Platform. Citrine Platform works with materials data to generate algorithms to use AI to develop new materials and chemistries for high-performance applications. For example, to find a 3D printable aluminum alloy for aerospace grade, it used its AI platform to narrow down the possible candidates for the alloy from 10 million to 100 (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2019).

Figure 4. *The CE-IoT Ecosystem*



Source: Askoxylakis, 2018

Second, AI can be used in monitoring products and data-driven decision-making for the maintenance of products in the circular economy. For example, virtual models developed by AI that accurately reflect physical objects can help improve products in the circular economy. Since these systems use IoT sensors to collect data on functionality, they can help ensure longevity by understanding product performance in real-time (Askoxylakis, 2018). In short, AI monitors a product throughout its lifecycle, analyses the data collected, improves efficiency, and assesses whether the returned product can be reused or recycled (Blunck et al., 2019). An example of this is Apple. Since 2019, Apple has been enabling more efficient battery charging with machine learning for iPhone users. In this way, it claims that it can extend the life of the smartphone.

Operate Circular business models

Reverse logistics and remanufacturing efforts in circular business models require solving various problems, such as fluctuating demand and supply of used products and components, and returned components. For example, for a company to choose the next use cycle for each returned product, it needs to consider a combination of factors related to the condition of the product and the current brand status. By combining real-time and historical data from products and users, AI can help improve product circulation and asset utilisation through pricing and demand forecasting, preventive maintenance, and intelligent inventory management. With the capacity to collect large amounts of product and customer data and a powerful AI-based analytics model that can make sense of this data, a decision-making model can be implemented that can increase the competitiveness of circular business models.

AI can boost trade for the circular economy. AI can contribute to the operation of circular business models in the following areas.

First, developing profitable and successful circular business models requires organising business functions such as pricing, marketing, sales and after-sales services, and logistics according to circular economy principles (Ellen MacAr-

thur Foundation, 2019). Artificial intelligence can be used to develop innovative approaches to the pricing system of circular business models. For example, suppose second-hand goods or recycled products are marketed. Considering that there are many factors that determine the price of a product, it is not possible to have standardised pricing for these products. Here, dynamic pricing algorithms can be created with artificial intelligence applications. These algorithms can help determine the best price by analysing variables such as the age of the product, market conditions, and wear and tear. Shopping sites such as eBay offer price suggestions to second-hand sellers based on the prices of similar products (Gailhofer et al., 2021).

Founded in Seattle in 2014, Stuffstr collects used clothing and household items and sells them in secondary markets in exchange for coupons that consumers can spend. This increases the reuse of products. Stuffstr uses artificial intelligence algorithms to price products both when buying them from consumers and when reselling them on secondary markets (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2019).

Second, in a functioning circular economy, AI can support recycling infrastructure, making it easier for firms working in the circular economy. In the stages of reusing, repairing, and recycling products, waste can be identified and separated with the image recognition processes of artificial intelligence, minimising resource loss. The recent partnership between Alibaba and Unilever is an example of this. In this joint project, different types of plastic are separated from each other with an AI-supported sorting machine (Moore, 2021). Additionally, Apple's Daisy robot can separate the materials of 200 iPhone devices per hour. In this way, these materials are recycled and brought to the secondary product market (Apple Recycling Program, 2018). The aim of such separations is to minimise the waste of a product at the end of its life cycle and provide materials for new circular products.

In existing business models, AI technology has significant potential to create circular value. With AI, inventory levels can be reduced without compromising the ability to meet customer demand. This can lead to a reduction in waste caused by unsold products, while at the same time reducing costs (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2019).

Finally, artificial intelligence can be used to ensure that the resources used in circular firms are also sustainable. Since processing and storing data is energy-intensive, AI's ability to optimize cooling and energy use can be leveraged to help these firms meet the environmental goals of the circular economy (Andrae and Edler, 2015). For example, in 2016, DeepMind developed an artificial intelligence system that adjusts the cooling systems of Google data centers according to the weather. With this system, there was a 40% reduction in energy bills (Jones, 2018).

CONCLUSION

The global economy still operates in a linear way and is characterised by the extraction, production, consumption, and disposal of materials. This is a problem

given that we live on a planet with limited resources. However, the transition to a circular economy, where businesses recover or recycle the resources they use in their value chains, is still difficult, despite the opportunity to create trillions of dollars of value. Barriers include the low residual value of used products, the inability to collect materials, the prohibitive costs of sorting and processing materials, and the lack of traceability of recycled products and materials. Entrepreneurs and business leaders can accelerate the circular economy by using digital tools and artificial intelligence to remove these barriers and create entirely new markets and business models.

As artificial intelligence becomes more known and more established in society, it will not only affect businesses that adopt it, but will also have economic and social impacts on consumers. Currently, artificial intelligence is used by financial companies around the world to provide better service to customers and detect fraudulent activities; streamlining supply chains in factories by manufacturers; ensuring accurate detection of diseases in the healthcare system; and by authorities in cities to monitor and reduce urban problems such as traffic, crime, and environmental pollution.

Combining the power of artificial intelligence with the vision of a circular economy offers great opportunities to transform and revitalise our global economic system, which has been the subject of hundreds of economics books on its fragility, from linear to circular. Moreover, there is much more to be discovered when we consider the unabated developments in technological advancements and digitalisation. The three main ways to achieve a more circular economy, especially with AI, are: increased product utilisation, material efficiency, and the use of recycled materials.

Artificial intelligence plays an important role in advancing the circular economy by creating many advantages with the help of its algorithms. Providing real-time data analysis in supply chain management, performing process automation for reverse logistics, reducing carbon footprint and costs for sustainable development, separating materials in recycling activities, and optimising waste management are among the advantages of artificial intelligence in accelerating the transition to a circular economy. Artificial intelligence's adoption of recycling processes as well as the reuse and remanufacturing of products supports the transition to a circular economy.

Building a broader awareness and understanding of how AI can be used to support a circular economy, promoting practices that encompass and go beyond circular design spaces, making circular business models work, and optimizing circular infrastructure requires both collaboration between relevant stakeholders and a degree of oversight. This can ensure that data can be shared openly and securely, and that AI is developed and distributed in an inclusive and equitable way for all.

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Research Article

**TATARNESS REIMAGINED:
LANGUAGE, MEMORY, AND IDENTITY
IN POST-CIVIL WAR TAJIKISTAN**

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the transformation of ethnic identity among the Tatar community in Tajikistan in the wake of the Tajik Civil War. Drawing on in-depth interviews, it analyses how the war and subsequent dispersion and migration have reconfigured Tatar ethnic ties and fostered the emergence of a hybrid identity. The findings reveal a complex process of identity formation, where the loss of homeland and language intertwines with the development of a Tajikistani national identity and the experience of differentiation through labour migration. The paper argues that the Tatar community's self-definition as 'Tatar of Tajikistan' epitomises the resilience of people navigating multiple contexts and transcending conventional categories of ethnicity and migration. It offers insights into the dynamics of identity politics amidst post-socialist transition and war.

Keywords: Ethnic identity, Tajik Civil War, Tatar diaspora, Language shift, Labour migration.

INTRODUCTION

Increased international migration is one of the most pressing issues facing the contemporary world. As of mid-2022, there were approximately 281.7 million migrants worldwide, and the number continues to grow steadily each year (International Organization for Migration, 2022). Among them, refugees who have been forced to flee their homelands due to war or conflict often find themselves in challenging circumstances. By the end of 2022, the global refugee population reached 89.4 million, far surpassing the levels seen in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2023).

In response to this situation, recent years have seen growing academic interest in the experiences of refugees. There has been a shift towards viewing refugees as complex subjects with multifaceted backgrounds, moving beyond the traditional notion of refugees as mere objects of protection (Gatrell, 2015; Sigona, 2014). Specifically, research is being conducted to re-examine the label of ‘refugee’ and to strive for a more nuanced understanding based on individual experiences.

Building upon these concerns, this paper attempts to reframe the experiences of refugees over a prolonged period. Specifically, focusing on the Tatar people living in Tajikistan, we examine their experiences of becoming refugees due to the civil war and subsequent migration to the ‘historical homeland’ based on the narratives of those involved.

The history of large-scale Tatar migration to Central Asia can be traced back to the Russian Empire’s conquest of the region in the late 19th century. At that time, Tatars from the Volga-Ural region, with diverse backgrounds as merchants, artisans, and officials, moved to Central Asia in search of new markets (Komatsu, 2005). They expanded their presence into the territories of present-day Tajikistan and Afghanistan, working primarily as traders and interpreters (Parviz, 2015). However, the full-scale settlement of Tatars in the present-day territory of Tajikistan began only in the 1930s. Numerous Tatars migrated to Central Asia to escape agricultural collectivisation. Moreover, some of them relocated to the Tajik Soviet Socialist Republic pursuing a more favourable climate and urban lifestyle, enabled by the liberalisation of internal migration policies during the Khrushchev era in the 1950s (Abdullaev, 2018). As a result, Tatars became an integral part of Tajikistan’s multiethnic society.

According to the 2010 census, the Tatar population in Tajikistan was approximately 6,000, accounting for about 0.1% of the country’s total population (Statistical Agency under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, 2010). Although a relatively small minority group, Tatars have played a significant role in Tajikistan’s social, economic, and cultural life.

However, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Tajikistan plunged into severe political and social turmoil. The Tajik Civil War erupted between 1992 and 1997, resulting from intensified regional conflicts, power struggles, and a quagmire of war (Akiner, 2001; Heathershaw, 2009). This civil war severely damaged the country’s political system, resulting in an estimated 100,000 deaths and 1.2 million internally displaced persons (Foroughi, 2002). The Tatar community was one of the many ethnic groups caught up in this devastation. Many Tatars

were forced to become refugees and flee to neighbouring countries. While some chose to remain or return, the economic hardships in the post-war period compelled them to seek employment as migrant workers in the ‘historical homeland’ of the Republic of Tatarstan in Russia (Sakurama, 2021).

This paper aims to examine these experiences of war and migration from the perspective of the transformation of Tatar ethnic identity. Previous studies on immigrants and refugees have often explained the adaptation process of immigrants in terms of a dichotomous framework of assimilation or separation (Alba and Nee, 2003; Portes and Zhou, 1993). However, the experiences of Tatars in Tajikistan paint a complex picture that such a binary approach fails to fully encapsulate. This paper aims to elucidate how the Tajik Civil War severed the ethnic ties of the Tatar community and how new identities were generated in becoming refugees and migrating through a qualitative analysis of narratives obtained through interviews.

Furthermore, this paper also focuses on the narratives surrounding the inheritance of the mother tongue. Language is an essential element that represents ethnic identity (Fishman, 1991) and is an indispensable subject of analysis for understanding the experiences of refugees. Examining the dynamic process of conflict and reinterpretation surrounding the inheritance of the Tatar language amid the drastic changes in the linguistic environment caused by the Tajik Civil War sheds light on the manifestation of refugee agency through the lens of language. Thus, this paper also attempts to rethink the nature of identity among immigrants and refugees in an era of accelerating human mobility.

RESEARCH DATA AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Research data

The data analysed in this paper were initially collected to examine the linguistic situation of Tatars living in Tajikistan. The author’s doctoral dissertation (Sakurama, 2021) primarily considered the data within that context. However, during the survey, narratives related to the Tajik Civil War were collected beyond initial expectations, and the doctoral dissertation did not sufficiently analyse them. Therefore, this paper revisits the narratives surrounding the Tajik Civil War and seeks to deepen the examination of its impact on the Tatar community in Tajikistan.

Research participants and methods

The survey was conducted between October 2018 and August 2019. From October to December 2018, a preliminary survey was conducted with the cooperation of Tatar-Bashkir Cultural Centre. Subsequently, from December 2018 to July 2019, semi-structured interviews were conducted using questionnaires. The interviews were conducted online (mainly via Viber and Telegram), and the snowball sampling method was used, where each research participant introduced the next participant. The languages used were Russian, Tajik, Tatar, Uzbek, or a combination thereof, and the author switched languages to match the participants’ speech. Finally, supplementary research was conducted from July to August 2019 to collect missing data.

Attributes of research participants

The research involved 76 participants (37 males and 39 females), with an average of 3-4 hours of interview data obtained per person. The total duration of the interviews amounted to 299 hours and 44 minutes. While all interviews followed a semi-structured format, many unfolded non-structurally, centring on the participants' life histories. Most of the data analysed in this paper is derived from these non-structurally developed life histories. The participants' ages spanned a wide range from teens to 80s, and they held various occupations. All participants had Tatar ethnicity (*natsional'nost'*) on their documents, but their self-perceptions varied, such as 'Tajikistani' or 'Tatar of Tajikistan.'

Research ethics and data management

In this paper, only data from research participants who consented to its use for purposes other than the initially intended doctoral dissertation were included in the analysis. This paper's possible analysis subjects are the 14 individuals who mentioned much about the war. We received explicit consent from 13 individuals to use their narratives in this paper, excluding one who is deceased.

To protect the privacy of research participants, this paper does not disclose any information that could identify individuals. When quoting narratives, pseudonyms and identification symbols (DU01-DU76) are used to identify each research participant. Furthermore, strict security measures are taken to manage audio data, transcripts, and personal information. Specifically, the data is encrypted and stored on a password-protected hard disk, and access is limited to the author. In addition, field notes containing personal information are all stored and locked in a safe.

Moreover, in writing this paper, additional feedback was obtained from the research participants by reporting and consulting with them on the data to be used per their requests. Recounting experiences from the Tajik Civil War and revisiting those memories may trigger traumatic recollections. In consideration of the potential mental and physical strain on the participants, they were informed of their right to withdraw consent for data use at any point, even after providing responses, should they experience discomfort or fatigue. None of the research data used in this paper was withdrawn.

Characteristics of the research data

The narratives obtained in this research exhibited the following three notable characteristics:

1. As mentioned earlier, experiences of the Tajik Civil War were recounted with a frequency and depth beyond initial expectations. Many participants shared vivid memories of family members torn apart by the war and the sense of loss, and these narratives constituted a significant portion of the research data.
2. Narratives firmly asserting a Tajikistani identity were prominent. The participants widely shared the perception that the collective narrative of

rebuilding Tajikistan intersects with their personal narratives of rebuilding their own lives.

3. The experience of working in Tatarstan served as an impetus for reconsidering ethnic identity. By articulating their differences from Kazan Tatars, the participants emphasised the distinctiveness of Tajikistan's Tatars and tended to redefine their identity.

These characteristics suggest that the historical experience of the Tajik Civil War triggered a dynamic negotiation process between the ethnic identity of Tatars and the national identity of Tajikistan. The narratives obtained in this research vividly depict this multilayered process of identity formation. Therefore, this paper extracts the narratives of 13 participants who provided rich accounts of their memories of the Tajik Civil War and migration and carefully attempts to interpret the meaning of their experiences.

Analysis method of the research data

The narrative data obtained through interviews are qualitatively coded. Particular attention is given to narratives about the war, and inductive analysis is conducted following the procedures of the grounded theory approach (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

First, verbatim transcripts of the interview data are prepared, and narratives related to the Tajik Civil War are extracted. Second, the extracted narratives are closely examined, and keywords and contexts indicative of the Tajik Civil War's impact on Tatar society are meticulously coded. The coding results are compared and organised to identify common themes and concepts. Fourthly, the relationships between the identified themes and concepts are examined, and the process of transformation brought about by the Tajik Civil War on the ethnic identity of Tatars is described as a storyline.

Through these procedures, three analytical concepts were derived: (1) dispersion of relatives due to the Tajik Civil War, (2) formation of a 'Tajikistani' identity, and (3) experience of being 'differentiated' in the destination of labour migration. These concepts shed light on the process of disruption and reconfiguration of the ethnic ties of Tatars triggered by the Tajik Civil War.

Furthermore, narratives surrounding the inheritance of the Tatar language are also examined from three perspectives: (1) memories of Tatar language use before the Tajik Civil War, (2) changes in the linguistic environment caused by the Tajik Civil War, and (3) the pursuit of 'Tatariness.' The dynamic relationship between language and identity is also considered.

As a theoretical foundation for the analysis, constructivist approaches to identity research (Hall, 1996), insights from diaspora studies (Safran, 1991; Vertovec and Cohen, 1999), and discussions on language and identity (Fishman, 1991) are referenced. The concepts derived from the data are connected with existing theoretical insights.

In this way, this paper aims to elucidate the influence of macro-level social changes on the subjective identity formation of minorities from a bottom-up perspective at the micro-level of interactions by interpreting the world of meanings entrusted to the narratives of Tatars surrounding the Tajik Civil War. The methodological focus of this paper lies in approaching the complex aspects of minority identity politics through a meticulous analysis of narratives rooted in individual experiences.

TRANSFORMATION OF ETHNIC TIES DUE TO THE TAJIK CIVIL WAR

How did the Tajikistan civil war transform the ethnic ties of the Tatar community? Let us trace the process of the destabilisation and reconfiguration of Tatar ethnic identity from three perspectives: (1) the dispersion of relatives due to the Tajik Civil War, (2) the formation of a ‘Tajikistani’ identity, and (3) the experience of being ‘differentiated’ in the destination of labour migration.

Dispersion of relatives due to the Tajik Civil War

The interview data indicates that many Tatar families were dispersed during the war. Alsu (born in 1992, female, healthcare worker / DU20, interviewed on 8 January 2019) describes the impact of the Tajik Civil War as follows:

‘My grandparents and relatives knew the Tatar language well, but my grandparents passed away early, and my relatives fled abroad during the war, so my family had no opportunity to be exposed to the Tatar language. The war scattered our relatives, but if it were not for the war, I might have known at least a little bit of the Tatar language and culture by now.’

Similar narratives were heard from Ilyas (born in 1982, male, technician / DU28, interviewed on 23 May 2019) and Ilmira (born in 1982, female, occupation not disclosed / DU29, interviewed on 22 June 2019). Ilyas fled to Russia during the war and continued to work there for a long time. He reflects, *‘there were no Tatars around me, so I grew up without developing a sense of being Tatar.’* Ilmira also says, *‘some of my relatives might have spoken Tatar, but many of them were scattered to Russia and Europe during the war.’*

These narratives indicate that the Tajik Civil War was experienced as an event that physically severed the ethnic ties of the Tatar community. The change in the linguistic environment is a prime example. Before the Tajik Civil War, the Tatar language was used daily within and outside the home, serving as a foundation for ethnic identity. However, this foundation was lost due to the dispersion. Shamil’s (born in 1972, male, physician / DU40, interviewed on 17 April 2019) words vividly illustrate the fragmentation of the community:

‘The war destroyed the peaceful coexisting society. Many ethnic groups left Tajikistan, and now only a small number of each minority group remains. In the impoverished and devastated society after the war, there was no room to preserve the languages and cultures of ethnic groups.’

However, these narratives also reveal a counterfactual way of thinking. As Alsu says, *'if it were not for the war, I might have known at least a little bit of the Tatar language and culture by now.'* These words not only highlight the sense of loss caused by the Tajik Civil War and suggest a desire for the continuity of Tatarness.

At this point, it is pertinent to consider the debates surrounding diaspora. Safran identified the severance from the 'homeland' and the impossibility of 'return' as defining characteristics of diaspora (Safran, 1991). However, the narratives of Tatars in Tajikistan suggest that the 'homeland' or 'home' torn apart by the Tajik Civil War cannot be easily specified. The fact that they express nostalgia not for Tatarstan but for Tatarness suggests that it is a 'homeland' that has been lost yet remains yearned for.

The younger generation of research participants also voiced the desire for a 're-
vival' of the Tatar language and culture. Kamila (born in 2001, female, student /
DU03, interviewed on 27 May 2019) prefaces by saying:

'On paper, I am Tatar, so when asked about my ethnicity, I say I am Tatar, but I do not have a strong sense of being Tatar. Unfortunately, I never had the opportunity to learn the Tatar language but that might not be all there is to it. After the war, my parents deliberately returned to Dushanbe and devoted themselves to rebuilding this land. I am very proud of that. Moreover, I want to live here forever.'

Here, Kamila expresses a sense of belonging to Tajikistan rather than Tatarstan. However, the words *'on paper, I am Tatar'* suggest that Tatarness has not been wholly lost. For her, being Tatar is inseparable from the experience of her parents, which is a source of pride.

In this way, the dispersion of relatives due to the Tajik Civil War severely damaged the ethnic ties of the Tatar community. However, it also served as an impetus for rediscovering Tatarness. The Tatarness that became yearned for through its loss intertwines with the sense of belonging to Tajikistan, forming the seeds of a new ethnic identity.

Formation of a 'Tajikistani' Identity

The reconstruction of Tajikistani society after the war significantly impacted the ethnic identity of Tatars. In particular, the formation of a national identity as 'Tajikistani' is a characteristic commonly found in the narratives of many participants.

Dilyara (born in 1992, female, graduate student / DU19, interviewed on 3 March 2019) states, *'on paper, I am Tatar, but I do not think of myself as ethnically Tatar, Russian or Tajik. I do, however, feel Tajikistani.'* When asked about the reason, she explained as follows: *'Why? Because I was born amidst the war and raised amidst the reconstruction... Especially as I witnessed the country developing, that feeling grew stronger.'* This narrative articulates a 'Tajikistani' identity that transcends ethnic categories, underpinned by a sense of belonging as a member of the nation-state, which extends beyond ethnic boundaries.

A similar narrative was heard from Gulya (born in 1990, female, healthcare worker / DU26, interviewed on 1 February 2019). Gulya, whose 'parents both spent their youth in Dushanbe and had an attachment to it,' says:

'After the war ended, my family moved to Dushanbe. We deliberately returned to this place, and our family history is intertwined with the reconstruction of this city. We worked hard to learn the Tajik language. That is why my family and I have a strong sense of being Tajikistani, even though our ethnicity is Tatar.'

Here, too, the sense of belonging to Tajikistan takes precedence over the ethnic identity of Tatar. The narrative that intertwines *'the reconstruction of this city'* with *'the history of our family'* indicates that the story of national rebuilding is deeply rooted in personal experiences.

This formation of a 'Tajikistani' identity is compatible with the constructivist understanding of identity discussed earlier. As Hall suggested, identity is not a fixed and singular entity but a multilayered one constantly generated through discursive practices (Hall, 1996). The identity of Tatars in Tajikistan has also been dynamically reconstructed through experiences such as the Tajik Civil War, national rebuilding, and labour migration. This process compelled them to fundamentally question their sense of belonging, from the loss of identities such as 'Soviet citizens' to the destabilisation of ethnic categories accompanying nation-state formation.

The emergence of the new identity category of 'Tatars of Tajikistan' is particularly suggestive. It expresses a hybrid identity rooted in place, distinct from Kazan Tatars and Tajiks. This points to the limitations of reducing the nature of identity to given ethnic categories and illuminates how a complex sense of belonging is generated at the intersection of multiple contexts.

Experience of being 'Differentiated' in the destination of labour migration

The experience of labour migration is another aspect that cannot be overlooked when considering the identity of Tatars in post-civil war Tajikistan. Driven by economic hardship, many Tatars went to Russia for work, particularly to the 'historical homeland' of the Republic of Tatarstan. This experience has had a significant impact on the reconfiguration of ethnic identity. Rishat (born in 1991, male, technician / DU21, interviewed on 21 May 2019) describes his experience of working in Tatarstan as follows:

'When I went to Kazan for work, I also worked with local Tatars. They mix Tatar words into their Russian, while I mix Tajik words into my Russian. We are supposed to be the same Tatar people, but there were many aspects we could not relate to. Our ways of thinking were different. Although we belong to the same ethnicity, we have different backgrounds. They are Kazan Tatars, and I am a Dushanbe Tatar, or rather, a Tatar of Tajikistan.'

What is articulated here is the experience of differentiating between 'Kazan Tatars' and 'Tatars of Tajikistan.' Tatars, presumably sharing the same ethnic origins, are perceived as having different language use and ways of thinking. Ilyas, who appeared in section 4.1, also reflects on his working life in Kazan:

'Although we looked identical, Kazan Tatars seemed to have completely different ways of thinking and everything else. However, Tajiks mocked my poor Tajik language skills. It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience of feeling in lim-

bo, being told I was so Tatar on the one hand and having my Tatar identity denied on the other. It may feel more fitting to be called a Tatar of Tajikistan.'

This narrative reveals the identity conflict between being Tatar and being Tajik. The outcome is the hybrid identity of 'Tatar of Tajikistan.'

The narrative of Marat (born in 1975, male, designer / DU36, interviewed on 31 March 2019) is also intriguing. Marat has an ethnically diverse background, having spent his childhood in Bayramali (currently Turkmenistan) and moved to Dushanbe in his youth. For Marat, the encounter with Kazan Tatars became an impetus for rediscovering his identity.

"When I went to Kazan for work, I met Tatars similar to me. I felt more like I was with relatives than with my Tajik migrant worker companions. I am not sure what made me feel that way. Probably the similar faces, the similar sensibilities... Ah, I thought, I am Tatar after all. However, there were times when my behaviour differed from Tatars who were born and raised in Russia, and I was told things like, 'You know, those guys from Tajikistan...' It is frustrating, but the fact that I am from Tajikistan is an undeniable truth, and the experiences I have gained while being born and raised in this society shape who I am today. Different from Kazan Tatars, but also different from Tajiks. I came to think of myself as a Tajikistani and a Tatar of Tajikistan.'

What is demonstrated in this narrative is the formation of a multilayered and composite identity. Recognising the differences between the Tatars of Tatarstan and Tajiks enables the coexistence of a national identity as Tajikistani and an ethnic identity as Tatar of Tajikistan. This experience of 'differentiation' resonates with Nagel's theory of ethnicity. Nagel conceived of ethnicity as a dynamic phenomenon that emerges in group interactions (Nagel, 1994). The identity of Tatars is also constructed through interactions with Kazan Tatars and Tajiks, where differences are recognised, and new self-definitions are generated. What is important here is that the 'Tatar of Tajikistan' identity is not a mere combination of ethnic categories. It is the product of strategic self-identification amidst complex social contexts, such as the war experience, participation in national reconstruction, and 'differentiation' through labour migration.

In this way, the experience of labour migration has brought a new dimension to Tatars' identity. Differentiation from Kazan Tatars has fostered the emergence of a new identity as 'Tatars of Tajikistan.' This identity also expresses a hybrid identity different from Tajiks but is Tajikistani. Tatars living in post-civil war Tajik society have developed a complex self-definition that transcends multiple ethnic and national categories through the experience of mobility in labour migration.

Storyline of 'the hybrid identity of Tatars born from the Tajik Civil War'

Based on the analysis thus far, the concepts and theories regarding the transformation of ethnic identity among Tatars in Tajikistan can be summarised as follows.

Table 1. *Hybrid identity of Tatars born from the Tajik Civil War*

Concept	Definition	Example
Dispersion of relatives due to the Tajik Civil War	The physical fragmentation of Tatar families due to the war, which damaged the ethnic ties of the community	<i>'My relatives fled abroad during the war, so my family had no opportunity to be exposed to the Tatar language'</i>
Loss and yearning for Tatarness	The sense of losing the Tatar language and culture due to the dispersion, while simultaneously fostering nostalgia and an impetus for rediscovery	<i>'If it were not for the war, I might have known at least a little bit of the Tatar language and culture by now'</i>
Formation of a Tajikistani identity	The development of a sense of belonging as a Tajikistani national, transcending ethnic categories, through participation in post-war national reconstruction	<i>'Even though our ethnicity is Tatar, we have a strong sense of being Tajikistani'</i>
Differentiation from Tajiks	The perception of being Tajikistani as distinct from the ethnic majority of Tajiks	<i>'I am not Tajik. I am a citizen of Tajikistan'</i>
Experience of being 'Differentiated' in the destination of labour migration	The recognition of differences between Kazan Tatars and Tajiks during labour migration to Tatarstan, leading to the generation of a new self-definition	<i>'Different from Kazan Tatars, but also different from Tajiks. I came to think of myself as a Tatar of Tajikistan'</i>

Source: From the storyline of 'the hybrid identity of Tatars born from the Tajik Civil War'

Tatars in Tajikistan experienced the (Dispersion of relatives due to the Tajik Civil War). This experience of dispersion gave rise to an ambivalent consciousness of (Loss and yearning for Tatarness). In other words, losing contact with the Tatar language and culture led to a sense of losing Tatarness. At the same time, it also fostered nostalgia for what was lost and an impetus for rediscovery.

Participation in the post-war national reconstruction promoted the (Formation of a Tajikistani identity). This national sense of belonging transcends ethnic categories and is accompanied by (Differentiation from Tajiks). In other words, being Tajikistani is self-defined as a different existence from the ethnic majority of Tajiks.

Furthermore, the (Experience of being 'Differentiated' in the destination of labour migration) in Tatarstan fosters the emergence of a new identity. Amidst the awareness of differences between Kazan Tatars and Tajiks, a hybrid self-definition of Tatar of Tajikistan is generated.

In this way, the identity of Tatars transcends essentialist ethnic categories and emerges in a complex manner, traversing multiple contexts such as (Dispersion of relatives), (Loss and yearning for Tatarness), (Formation of a Tajikistani identity), (Differentiation from Tajiks), and (Experience of being 'Differentiated' in the destination of labour migration). It is the product of strategic self-identification by Tatars to survive in the post-civil war Tajik society.

NARRATIVES ON MOTHER TONGUE INHERITANCE

Furthermore, let us consider the impact of the Tajik Civil War on the linguistic identity of Tatars, using their narratives on mother tongue inheritance as a clue. Here, we will trace the process of loss and regeneration of the mother tongue from three perspectives: (1) memories of Tatar language use before the Tajik Civil War, (2) changes in the linguistic environment caused by the Tajik Civil War, and (3) the pursuit of Tatarness.

Memories of Tatar language use before the Tajik Civil War

The interview data unveils rich memories of Tatar language use before the Tajik Civil War. Azat (born in 1955, male, pensioner / DU59, interviewed on 15 May 2019) recounts his childhood memories as follows:

'When I was a child, I often spoke Tatar with my parents, and the surrounding houses were also multiethnic. It was like that throughout the Soviet period, but the war changed everything. Many minorities moved abroad. As a result, most of the people who remained in this country were Tajiks, so to continue doing business amid hardship, it was necessary to learn the Tajik language. Ultimately, there were no more opportunities to speak Tatar with anyone, and I completely forgot it.'

This narrative indicates that Tajikistan during the Soviet era was a linguistically diverse society where multiple ethnic groups coexisted. The Tatar language was used daily, both within and outside the home, serving as a foundation for ethnic identity.

These memories evoke Fishman's concept of diglossia (Fishman, 1991). Fishman referred to the state of functional segregation as diglossia, in which the minority language is used daily in the home and community while the majority language is used in the public sphere. It can be said that Tajikistan during the Soviet era was in a stable state of diglossia, with Russian being used as the language in public spaces. In contrast, each ethnic language was maintained in the home and local community.

Ironically, however, this stability of diglossia later became a factor that promoted language shift. The limited use of Tatar in the home made it challenging to transmit to the next generation, as opportunities for its use in public spaces diminished. Zulfya's words, *'I still remember just a little bit,'* suggest that Tatar's intergenerational transmission was already on the brink of a crisis.

Here, we can recall previous studies on language shift in the former Soviet countries. For example, it has been pointed out that the elevation of the social and legal status of titular ethnic languages after the collapse of the Soviet Union led to the decline of minority languages (Wertheim, 2003; Laitin, 1998). The experiences of Tatars in Tajikistan also reflect these changes in the linguistic situation brought about by de-Sovietisation.

The pursuit of 'Tatarness'

However, losing the Tatar language has ironically become an impetus for pursuing 'Tatarness.' Although they cannot freely use the Tatar language, many participants shared narratives seeking connection with 'things Tatar-ish.'

For instance, celebrating traditional festivals such as Sabantuy, listening to music imbued with Tatar sentiments, preparing Tatar cuisine, and donning Tatar skullcaps were mentioned as cultural practices affirming Tatarness.

It is particularly striking that the Tatar language's memory of being spoken before the Tajik Civil War is articulated as a resource that sustains Tatarness. Zulfiya (born in 1961, female, housewife / DU53, interviewed on 1 July 2019) nostalgically recounted her childhood memories of speaking Tatar with her parents and relatives.

'Most of my relatives who spoke Tatar moved abroad during the war, and for a long time, no one nearby spoke Tatar, so I completely forgot it. Even so, I still remember just a little bit. Isänmesez (hello), xälläregez niçek (how are you), barısı da yaxşı bulır (everything will be fine) ...'

The words of greeting that were once exchanged daily can no longer be fully recalled. However, their fragments speak more eloquently than anything else about Zulfiya's identity as a Tatar. This could be interpreted as an endeavour to construct a new identity triggered by language loss.

The effort to maintain an ethnic identity despite losing the mother tongue underscores the existence of Tatars as an 'imagined community.' Even if they cannot speak the Tatar language, tracing its vestiges reweaves a sense of belonging to the history and culture of the ethnicity anew. However, we cannot overlook people like Damir, introduced in section 5.2, who says they have '*completely forgotten*' the Tatar language. For them, the identity as Tatar may have no choice but to be imagined as an abstract Tatarness now detached from the language.

In this way, the narratives surrounding the inheritance of the mother tongue among Tatars highlight the complex transformation process of linguistic identity. The erosion of the linguistic foundation due to the Tajik Civil War made intergenerational transmission of Tatar difficult. However, simultaneously, it also prompts the pursuit of Tatarness through new cultural practices different from those of the mother tongue. While the inheritance of the mother tongue holds significant meaning for maintaining ethnic identity, its loss does not necessarily signify the loss of identity. The creation of new cultural practices enables the construction of ties that do not rely on language. The effort to maintain a Tatar identity despite losing the Tatar language can also be viewed as a product of their strategic adaptation to navigate the intricate situation in the post-civil war period.

Storyline of 'being Tatar even after losing the Tatar language'

Based on the analysis thus far, the concepts and theories that have become evident from the narratives of Tatars in Tajikistan regarding the inheritance of their mother tongue can be summarised as follows.

Table 2. *Being Tatar even after losing the Tatar language*

Concept	Definition	Example
Memories of Tatar language use before the Tajik Civil War	The recollection of the Tatar language being used daily both within and outside the home during the Soviet era in Tajikistan, serving as the foundation for the ethnic identity of Tatars	<i>'When I was a child, I often spoke Tatar with my parents, and the surrounding houses were also multiethnic'</i>
Changes in the linguistic environment caused by the Tajik Civil War	The destruction of coexistence between ethnic groups and the undermining of the foundation of minority languages due to the outbreak of the war	<i>'The war changed everything. Many minorities moved abroad'</i>
Becoming refugees and dispersion	Tatars being cut off from their linguistic environment due to becoming refugees and dispersing to other countries during the war	<i>'Most of my relatives who spoke Tatar moved abroad during the war'</i>
Language shift to Tajik	The inevitability of learning the Tajik language for survival due to the Tajikization of Tajik society after the war	<i>'To continue doing business amid hardship, it was necessary to learn the Tajik language'</i>
The pursuit of 'Tatarness'	The endeavor to seek connections with 'things Tatar-ish' through cultural practices, even if one cannot readily use the Tatar language	<i>Celebrating traditional festivals such as Sabantuy, listening to music imbued with Tatar sentiments, preparing Tatar cuisine, and donning Tatar skullcaps.</i>
Memory of the Mother Tongue and identity	The Tatar language, once exchanged daily, serving as a resource that sustains the Tatar identity, even if only fragments remain	<i>'I still remember just a little bit. Isänmesez (hello), xälläregez niçek (how are you), barısı da yaxşı bulır (everything will be fine)...'</i>

Source: From the storyline of 'being Tatar even after losing the Tatar language'

In Tajikistan during the Soviet era, the Tatar language was used daily both within and outside the home, and (Memories of Tatar language use before the Tajik Civil War) served as the foundation for the ethnic identity of Tatars. However, the outbreak of the war brought about (Changes in the linguistic environment caused by the Tajik Civil War), destroying the coexistence between ethnic groups and undermining the foundation of minority languages. (Becoming refugees and dispersion) cut off Tatars from their linguistic environment, and (Language shift to Tajik) became inevitable for survival.

The Tajikisation of Tajik society after the war made intergenerational transmission of Tatar difficult, but it has ironically become an impetus for (The pursuit of 'Tatarness'). Although they cannot readily use the Tatar language, they seek connections with 'things Tatar-ish' through cultural practices such as celebrating traditional festivals and preparing Tatar cuisine.

Furthermore, the (Memory of the Mother Tongue and identity) itself, the Tatar language once exchanged daily, functions as a resource that sustains the Tatar identity. The fragments of the Tatar language serve as a catalyst to reweave a sense of belonging to the history and culture of the ethnicity anew.

The endeavour to be Tatar despite losing the Tatar language is a product of their strategic adaptation to survive the complex situation in the post-civil war period. (Memories of Tatar language use before the Tajik Civil War) were inevitably interrupted by (Changes in the linguistic environment caused by the Tajik Civil War), but amidst experiences such as (Becoming refugees and

dispersion) and (Language shift to Tajik), new identity construction is being sought through (The pursuit of 'Tatarness') and (Memory of the Mother Tongue and identity). While the inheritance of the mother tongue bears significant meaning for maintaining ethnic identity, its loss does not necessarily equate to the loss of identity. The construction of ties that do not rely on language is also emerging as a new ethnic identity.

DISCUSSION

In this section, we will summarise the analysis thus far and discuss the theoretical implications that can be derived from the Tatars' experiences in Tajikistan.

The emergence of hybrid identity: from the context of Post-Civil War transition

This paper has revealed that the identity of Tatars who lived through the Tajik Civil War and transition has taken on a complex nature that fluctuates between multiple senses of belonging. This process is not a unidirectional shift from an ethnic identity as Tatar to a national identity as Tajikistani; rather, it is characterised as a composite formation where the two intersect and sometimes conflict.

This aligns with the constructivist turn in identity research. As Hall suggested, identity is not an essential attribute but is constantly generated through discursive practices (Hall, 1996). The identity of Tatars in Tajikistan has also been dynamically reconstructed through experiences such as the Tajik Civil War, national rebuilding, and labour migration. This process compelled them to fundamentally question their sense of belonging, from the loss of identities such as 'Soviet citizens' to the destabilisation of ethnic categories accompanying nation-state formation.

The emergence of the new identity category of 'Tatar of Tajikistan' is particularly revealing. It articulates a hybrid identity rooted in place, distinct from the Tatars of Tatarstan and Tajiks. This points to the limitations of reducing the nature of identity to given ethnic categories and illuminates how a complex sense of belonging is generated at the intersection of multiple contexts.

Transformation of diaspora: beyond the dichotomy of 'Homeland' and 'Country of Settlement'

The dichotomy of 'homeland' and 'country of settlement' presupposed by conventional concepts of diaspora does not fully capture the experiences of Tatars in Tajikistan.

As proposed by Tölölyan's case study of the Armenian diaspora, the emergence of such hybrid identities can be interpreted as a manifestation of the creativity inherent in diasporic cultural practices (Tölölyan, 2005). The 'Tatar of Tajikistan' category can also be positioned as the seed of a new cultural identity, neither a simple return to the homeland nor assimilation to the country of settlement.

However, it is crucial to recognise that this category is also a construct shaped by the historical context of the Tajik Civil War. Instead of expressing a universal diasporic condition, it is a product generated by the political and social dynamics specific to the post-socialist world.

De-essentialising and reconfiguring ethnicity: the legacy of the Soviet Union and the dynamics of majority/minority

Furthermore, through the case of Tatars in Tajikistan, this paper also underscores the importance of a perspective that views ethnicity not as an essential attribute but as a product of the dynamic interplay between institutions and practices. In light of this, the legacy of Soviet ethnic policy cannot be overlooked. The Soviet Union institutionalised the category of ethnicity (*national'nost'*) on one hand while aiming for the ultimate fusion into 'Soviet citizens' on the other. As a result, minorities were subjected to the double bind of ethnic categories and Soviet identity (Brubaker, 2009). The collapse of this institutional foundation accompanying the dissolution of the Soviet Union compelled people to reconsider the meaning of being Tatar. However, at the same time, it also became an impetus for the rediscovery of Tatariness.

Furthermore, the configuration of ethnicity in post-civil war Tajik society is shaped by the dynamic interaction between the majority and minorities. While the identity of Tatars is constructed through differentiation from Tajiks, it also generated new logic of inclusion and exclusion.

Drawing on the discussions of Barth and Brubaker, ethnicity should be understood not as objective cultural differences but as the practice of boundary-making based on subjective senses of belonging, which is situationally defined as a dynamic process (Brubaker, 2002; Barth, 1969).

These insights highlight the significance of a perspective that regards ethnicity as a product of the dynamic interplay between institutions and practices. They also unveil the complex identity politics manifested at the intersection of majority and minority positionalities. Ethnicity, too, should be captured within the dynamics of emergence and transformation amidst the forces woven by the legacy of Soviet institutions and the presence of post-socialism.

In this way, this paper's findings can be positioned as an attempt to connect the empirical realities of people living in the post-civil war era to debates surrounding identity, diaspora, and ethnicity.

CONCLUSION

This paper has examined the impact of civil war and post-socialist transition on the identity formation of ethnic minorities, drawing on the narratives of the Tatar community in Tajikistan.

Firstly, it has become evident that the experience of the Tajik Civil War and the subsequent dispersion and reconfiguration significantly undermined the

existing ethnic ties of Tatars. The loss of ‘homeland’ meant a fundamental shaking of the linguistic and cultural foundations. Secondly, the nation-building of Tajikistan after the war necessitated a new positioning of Tatar as a minority vis-à-vis Tajik. Thirdly, however, what emerged in the process of this reconfiguration was the seed of a hybrid identity of ‘Tatar of Tajikistan,’ which is neither Tatar nor Tajik.

These findings provide a perspective that calls into question the nature of identity among ethnic minorities. It defies being subsumed under predetermined categories of ‘X people’ and illuminates how a complex sense of belonging is continuously renegotiated at the intersection of multiple contexts. Amidst the destabilisation of ethnic categories, how do people redefine their own identities and seek new ties? This paper can also be one of the attempts to approach such issues empirically.

Admittedly, this paper has several limitations. First, while the discussion is developed based on the case of ‘Tatars of Tajikistan,’ the comparative perspective with other former Soviet countries is weak, and there is a lack of discussion on the extent to which this case can be generalised. It is necessary to develop a broader scope of discussion while distinguishing between issues common to the post-socialist world and contexts specific to Tajikistan. Second, the perspective of longer-term historical changes is weak. Although the focus is on changes before and after the civil war, the longer-term process from the Soviet era to the present is not sufficiently discussed. It is essential to situate the transformation of ethnic identity within a longer time span. Third, the positioning of other differences that influence identity formation, such as gender, generation, and class, is not adequately examined. Further consideration is required on how these differences intersect with the transformation of ethnic identity, and the introduction of an intersectional perspective is desirable. Addressing these issues will be an important task for future research.

Furthermore, it is imperative to emphasise that the Tajik Civil War, as a state of exception, ruptured the ethnic ties of Tatars in Tajikistan and eroded their linguistic and cultural foundations. However, at the same time, such experiences also had aspects that fostered the emergence of a new identity as the ‘Tatar of Tajikistan.’ These findings are not limited to the description of a particular case. They also provide universal implications for considering the impact of war and unexpected migration on the identity formation of minorities. Currently, conflicts continue unabated in various parts of the world, and many people are being forced to flee their homes and become refugees. The experiences of war and evacuation have become a universal problem not limited to specific regions.

What this paper proposes is that such extreme situations can not only sever the existing ethnic ties of minorities but also act as a catalyst for seeking new identities. The self-definition of ‘Tatar of Tajikistan’ suggests the possibility of a hybrid identity that transcends the dichotomy of homeland and place of evacuation/country of settlement, generated at the intersection of multiple contexts. By shedding light on a more complex sense of belonging that is neither reducible to ethnic categories of ‘X people’ nor a monolithic grouping

of immigrants/refugees, a path may be opened to grasping the multifaceted experiences of war and displacement.

In this regard, this paper also attempted to derive universal theoretical insights from a specific case. Driven by the ravages of war and deprived of the foundation of identity, this paper also sought to capture the experiences of people who were once placed in such situations and to discern universal suffering and hope. The self-definition of ‘Tatar of Tajikistan’ epitomises the resilience of people navigating multiple contexts, transcending the conventional categories and experiences of refugees and immigrants.

Even now, conflicts persist in various parts of the world, and innumerable people face critical junctures. While acknowledging differences as they are, we must strive to foster an inclusive horizon of coexistence that transcends such distinctions. The narratives of Tatars in Tajikistan also entrust us with such hope. We sincerely hope this paper will contribute to the understanding of resilient identity formation amidst the turbulence of war.

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Research Article

**THE CHINA-KYRGYZSTAN-UZBEKISTAN RAILWAY:
CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES**

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to analyse the causes and consequences of the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan railway. The project is one of the most important and ambitious in the modern history of Central Asia. The construction of the railway will transform trade and transit routes in Eurasia. The paper argues that the start of the project was driven by internal, regional, and global factors. The expected benefits from the railway are significant for each participating country. Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan plan to develop their infrastructure, diversify exports, and penetrate new markets, while China diversifies its transit routes and deepens economic integration with Central Asia. However, the paper highlights that there are important risks related to the railway, and addressing these will increase the benefits of the project.

Keywords: The China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan railway, Central Asia, Transport, Infrastructure, International trade.

INTRODUCTION

Being landlocked is one of the main disadvantages of Central Asian (CA) states, which negatively affects the region's competitiveness. Landlocked countries bear higher transport costs and have to deal with regulations and political issues of transit countries. They have difficulties in attracting foreign direct investments, and many of them are unable to develop their infrastructure due to economic, financial, and technological constraints. Lack of access to international markets constrains knowledge and technology diffusion. According to Gyawali (2024), being landlocked for manufactured goods trade is highly negative, and such an effect is higher for low-income landlocked countries than for high-income landlocked countries.

Landlocked countries try to solve this important problem by improving their infrastructural potential through regional integration and cooperation or participation in global programmes. China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is one example of transforming the landlocked Central Asian region by developing regional infrastructure and improving its connectivity. On June 6, 2024, the intergovernmental agreement on the construction of the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan (CKU) railway was signed in Beijing. The Presidents of Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and China sent congratulatory video messages to the participants of the meeting. They mentioned that the CKU railway will become a symbol of cooperation within the comprehensive strategic partnership in the new era between the three countries. As the shortest land route connecting China with Central Asia, it will allow access through the promising Trans-Afghan corridor to the capacious markets of South Asia and the Middle East (Azattyk, 2024). Moreover, the railway demonstrates to the world the firm determination of the three countries to promote cooperation and seek development together (Xinhua, 2024a). All Presidents pointed out the economic effects of the project, such as boosting regional trade, industrial cooperation, and higher standards of living. In fact, according to Donaldson (2018), railways decrease trade costs, increase interregional and international trade, and real income levels. In Central Asia, as Karymshakov and Sulaimanova (2020) show, both the quality and quantity of infrastructure have a positive impact on trade flows, but this effect varies by country. The authors call for a regional approach to the development of infrastructure, and this policy should be associated with further regional economic integration.

The CKU railway was first proposed in the 1990s, and the three countries signed a memorandum of understanding on the railway in 1997. However, due to technical and political issues, the railway construction was postponed several times (Zhen, 2024). Financing of the project was another important obstacle. Hence, the final steps before the start of the implementation of this infrastructural project raise a key question: what are the main factors that pushed the countries to start the construction of the railway? Hence, the aim of the paper is twofold. Firstly, it reveals the main causes of the project from the perspectives of each participating country, integration processes in Central Asia, and global factors. Secondly, it draws potential consequences of the project, showing the main benefits and risks. The rest of the paper is organized as follows. Section 2 shows the CKU benefits for Kyrgyzstan in terms of trade, development of infrastructure and transit services, and investments. Section 3

analyses the expanding economic cooperation between Uzbekistan and China and shows that the CKU will deepen their bilateral economic integration. Section 4 reveals China’s interests and draws the potential consequences of the project and the main risks for Central Asia.

THE CKU BENEFITS FOR KYRGYZSTAN

China has been one of Kyrgyzstan’s key partners in terms of trade (Table 1), investments, and loans. Bilateral trade between the two countries grew from \$129 million in 2005 to \$4,130 million in 2022, increasing by 32 times. During the same period, Kyrgyzstan’s exports to China increased by 2.3 times, while its imports surged by almost 40 times. It is worth mentioning that Kyrgyzstan benefits from the re-export of Chinese products, and the trade statistics differ substantially. For instance, according to data from the International Trade Centre (Chinese sources), in 2022, China exported to Kyrgyzstan products worth \$15,421 million, which is 3.8 times higher than the reported statistics from Kyrgyzstan. Thus, trade with China remains an important revenue source for Kyrgyzstan.

Authorities in Kyrgyzstan pay substantial attention to implementing energy and infrastructure projects with China. Chinese investment has enabled the execution of many of the Kyrgyz government’s priority national-level projects, such as the Datka-Kemin power transmission line (a \$400 million project). The CKU railway is by far the largest and most intriguing potential project involving China and Kyrgyzstan. However, it should be noted that Kyrgyzstan hopes that China will revive other projects, such as the construction of the Kambarata-1 hydroelectric power station on the Naryn River, worth \$3 billion and with a capacity of 2,000 megawatts, the Upper Naryn cascade of hydroelectric power stations, valued at over \$700 million more than ten years ago, and a hydroelectric power station on the Sary-Jaz River in the Issyk-Kul region in the east of the country. The previous two projects were initially intended for Russian investors, but Bishkek cancelled the deals, citing a lack of progress (Radio Azattyk, 2024).

Table 1. *Kyrgyzstan’s trade with China, million USD*

	2005	2010	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Exports	27	28	36	80	97	61	81	43	64	61
Imports	103	666	1029	1468	1500	1942	1734	737	1463	4069
Total trade	129	695	1065	1549	1598	2003	1815	780	1527	4130

Source: Author’s compilation and calculations based on the International Trade Centre (ITC, 2024) data

Given the country’s high dependence on migrant remittances from Russia, Kyrgyzstan plans to diversify and seek alternative sources of revenue. At the same time, Kyrgyzstan is interested in developing its internal infrastructure, as the length of its railways is only 424 km. The country’s railway infrastructure consists of unconnected routes in the north and south that provide access to the railway networks of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. Hence, the CKU railway

presents an opportunity for Kyrgyzstan to connect the north and south of the country, as it has not built railways since independence. The second task that Kyrgyzstan's government is addressing is obtaining access to global markets and becoming part of global production chains (Institute of Strategic Analysis and Forecast, 2024). According to the Prime Minister of Kyrgyzstan, Akylbek Zhaparov, the China-Uzbekistan-Kyrgyzstan railway will become the "road of life," turning Kyrgyzstan into a major commercial and industrial centre (Kazinform, 2024). Recently, Kyrgyzstan's Parliament, Jogorku Kenesh, approved agreements between the governments of Kyrgyzstan, China, and Uzbekistan on cooperation in promoting the transcontinental railway project. The countries are establishing a trilateral project company, which will be the main operator of the railway. The construction of the CKU railway requires \$4.7 billion, with China allocating more than \$2.35 billion in the form of a loan. Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan are expected to invest \$700 million each. The shares of participants in the project will be distributed as follows: "Chinese Railways" will hold 51%, while "Kyrgyz Temir Zholu (railways)" and "Uzbekistan Temir Yollari (railways)" will each own 24.5%. Almost 312 km (out of a total of 486 km) of the railway will pass through Kyrgyzstan. It is planned to construct 18 railway stations, 81 bridges with a total length of 26.1 km, and drill 41 tunnels with a length of over 120 km. It is expected that, for the transit of goods alone, Kyrgyzstan's budget will receive about \$200 million (Kabar, 2024). According to ITC data, Kyrgyzstan's transport services exports increased from \$204 million in 2021 to \$431 million in 2022. Hence, the expected transit revenues will substantially contribute to the growth of Kyrgyzstan's transport services. Thus, Kyrgyzstan will benefit in terms of developing its internal rail network, gaining access to international markets, and increasing transit revenues. At the same time, the CKU railway's implementation can positively influence the country's labour market by increasing employment and revenues.

IS UZBEKISTAN A KEY BENEFICIARY OF THE PROJECT?

Uzbekistan's foreign policy under Shavkat Mirziyoyev is characterised by openness towards the inclusion of Uzbekistan in global and regional integration processes. Uzbekistan actively participates in and supports China's BRI, holds observer status in the Eurasian Economic Union, and strengthens economic cooperation with South Asia. Uzbekistan's foreign economic policy aims at penetrating new markets, including China, Russia, and South Asia. It is worth mentioning that China has become one of the key trade and investment partners. Moreover, China plays an important role in Uzbekistan's industrialisation.

In January 2024, the President of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, made a state visit to China, where he met with his Chinese counterpart, Xi Jinping. During the visit, an investment forum was organised, bringing together heads of departments and regions from both countries, along with more than 600 representatives from major Chinese businesses. The President of Uzbekistan made several important statements regarding the interim achievements of bilateral cooperation and its future prospects. According to President Mirziyoyev, the volume of mutual trade has doubled and reached a record level of \$14

billion in 2023. He highlighted the need to increase this figure to \$20 billion by expanding the mutual supply of agricultural and industrial products and by concluding a new intergovernmental agreement on the establishment of preferential trade for certain types of products. He also noted that the number of enterprises with Chinese capital had increased threefold. Additionally, the parties agreed that Chinese banks would expand project financing in Uzbekistan, and the Export-Import Bank of China would open a representative office. A new investment platform with the Silk Road Fund will also be established in Uzbekistan (President.uz, 2024a). Uzbekistan will open 21 trading houses in more than 10 cities in China, as outlined in the April document adopted by the President of Uzbekistan. This initiative aims to boost the export of agricultural products to China (Kursiv, 2024). Mutual trade between the two countries has increased significantly (Table 2). While total trade amounted to \$4 billion in 2017, it exceeded \$8 billion in 2022, more than doubling. During the same period, Uzbekistan's exports to China grew by 1.3 times, while imports surged by 2.3 times. Uzbekistan primarily exports mineral fuels, metals, and agricultural products, while its imports are diversified, including machinery, electronics, and cars. It is important to note that China was a key import partner for Uzbekistan in 2022, with a 22% share of total imports. There are also discrepancies in trade statistics between China and Uzbekistan. For instance, in 2022, according to Chinese sources, Uzbekistan's imports from China amounted to \$7.5 billion.

Chinese businesses are highly interested in investing and establishing joint enterprises in Uzbekistan. As of January 1, 2024, the number of joint ventures and foreign enterprises in Uzbekistan stood at 14,053. Russia, China, and Türkiye are the top three countries involved in launching and participating in joint enterprises in Uzbekistan. Specifically, the number of companies with Russian capital amounted to 3,044 (22% of the total). The number of enterprises with capital from China and Türkiye was 2,337 (17%) and 1,883 (13%), respectively (Kun.uz, 2024).

Table 2. *Uzbekistan's trade with China, million USD*

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Exports	1313	2121	1768	1282	1744	1753
Imports	2700	3539	5052	4426	4861	6321
Total trade	4014	5660	6820	5708	6605	8075

Source: Author's compilation and calculations based on the ITC (2024) data

It should be noted that in recent years, the volume of Chinese investment in the economy of Uzbekistan has increased fivefold. In the first quarter of 2024, China ranked first among key foreign investors in Uzbekistan, with its share of total investments amounting to 23%, followed by Russia (13.8%) and Türkiye (8.5%) (Radio Ozodi, 2024). During the visit, Uzbekistan and China agreed to prepare cooperation programmes in the areas of infrastructure development, industrial cooperation, technology transfer in agriculture, and green energy. President Mirziyoyev also called on Chinese partners to actively participate in the privatisation of state-owned enterprises and banks in Uzbekistan. More-

over, the importance of constructing the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan railway was emphasised (Gazeta.uz, 2024a). Entrepreneurs who participated in a joint investment forum reported that agreements were reached on implementing approximately 500 projects with a total value of \$56.7 billion (Daryo, 2024). As part of his trip to China, President Mirziyoyev visited the headquarters of the leading Chinese automaker BYD in Shenzhen. Together with the company's president, Wang Chuanfu, he participated in the remote launch ceremony for the construction of a plant for assembling hybrid and electric cars, which will be built in the Jizzakh region of Uzbekistan. Initially, the plant will produce 50,000 cars per year, with annual production capacity set to increase to 300,000 units. The agreement also grants the joint venture the right to export BYD vehicles manufactured in Uzbekistan to Central Asian countries. In September 2022, Roodell, the official distributor of Chery Automobile in Uzbekistan, also began assembling cars in the Jizzakh region (Eurasianet, 2024a). In June 2024, President Mirziyoyev visited the joint venture "BYD Uzbekistan Factory" in the Jizzakh region. As mentioned earlier, the annual capacity of the first phase of the project, worth \$160 million, will be 50,000 electric vehicles. The joint venture is equipped with modern industrial infrastructure, including advanced robotic systems from China. Almost 2 kilometres of railway tracks have been laid, and a warehouse and logistics centre for 1,200 containers have been built. The second phase of the project, worth \$300 million, will increase production to 200,000 electric vehicles, while the third phase, worth \$500 million, aims to raise production to 500,000 electric vehicles annually. Higher production volumes will gradually increase the level of localisation. An R&D centre will be established for training personnel and supporting scientific and engineering research. The enterprise currently employs 1,200 people, and 92 specialists will receive training in Xi'an and Changsha, China, in areas such as quality control, technology, supply, and equipment maintenance. Once all three phases are completed, the number of jobs is expected to reach 10,000 (President.uz, 2024b). Additionally, in December 2023, the Chinese firm Henan Suda signed a deal with Uzbekistan's Energy Ministry to build up to 50,000 electric vehicle charging stations across the country by 2033. The project will serve approximately 700,000 electric vehicles when fully completed (Eurasianet, 2023). In cooperation with Chinese investors, Uzbekistan is implementing 26 projects worth \$1.7 billion in the Andijan region. These projects cover critical sectors such as energy, electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, textiles, building materials, pharmaceuticals, agriculture, education, and infrastructure (President.uz, 2024c). Furthermore, the President of Uzbekistan approved an agreement for constructing two wind power plants in the Samarkand and Jizzakh regions, worth \$250 million. The total capacity of the two power plants will be 500 MW. The National Electric Grids of Uzbekistan has pledged to purchase the electricity generated by these facilities for 25 years after their construction and to cover the costs of constructing power lines for 10 years (Eurasianet, 2024b). Thus, China's investments in Uzbekistan's various sectors, from agriculture to energy, have seen significant growth (Table 3).

Table 3. *China's investments and construction projects in Uzbekistan*

Year	Investor	Million USD	Sector (subsector)
2007	China International Trust and Investment	110	Agriculture
2007	China National Petroleum Corp.	880	Energy (gas)
2010	Baiyin Non-Ferrous, China International Trust and Investment, Chang Xin	190	Metals
2010	Jinsheng Trading	110	Other (industry)
2012	China National Petroleum Corp.	2040	Energy (gas)
2013	China Railway Engineering	460	Transport (rail)
2014	Harbin Electric	230	Energy (coal)
2014	China National Machinery Industry, China National Chemical Engineering	480	Chemicals
2014	China Poly	180	Agriculture
2017	Ming Yuan Silu	110	Real estate (construction)
2017	Xin Zhong Yuan	150	Real estate (construction)
2017	China National Building Material	160	Real estate (construction)
2017	Power Construction Corp.	110	Energy (hydro)
2017	China National Petroleum Corp.	190	Energy (gas)
2018	China Railway Engineering, Zhongyun International Engineering	100	Energy (coal)
2018	China Energy Engineering	200	Real estate (construction)
2019	Anhui Conch	150	Real estate (construction)
2019	China Railway Construction	230	Agriculture
2019	Huaxin Cement	150	Real estate (construction)
2019	Shanghai Construction	230	Finance
2019	Minmetals	110	Real estate (construction)
2020	China Railway Construction	100	Transport (autos)
2020	State Construction Engineering	200	Real estate (construction)
2020	Power Construction Corp.	120	Energy (alternative)
2021	China Energy Engineering	760	Energy (gas)
2021	Minmetals	170	Real estate (construction)
2021	China Energy Engineering	350	Real estate (construction)
2021	Anhui Conch	260	Real estate (construction)
2021	China National Chemical Engineering	460	Chemicals
2022	China National Building Material	270	Real estate (construction)
2022	State Administration of Foreign Exchange	130	Energy (gas)
2023	China Communications Construction	170	Transport (autos)
2023	China National Machinery Industry	310	Entertainment
2023	China Energy Engineering	120	Real estate (construction)
2023	China Energy Engineering	340	Energy (alternative)
2023	Power Construction Corp.	560	Energy (alternative)
2023	China Energy Engineering	400	Energy (alternative)

Source: Author's compilation using data from the American Enterprise Institute and the Heritage Foundation (2024).

It is worth mentioning that investments started to increase in 2017, when Uzbekistan began its new course of foreign economic policy, strengthening economic cooperation between the two countries. Deepening economic cooperation between the two countries increased Uzbekistan's interest in the implementation of the CKU railway. The project promises substantial benefits for Uzbekistan: in addition to accessing Chinese and other new markets, it is expected that the country could receive revenues from cargo transit amounting to \$150-200 million annually (UzDaily, 2024). Data from the ITC shows that Uzbekistan's transport services exports increased from \$1.276 billion in 2021 to \$1.490 billion in 2022. Therefore, cargo transit revenues will contribute to the growth of transport services exports. Uzbek entrepreneurs trading with China report that it can take between 45 to 70 days to transport goods by train from China through Kazakhstan to Uzbekistan. Consequently, the CKU railway can alleviate the financial burden on Uzbekistan's entrepreneurs and significantly reduce transportation time (Karimov and Kurbonmurotov, 2023). Additionally, the CKU railway will enhance Uzbekistan's role as a transit hub (People's Daily Online, 2024). On June 7, 2024, delegations from Uzbekistan Temir Yollari and the Xi'an Municipal Committee of China met to further strengthen railway and logistics ties between China and Uzbekistan. According to the Xi'an provincial delegation, in 2023, 5,351 trains were dispatched from the port of Xi'an, 675 of which were sent to Central Asia, with Uzbekistan accounting for more than 50%. By the end of 2024, it is planned to transport 20,000 TEU containers along the Xi'an–Jizzakh route. Uzbekistan's delegation expressed its readiness to cooperate in increasing the volume of cargo transportation through the port of Xi'an to Uzbekistan and beyond. It was also proposed to explore the possibility of transporting goods from Xi'an to Uzbekistan via Kyrgyzstan (Uzbekistan Temir Yollari, 2024). Furthermore, the CKU railway may contribute to the growth of bilateral trade between Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, which increased from \$240 million in 2017 to \$1.145 billion in 2022 (Table 4). During the same period, Uzbekistan's exports to Kyrgyzstan surged by 5.5 times, while its imports grew by almost three times.

Table 4. *Uzbekistan's trade with Kyrgyzstan, million USD*

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Exports	168	251	635	713	770	927
Imports	73	127	124	138	157	218
Total trade	240	378	759	851	928	1145

Source: Author's compilation and calculations based on the ITC (2024) data

Hence, China is strengthening its position as Uzbekistan's key trade and investment partner. The cooperation is extensive and spans various sectors, from agriculture to energy. Thus, the CKU railway will support Uzbekistan's goals of penetrating new markets and will serve as a new source of revenue. Uzbek entrepreneurs will enhance their competitiveness by lowering trade costs, which will positively impact the country's industrial policy and improve the well-being of its population.

CHINA'S INTERESTS AND CONSEQUENCES FOR CENTRAL ASIA

Through the implementation of the new railway following the conflict in Ukraine, China will diversify its transit routes, reduce its dependence on both Russia and Kazakhstan and sustain rail trade with the European Union and Middle Eastern countries in the long term. It is worth noting that the CKU railway will be one of the shortest routes and will save seven or eight days in shipping time. Moreover, the new railway will contribute to the economic growth and development of China's central and western regions, particularly Xinjiang, by boosting the manufacturing industry (Sharifli, 2022).

In November 2023, China launched the Xinjiang Pilot Free Trade Zone (FTZ), the first in China's northwestern border regions, which includes areas in Urumqi, Horgos, and Kashgar, and covers nearly 180 square kilometres. It is expected that the FTZ will substantially contribute to Xinjiang's integration into the domestic and international markets. The FTZ is granted greater autonomy in reform and aims to cultivate and expand industries unique to Xinjiang or in which Xinjiang has a competitive advantage (State Council of the People's Republic of China, 2023). Xinjiang's foreign trade shows promising results. In the first 10 months of 2023, trade surged by 40% to a record \$409.2 billion, with shipments from January to October exceeding the total value of trade in 2022, despite sanctions imposed by Western governments in response to reports of forced labour. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan accounted for the largest share of these transactions. Chinese officials plan to transform Xinjiang into an export gateway to neighbouring countries and hope the zone will attract foreign investors from nearby countries, all of which are members of the BRI, and increase the use of the yuan in cross-border trade settlements (Nikkei Asia, 2023). Since the unveiling of the Kashgar subzone, a total of 86 companies have registered with investments amounting to \$1.75 billion. China has improved its logistics efficiency, allowing cargo inspected at Kashgar Customs to pass through Turgart port directly to avoid a second inspection. Additionally, China has established an industrial park for Kyrgyzstani companies in Kashgar. As a result, Kashgar's foreign trade surged by 71.2% in 2023, contributing 23.4% to regional foreign trade (China Daily, 2024). According to Chinese experts, the CKU railway is a crucial part of the New Eurasian Land Bridge, which will change the transport structure in Xinjiang and form the southern part of the Second Eurasian Land Bridge. The CKU railway will enhance trade and economic relations between China and Central Asia. Rail transport is cheaper, operates stably, and is not subject to seasonal restrictions. Thus, transport costs will decrease significantly, leading to lower commodity prices and contributing to the rapid growth of mutual trade (Xinhua, 2024b). The CKU railway will diversify China's trade and transit routes, enhance Xinjiang's economic capacity, and, consequently, strengthen China's role in Central Asia.

However, there are significant risks related to the environment, debt traps, increased competition from China, and dependence on China. It is important to note that as China supports its companies in moving excess capacity abroad, countries participating in the BRI and implementing joint projects may be considered for such relocation. There are concerns that by doing so, China may be shifting its polluting industries to less developed countries. Consequently, China's partners need to advocate for the adoption of meaningful social and

environmental standards in the early stages of infrastructure development planning, ensuring they are at least as stringent as those implemented domestically in China (Tracy et al., 2017).

Kyrgyzstan's total debt is estimated at \$6.2 billion, or 45% of GDP, with about \$1.7 billion owed to the Export-Import Bank of China. It is important to note that Chinese loans have financed large infrastructure projects in Kyrgyzstan. Kyrgyz officials proposed to China a scheme where, instead of repaying the Chinese loans, Kyrgyzstan would use the funds to reduce CO2 emissions or invest in renewable energy projects, but China declined the proposal. There were calls in Kyrgyzstan to fully repay the external debt, including the Chinese loans, using the country's gold reserves, which were rejected by the National Bank of Kyrgyzstan (Voice of America, 2024). During the first half of 2023, public debt in Uzbekistan rose to 36.8% of GDP, amounting to \$31.5 billion, with external public debt reaching \$25.9 billion. Uzbekistan's debt to China was \$3.8 billion (Gazeta.uz, 2024b). Hence, if China provides loans for the CKU railway project, the volume of debt will increase. Given the importance of the project, regardless of the financing sources, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan need to ensure the efficient use of the potential funds.

As mutual trade between the three countries shows increasing trends, the implementation of the CKU railway will further contribute to its growth. In this case, it is important to ensure that trade processes are transparent. Significant inconsistencies in bilateral trade can lead to budget losses and distort industrial and other economic policies, decreasing the competitiveness of Central Asian countries. At the same time, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan need to study China's import structure and invest in relevant sectors. As mentioned, agriculture remains a key priority for Central Asian countries. By addressing the above-mentioned risks in advance, Central Asian states may maximise their benefits.

CONCLUSION

The CKU railway is one of the most important and ambitious projects for the Central Asian region, and its implementation will have a substantial effect on Eurasian transport and trade networks. The start of the project was driven by a combination of internal, regional, and global factors. Kyrgyzstan's intention to develop its infrastructure and Uzbekistan's new foreign economic policy are among the key factors that positively contributed to the project's initiation. Both countries need to diversify revenue sources and reduce dependence on migrant remittances. It is worth noting that transit revenues will significantly contribute to the growth of transport services exports, especially for Kyrgyzstan. At the same time, the countries plan to penetrate new markets. Moreover, the deepening of economic cooperation between the two countries and China also played an important role in the decision to start the project. Additionally, regional integration in Central Asia, driven by Uzbekistan's reforms, has positively influenced the CKU railway implementation.

The war in Ukraine also had a significant effect on the CKU railway and prompted China to diversify its transit routes. The CKU railway will reduce China's dependence on Russia and Kazakhstan for transit and will play an important role

in developing Xinjiang as an industrial and technology hub for Central Asia. Consequently, the CKU railway will strengthen China's position in the region.

Central Asian countries need to address the risks associated with the implementation of the CKU railway in advance. To maximise the benefits of the project, it will be necessary to improve environmental standards, manage debt efficiently, ensure transparency in mutual trade, and develop industrial and agricultural policies to support the export of products needed in the Chinese market. Thus, these policy reforms can enhance the potential benefits of the CKU railway.

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Research Article

**ECONOMIC RELATIONS OF TÜRKIYE WITH THE TURKIC
STATES OF SOUTH CAUCASUS AND CENTRAL ASIA**

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ABSTRACT

In the present era, the Turkic states are experiencing an upward trajectory in the expansion of their relationships, particularly in the economic sphere. After the collapse of the USSR, the Turkic states that regained their independence – Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan – followed different dynamics of economic development. These Turkic states are located in regions of significant geopolitical and geostrategic importance, spanning a wide area from the Adriatic to the Great Wall of China. The purpose of the study is to examine the dynamics of the development of economic relations between Türkiye and the Turkic states of South Caucasus and Central Asia in the modern era. The main objectives are to examine the economic potential of the Turkic states and Türkiye’s economic policy towards the Turkic states of the South Caucasus and Central Asia, to analyze the development dynamics and characteristics of the economic relations between Türkiye and the Turkic states of these two regions.

Keywords: Türkiye, Turkic states, Bilateral economic relations, Cooperation in the energy sphere, Economic potential, Economic policy, Turkic integration.

INTRODUCTION

The Turkic states, rich in hydrocarbon resources except for Kyrgyzstan, play a significant role in the energy security of both Europe and Asia. Kazakhstan, the strongest state in Central Asia in terms of economic development, has pursued a more successful economic policy compared to other regional states, emerging as a leader in attracting foreign investments. Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, following independence, adopted a more conservative approach, retaining aspects of the economic monopoly of the state from the Soviet era but cautiously implementing economic reforms. Kyrgyzstan, while adopting a more flexible attitude towards the new economic order and enacting liberal reforms, has not achieved significant success. Azerbaijan, the most powerful state in the South Caucasus, has embraced liberal economic reforms and prioritized expanding its relations with the Turkic world as part of its transition to a market economy.

The political and economic interactions between Turkic states are swiftly developing within the framework of current geopolitical dynamics and the emergence of a new global structure. Unlike the positive trends of recent years, there were no relations between the Turkic republics within the USSR and Türkiye, a rival polar state, amidst the conditions of bipolar conflict. In the early 1990s, following the collapse of the USSR, Central Asian Turkic countries – specifically Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan – along with Azerbaijan in the Caucasus, declared independence, marking the emergence of five Turkic states with shared ancestry, language, and religion, akin to Türkiye, as independent actors on the international stage. This era was perceived by Turkish elites and politicians as the *Turkic Century*, sparking hopes for the establishment of a Turkic Union across a vast territory “*from the Adriatic to the Great Wall of China*”. However, Türkiye, having pursued a policy of self-isolation during the Cold War, lacked plans and strategies to develop comprehensive relations with the newly independent Turkic states amid the collapse of the Soviet Union and the emergence of a new world order. In essence, Türkiye was ill-prepared for the emerging geopolitical shifts.

For various reasons, including Türkiye’s lack of readiness for geopolitical changes, the post-Soviet Turkic states did not rush to establish close relations, despite Türkiye being the first country to recognize the independence of the former Turkic-speaking Soviet republics and opening embassies. However, due to the rapid development of bilateral and multilateral cooperation with the Turkic states in the ensuing years, Türkiye has become their main economic partner and ally. Turkic states are expanding joint cooperation across a wide spectrum of issues within various organizations (such as the Organization of Turkic States, Economic Cooperation Organization, etc.) and engaging in the integration process.

The article investigates the developmental patterns of economic relationships among the Turkic countries, contrasts the economic prospects of these states, and presents statistical data. Additionally, it discusses the political and economic benefits that deepening Turkic integration will yield for these countries in the future.

The article mainly comprehensively used the following methods: 1. The historical method, with the help of which the history of the formation of Turkish economic policy in the South Caucasus and Central Asia the formation of a new system of international relations was studied; 2. Comparative method, on the basis of which the directions of Turkish economic policy were compared in the new geopolitical realities; 3. The method of system analysis, thanks to which all the factors influencing the formation of the policy of the South Caucasus and Central Asia.

The ideological basis of the competition for the South Caucasus and Central Asia, the economic potential of the Turkic states and the characteristics of their economic policy were analyzed in study. The modern dynamics of the economic relations of the Turkic states with Türkiye, the prospects of economic integration are shown. The question of whether economic integration among the members of the Organization of Turkic States (OTS) is necessary and viable arises in a world where two opposing trends, globalization and fragmentation, are in competition.

The expansion and deepening of a wide range of relations, especially economic relations among the Turkic states in modern times, makes the research of this topic relevant. The article comparatively analyzed the development dynamics of economic relations among the Turkic states. Mehmet Yuçe (Yuçe, 2022), Deniz Istikbal (Istikbal, 2022) analyzed the development of Türkiye's economic relations with the Turkic states of Central Asia and Azerbaijan and noted that it is necessary to create cooperation institutions and mechanisms for the development of Turkic integration. Atsız Gokdag (Gokdag, 2020) and other researchers politically analyzed Türkiye's economic relations with the Turkic states and drew attention to the geopolitical factors of cooperation. Nurdinova researched the modern dynamics and prospects of the economic relations between Uzbekistan and Türkiye and showed statistical indicators in tables and diagrams (Nurdinova, 2022). Khitakhunov (2022) has analyzed Türkiye's economic diplomacy in Central Asia, the main results and prospects of its economic activity.

Russia, grappling with challenges following the collapse of the USSR, initially showed little interest in Türkiye's policies toward the Turkic world. However, the US and Western countries supported Ankara's approach to the Turkic world as they sought to exert influence in this region through Türkiye. The repetitive political cycle laid the groundwork for the formation and institutionalization of Türkiye's ties with the Turkic states (Yuçe, 2022). These ties, particularly in the economic realm, yielded positive outcomes. Türkiye has emerged as a key player among Turkic states, ranking in the top five in terms of both investment and foreign trade partnerships (OTS, 2023). Nevertheless, apart from economic and cultural sectors, interactions, notably within the political arena, did not achieve the targeted level of strategic profundity. The foundations of relations among the Turkic states remained fragile, influenced by four main factors: the Russian factor, the US and EU factor, internal dynamics within the South Caucasian and Central Asian Turkic republics, and Türkiye's dynamics.

Russia's stance is pivotal in shaping and implementing the concept of Turkic unity. It holds significance in both Ankara's relations with the new Turkic states and in determining inter-Turkic state relations. Initially tolerant of Türkiye's ties with post-Soviet Turkic states, Russia grew concerned over nationalist discours-

es such as “Turkic Homeland from the Adriatic to the Great Wall of China” and “Turkic Union,” perceiving them as manifestations of pan-Turkism. Viewing pan-Turkism as a threat to its interests, Russia pursued policies aimed at curbing the spread of this ideology in the Turkic states of the Caucasus and Central Asia, which it regarded as its “backyard”. Despite the dissolution of the USSR, Russia demonstrated its commitment to its “Near Periphery” doctrine, maintaining influence in Central Asia and the Caucasus in the ensuing years (Malikova, 2024).

Russia initially underestimated the prospects of the independent Turkic republics following the collapse of the Soviet Union. However, it quickly sought to assert itself as a hegemonic power in the post-Soviet space. Exploiting the transitional period, Russia engaged in a struggle with other powers vying for influence in the region, endeavoring to reaffirm its control and establish itself as the preeminent player in the *New Great Game*. Pursuing this policy, Russia aimed to assert its influence in regional security through military bases, promote regional integration through organizations it led (such as CIS, CSTO, Eurasian Economic Union), and enhance economic engagement through loans, investments, and trade.

Despite Russia’s extensive and multifaceted relations with Central Asian countries, Türkiye’s independent initiatives in the region sometimes diverged from regional realities (Gokburun, 2021). Consequently, Türkiye found it necessary to negotiate with Russia on certain aspects of its policies regarding the Turkic world. Employing *soft power*, Türkiye sought to broaden and deepen its influence in Turkic states while avoiding direct conflict with Russia’s interests in the region. The outcomes of key events such as the Samarkand summit of the Organization of Turkic States (OTS) in November 2022, the meeting of leaders from Azerbaijan, Türkiye, and Turkmenistan in December 2022, and the Extraordinary Summit of the OTS held in Ankara in March 2023 (Presidency of the Turkish Republic, 2023) indicate that Türkiye has made significant strides in this competition and towards Turkic integration. The new world economic order represents a transformative period in the global economy, driven by globalization, power shifts towards emerging economies, technological advancements and climate change. As the world navigates these changes, it is crucial Turkic countries (OTS) to adapt and harness the opportunities presented by this new era (OTS, 2023).

ECONOMIC POTENTIAL AND ECONOMIC POLICY OF TURKIC STATES

Central Asia (CA) is a region with approximately 70 million people, serving as the ancestral home of the Turks and boasting abundant underground resources. Azerbaijan has a population of 10.43 million, while Türkiye’s population stands at 86.61 million. According to 2023 IMF data, the total population of the six Turkic states reached 173 million (Center for Analysis and Economic Reforms of Azerbaijan, 2023). Unlike the declining populations of Russia and European Union countries, the Turkic world continues to experience growth. The Turkic world’s greatest asset lies in its young, dynamic, and educated human resources, which are vital for economic activity (Istikbal, 2023).

Figure 1. Country information of Turkic States

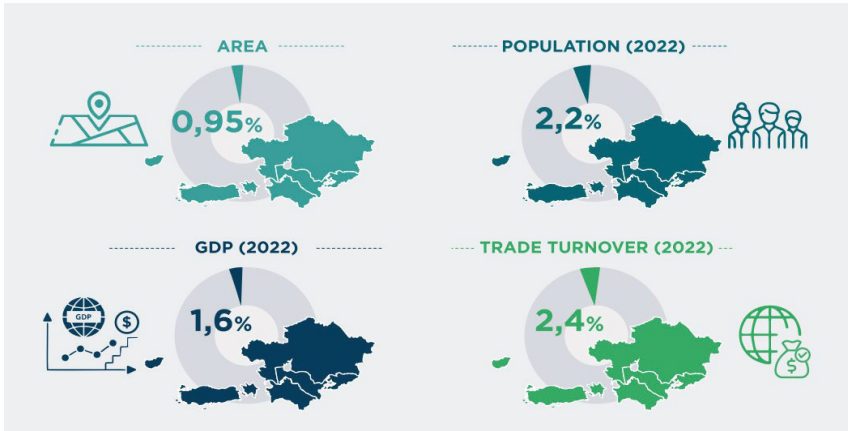


Source: Center for Analysis and Economic Reforms of Azerbaijan, 2023

Azerbaijan's most significant economic strengths lie in its oil, natural gas, and arable fields. Kazakhstan boasts rich reserves of coal, natural gas, and oil, while Uzbekistan possesses abundant coal and natural gas resources. Turkmenistan ranks among the world's largest reserves of natural gas. With its mountainous terrain, Kyrgyzstan boasts abundant resources for the generation of hydropower.

The Turkic world is projected to hold 12.5% of the global high oil and natural gas reserves in the Caspian basin, making it the second largest reserve after the Persian Gulf. This region is rich in underground and terrestrial resources, contributing to its significant share of the world's energy reserves. The energy resources of the Turkic states, which have attained independence, not only contribute to Türkiye's energy needs but also highlight several points that complement each other, thus shaping their strategic impact. Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan have established themselves as the primary producers of oil and natural gas in the post-Soviet region following Russia. The proportion of oil reserves in Central Asian (CA) Turkic states to the world's total reserves is 3.5%, while their natural gas reserves account for 6.9% (Gokdag Atsiz, 2021). Azerbaijan contributes 0.42% to the world's oil reserves, equivalent to 7 billion barrels. Kazakhstan possesses 1.8% (30 billion barrels) of the world's gas and oil reserves, along with 5.9 trillion m³ of natural gas reserves and the third-largest coal deposit in the former USSR. It ranks first globally in tungsten production, second in chromium and manganese production, fourth in molybdenum and phosphate production, third in boron production, and seventh in copper production. Uzbekistan stands as a significant global producer with 45 billion tons of natural gas production, ranking fourth in cotton production and tenth in gold production worldwide, with 800 million tons of copper reserves. The economy of Turkmenistan predominantly relies on natural gas and oil production, boasting 2.75 trillion m³ of natural gas reserves and 1.5 billion barrels of oil reserves as of 1995 (Center for Analysis and Economic Reforms of Azerbaijan, 2023).

Figure 2. *The combined shares of Turkic States in global statistics*



Source: Center for Analysis and Economic Reforms of Azerbaijan, 2023

During the implementation of the centrally planned economy in the USSR, Turkic-speaking republics were not considered favorable entities. Throughout the Soviet era, these republics primarily served as suppliers of raw materials to industrially developed regions, becoming dependent on other republics where main industrial production took place. This dependency resulted in their economic and socio-cultural backwardness. Following the collapse of the Soviet system, some Turkic states refrained from liberal economic reforms and instead pursued “state privatization” (Yuce, 2022). Having been under a centrally controlled economic structure for an extended period, they struggled to adapt to the new economic order upon gaining independence, leading to significant social and economic challenges.

Azerbaijan’s economy, transitioning to a free market economy, experienced a severe collapse after gaining independence in 1991, with a 60% decrease in economic output from 1991 to 1995. However, starting in 1995, the economy began to recover and enter a period of rapid development through cooperation with international organizations. In 1994, Azerbaijan signed the “Contract of the Century” with 11 of the world’s largest oil companies to jointly develop the deep-lying portions of the “Azeri” and “Chirag” fields in the Azerbaijani sector of the Caspian Sea, distributing the produced oil in shares. Subsequently, Azerbaijan aimed to position itself as a significant energy exporter in Eurasia and achieved several successes in this endeavor. While Azerbaijan has integrated well into global energy markets, the same cannot be said for non-energy markets. The oil and gas sector dominates the country’s commodity exports, with its share in total exports increasing from 68.8% in 1999 to 89.5% in 2019. Although the value of non-energy exports, primarily agricultural products such as tomatoes, fruits, nuts, cotton, and non-monetary gold, increased between 1999 and 2019, their share of total exports declined from 31.2% to 10.5%. During this period, non-energy exports accounted for only around 3% of GDP on average, indicating a relatively low level of export market stability for non-energy products. While the country has seen growth in service exports such as tourism, transportation, and computer and information services, the COVID-19 pande-

mic severely impacted the tourism sector. Going forward, changes in trade policy, including tariff reductions and non-tariff measures, as well as membership in the World Trade Organization (WTO), may be crucial for promoting non-energy exports (OTS, 2023).

While Kazakhstan grappled with some challenges inherited from the USSR, it successfully addressed a significant portion of them through structural measures it implemented. These reforms, coupled with its rich natural resources, positioned Kazakhstan as the central country in Central Asia. Following independence, Kazakhstan emerged as the most successful country in attracting foreign direct investment, becoming an appealing investment destination for nations such as the USA, Great Britain, China, France, Russia, and the Netherlands.

Unlike other Central Asian republics, Uzbekistan opted for a controlled and distinct transformation process instead of rapid reforms upon gaining independence. In the words of Uzbekistan's President Islam Karimov, "The old house cannot be demolished without building a new house," reflecting the state's approach to liberal economic reforms. Uzbekistan chose to implement reforms gradually and cautiously, ensuring a smooth transition to a market economy without dismantling the system inherited from the Soviet era.

Although nearly all Turkic states experienced economic crises in the initial period of their independence, they managed to recover to varying degrees in later years, albeit at different rates of economic development. Each country pursued its own development model based on its unique dynamics. Among these nations, Kazakhstan stands out as the most developed, while Kyrgyzstan lags behind as the least developed.

Kyrgyzstan, unlike the rest of the Central Asian republics, found it challenging to secure foreign investment, partly due to its geographical limitations and the absence of significant underground resources. With its landlocked status and mountainous topography, Kyrgyzstan grapples with logistical difficulties. The continuation of political instability has further hindered investment prospects, leading to the perpetuation of a traditional economic structure with low domestic income levels. The country's economy relies heavily on agriculture, animal husbandry, mining, and remittances from citizens working abroad. Key agricultural products include cotton, wool, and livestock, with cotton being the primary export. Other exported commodities include gold, mercury, uranium, natural gas, and, intermittently, electricity. Kyrgyzstan aims to broaden its range of exported goods and services while also seeking to draw in foreign capital, which may involve the development of hydroelectric dams. However, its success in this regard has been limited, primarily due to an inadequate investment climate. Apart from a Canadian company managing the country's gold mine, there is a notable absence of large Western investor companies in Kyrgyzstan.

Kazakhstan is distinguished as the Central Asian Turkic republic that has garnered the highest amount of foreign investment, as previously stated. The management of energy resources serves as the cornerstone of its economic development strategy, with oil playing a pivotal role in shaping Kazakhstan's economic structure. After gaining independence, Kazakhstan allocated significant resources to the oil industry, resulting in a swift expansion of the economy and the pro-

motion of growth in non-oil sectors. With more oil reserves than natural gas reserves, Kazakhstan ranks as the second-largest oil producer among post-Soviet republics after Russia. Today, the oil industry constitutes a significant portion of the industrial sector. Additionally, metal processing and steel production represent another vital sector of Kazakhstan's economy, with mining and metallurgy emerging as the second most developed industry, attracting substantial foreign investment.

In contrast to Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan pursued a gradual transition to a free market economy following independence, opting for a phased approach rather than rapid reforms. In this context, the prevailing system was not completely overhauled; instead, particular changes were made to adjust existing institutions to the requirements of the market economy. Uzbekistan's policy also included efforts to preserve the economic structure inherited from the USSR, with a focus on reducing imports. Previously known as a major cotton producer during the Soviet era, Uzbekistan maintained a centrally planned economy centered on heavy industry and cotton production. This structure persisted to some extent in the post-independence period, with heavy industry remaining a significant component of the economy. Within the processing industry, the automotive sector attracted considerable attention from foreign investors. Agriculture ranks as the second most important sector in Uzbekistan, with the country ranking fifth globally in cotton production and second in cotton exports. However, domestic grain production falls short of meeting market demand, resulting in heavy reliance on grain imports. Uzbekistan's economy also benefits from its abundant mineral resources, including gold, coal, aluminum, and uranium. Uzbekistan is the second-largest producer of gold among the CIS countries, with Russia being the only country ahead in terms of production. Following the tenure of President I. Karimov, President Shavkat Mirziyoyev pursued a more liberal economic policy, implementing reforms that contributed to significant economic growth in Uzbekistan during his tenure (Yuce, 2022).

In the economic structure underpinned by specialization in the Soviet centrally planned economy system, Turkmenistan's contribution extended beyond cotton to include oil and natural gas production. Following independence, Turkmenistan partially retained this economic framework inherited from the Soviet system, with oil and natural gas playing pivotal roles in its foreign trade. The nation possesses ample stores of oil, natural gas, mirabilite, iodine, bromine, sulfur, potassium, and salt. Turkmenistan's gas reserves account for approximately 10% of the world's total, making it the fourth-largest holder of gas reserves globally (World Bank, 2023).

Therefore, the economic capacity of each Turkic republic in Central Asia, combined with factors such as population demographics, border conflicts, relationships with neighboring nations, security considerations, and geopolitical positioning, as well as internal and external dynamics, played a significant role in shaping their respective foreign policies. These policies were crafted in response to challenges inherited from the USSR and were influenced by the leadership styles of their presidents. Consequently, each country pursued distinct foreign policies, reflecting their preferred economic growth models, whether inward-focused or outward-oriented, alongside their unique dynamics.

DYNAMICS OF ECONOMIC RELATIONS OF TURKIC STATES WITH TÜRKİYE

The five Turkic states, transitioning from a centrally planned economic system to a free market economy, sought to leverage Ankara's expertise and foster cooperation with Türkiye in foreign trade and investments within this unfamiliar economic landscape. Hindered by economic decline inherited from the USSR and a lack of institutional infrastructure, these republics forged emotionally driven economic ties with Türkiye, a brotherly country sharing ethnicity, culture, and religion. Alongside maintaining foreign trade relations with Türkiye, the Turkic states also engaged with the republics integrated during the USSR period. Nevertheless, as these nations progressed in establishing the required institutional framework, they achieved notable advancements in trade ties with Western nations, in addition to their current trade allies. While there has been a relative decline in emotionally based economic relations with Türkiye, Türkiye has consistently ranked among the top five countries in the economies of these nations.

Among the Turkic states, Azerbaijan stands out as the country with which Türkiye has fostered the closest economic relations. Economic ties between these nations, elevated to the highest level with the 2021 Shusha Declaration, encompass various facets. Türkiye serves as Azerbaijan's primary trade partner in implementing joint regional and international projects (BTC pipeline, BTE natural gas pipeline, TANAP, and TAP). Economic relations between Azerbaijan and Türkiye began flourishing in the early years of Azerbaijan's independence, marked by the signing of the "Agreement on Trade and Economic Cooperation" on November 1, 1992. Subsequent measures and steps taken after 1994 to enhance the legal-contractual framework laid the groundwork for a special stage in bilateral economic relations. Türkiye ranks among the top investors in Azerbaijan's economy, with direct investments from Türkiye to Azerbaijan totaling \$13.3 billion during 1995-2021 (\$10.4 billion in the oil sector and \$2.9 billion, ranking first, in the non-oil sector). Turkish enterprises are predominantly engaged in the fields of energy, industry, telecommunications, banking and insurance, construction, transportation, food, light industry (textiles), and healthcare.

Azerbaijan is also among the top investors in Türkiye's economy, with a noticeable surge in investments in recent years. Presently, approximately 2,000 companies with Azerbaijani capital operate in Türkiye. From 1995 to 2021, direct investments from Azerbaijan to Türkiye amounted to \$20.3 billion (\$17.1 billion in the petrochemical sector and \$3.2 billion in the non-oil sector). Notably, the "Star" oil refinery, completed by SOCAR in September 2018 within the "Petkim" petrochemical complex in Izmir, Türkiye, represents the largest single investment at \$6.3 billion. Overall, Azerbaijani businessmen investing in Türkiye lead among the countries of Central Asia and the Caucasus in terms of both the number of companies and investment volume. Turkish companies are actively engaged as contractors in numerous infrastructure projects within Azerbaijan's liberated territories, contributing significantly to large-scale construction efforts.

Turkish-Azerbaijani trade relations exhibit high developmental dynamics. Türkiye ranks as the second main trading partner of Azerbaijan in both imports and exports, as well as in bilateral trade volume. In 2021, the trade turnover

between Azerbaijan and Türkiye amounted to \$4,661.85 million (12.06%). This includes an import volume of \$1,843.71 million (18%) and an export volume of \$2,818.14 million (8.48%). Azerbaijan hosts 4,797 Turkish companies operating across various sectors, with active participation in the country's liberated territories. Turkish enterprises are currently engaged in 107 projects across various sectors in these regions. (Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the Republic of Türkiye, 2022).

Azerbaijan-Türkiye economic cooperation encompasses both bilateral matters and regional economic collaboration. Joint endeavors between the two nations have led to the realization of several regional projects of international significance. Prominent examples include the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline (BTC), Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum gas pipeline (BTE), Trans-Anatolian natural gas pipeline (TANAP), Trans-Adriatic pipeline (TAP), and Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway line (BTK).

Since gaining independence, Kyrgyzstan has established relations with Türkiye across many spheres. Gaining strength through the connection of shared history, culture, and language, bilateral relations have rapidly and comprehensively evolved during this period. Since 1992, numerous high-level visits have occurred between Kyrgyzstan and Türkiye, resulting in the signing of over 100 bilateral agreements. Close cooperation in bilateral relations has extended to the regional and international arenas, with economic relations emerging as a crucial aspect. Türkiye ranks among the top five countries investing in Kyrgyzstan. However, it's important to note that Türkiye's investments primarily consist of medium and small-scale investments and do not fall within the strategic investment category. Kyrgyzstan seeks cooperation with Türkiye in various sectors such as agriculture, textiles, mining, and hydropower. Although efforts are underway to increase the volume of foreign trade between the two countries to \$1 billion, the current trade volume (approximately \$500 million in 2020) falls significantly below this target. Türkiye primarily imports beans, cotton and cotton fabrics, raw leather, precious stones, gold and silver jewelry, and mineral fuel from Kyrgyzstan. Conversely, Kyrgyzstan imports light industrial products, chemical products, plastics, engineering products, agricultural raw materials, furniture, and accessories from Türkiye. The largest shares of the country's trade turnover fall on Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Türkiye, at the same time, the Republic of Türkiye and Kazakhstan are active in investment projects of Kyrgyzstan in the field of mining, communications, banking, etc. (OTS, 2023: 178).

Kazakhstan-Türkiye trade relations, which commenced with the "Protocol of Trade and Economic Cooperation", have progressed, facilitating the signing of agreements covering a wide array of relations. Additionally, economic ties between the two nations are primarily governed by the Long-Term Trade-Economic Cooperation Agreement, Economic and Technical Cooperation, Mutual Promotion and Protection of Investments, Double Taxation Agreements, New Synergies, and the Joint Economic Program Action Plan for 2019-2020. Trade relations between Türkiye and Kazakhstan are anchored in joint trade agreements. Upon examining the indicators of trade and economic relations between the two nations, it becomes evident that Kazakhstan's exports to Türkiye exceed Türkiye's exports to Kazakhstan by approximately 1.2 times. Türkiye's exports to Kazakhstan constitute 1% of the total export volume, while Kazakhstan's

exports to Türkiye make up 5% of the total. Moreover, Türkiye's imports from Kazakhstan are primarily dominated by copper and copper-derived products, whereas Türkiye is an oil-importing country, resulting in a trade deficit in its dealings with Kazakhstan. Despite positive developments in the political and cultural spheres, these advancements have not fully translated into trade relations between the two countries. Investment and trade development between Kazakhstan and Türkiye have yet to reach the desired level. Türkiye's contribution to Kazakhstan's yearly foreign trade is a mere 5%, highlighting a significant aspect of the situation. Moreover, Türkiye is not included in the top ten countries for foreign direct investment in Kazakhstan. Consequently, investment relations between the two countries lag behind trade relations. Addressing the factors impeding the advancement of trade relations between Kazakhstan and Türkiye is imperative in this context.

Türkiye is one of the five leading trading partners of Kazakhstan. Mutual trade turnover between our countries is growing every year. In 2021, it exceeded \$5 billion. Without slowing down, we must bring it to \$10 billion. Türkiye is also one of our 10 largest investors. It has invested over \$4 billion in the Kazakh economy. Kazakhstan has invested more than \$1 billion in the Turkish economy. Over the past two years, 16 investment projects have been implemented in Kazakhstan (Kazakhstan and Türkiye, 2022). Of Kazakhstan's top 10 major trading partners in 2010, 7 remained by 2021. The three new major countries are Türkiye, Uzbekistan and South Korea, which were not in the top 10 in 2010. The UK, Austria and Canada dropped out of the list. In general, there were 18 countries in the top 10 of Kazakhstan's trading partners during the analyzed period (OTS, 2023: 107-108).

It should be emphasized that the total capital of Turkish companies in the Kazakh economy is almost \$120 billion, which is almost 20% of Türkiye's GDP or 70% of Kazakhstan's GDP. During the visit, commercial agreements worth approximately \$1.1 billion were signed, including the joint production of "Anka" unmanned aerial vehicles in Kazakhstan, which will become Anka's first production base outside of Türkiye (Khitakhunov, 2022).

After gaining independence, economic relations between Uzbekistan and Türkiye began on a positive note, marked by the signing of numerous agreements to establish a legal framework for trade relations. However, economic relations experienced fluctuations, mirroring the ups and downs in political ties. In 1994, the Uzbek government called 1,600 of the 2,000 Uzbek students studying in Türkiye to return home. After enduring bumpy relations for more than two decades, relations between the two countries have recently improved (Simsek and Kurt, 2021: 123). Some businessmen were arrested, and their assets were seized. Consequently, Turkish investments dwindled, foreign trade contracted, and trade between the two nations fell below its potential levels.

With the improvement in foreign relations between Türkiye and Uzbekistan, particularly following the accession of Shevket Mirziyoyev to power, a new era in trade relations between the two countries commenced. Since President Mirziyoyev's tenure began, parallel to the rapid development of relations in all sectors, there has been a significant surge in foreign trade volume. Bilateral trade volume, which stood at \$1.242 billion in 2016, nearly doubled to \$2.101 billion

in 2020 (Yuce, 2022). In 2018, 364 Turkish-capital companies were established in Uzbekistan, a number that has now risen to approximately 1,100. Türkiye has invested \$1 billion in various sectors such as banking, pharmaceuticals, construction, automotive, shoe industry, tourism, and food. These investments are estimated to generate an income of \$50,000. The total value of projects implemented by Turkish contractors in Uzbekistan thus far amounts to \$2.7 billion (Simsek and Kurt, 2021: 124).

In recent years, Turkish companies have once again undertaken significant projects in Uzbekistan. Türkiye primarily exports cleaning products, pharmaceuticals, trailers, plastic products, and food processing machines to Uzbekistan. Conversely, its main imports from Uzbekistan include copper, copper alloys and products, boards, cotton yarn, unprocessed zinc, petroleum oils, fertilizers, tins, gold, unwrought lead, and silk. According to the World Bank (2022), Türkiye ranked among Uzbekistan's top five foreign trade partners in both exports and imports in 2019. Specifically, Türkiye accounted for 7.52% of Uzbekistan's total exports, placing it fifth among exporting countries, and held a 5.93% share in Uzbekistan's imports, ranking it fifth among importing countries. Turkish entrepreneurs have invested in water supply, sanitation and waste collection, as well as health care. The number of enterprises with Turkish capital operating in these sectors is 1,912 units (Nurdinova, 2022).

In August 2022, Turkish Trade Minister Mehmet Mush, speaking at a trilateral meeting between Türkiye, Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan in Tashkent, noted that the three countries have important combined commercial potential with a combined gross domestic product of about \$1 trillion and a population of about 130 million people. According to him, the preferential trade agreements signed with Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan indicate the importance of realizing this potential. Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan play an important role in Türkiye's trade with Central Asia, while Türkiye also acts as a bridge in Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan's trade with Europe, the Middle East and Africa (Daily Sabah, 2022).

Although detailed statistical data on Turkmenistan's economy is lacking, it is evident that economic relations between Türkiye and Turkmenistan are burgeoning and expanding, driven by Türkiye's significant share in the country's foreign trade and the large-scale projects undertaken by Turkish contractor companies operating in Turkmenistan. Turkmenistan is the top country in Central Asia where Turkish companies are responsible for executing projects. Furthermore, Türkiye emerges as the foremost investor in Turkmenistan.

Turkish contractor companies are at the forefront of various projects, including residential, industrial, cultural, and sports facilities, making significant contributions to the sector. From 1992 to 2019, Turkish companies implemented 1019 projects valued at approximately \$50 billion through contract services (Daily Sabah, 2021). Additionally, Turkish entrepreneurs have established textile enterprises in Turkmenistan, a notable cotton producer, showcasing some of the country's most modern investment facilities. These investments play a role in both creating employment opportunities and increasing the country's textile and garment exports.

While detailed statistical data concerning the economy of Turkmenistan cannot be reached, it is possible to express that the economic relations between Türkiye and Turkmenistan are developing and becoming diversified thanks to the significant share of Türkiye in Turkmenistan's foreign trade and the large-scale projects carried out by the Turkish contracting firms settled in the country. Turkmenistan is where Turkish companies undertake projects, most in Central Asia. Moreover, the country that invests in Turkmenistan the most is Türkiye. Turkish contracting companies that have implemented many tasks, such as residences, industrial sites, and cultural and sports facilities, are still in the leading position in the sector today (Kayali, 2018: 163). Türkiye-Turkmenistan foreign trade volume occurred as 1,7 billion dollars in 2021. Foreign trade was on behalf of Türkiye, albeit tiny (OTS, 2023: 275).

However, recent years have seen a decline in bilateral trade volume due to the impact of global economic shifts. Despite this, Türkiye remains among Turkmenistan's top five trade partners in both exports and imports. According to World Bank data, Turkmenistan's primary export partners in 2020 were Russia, Italy, Iran, Türkiye, and Ukraine, while its main import partners were Russia, Türkiye, Ukraine, the UAE, and Japan. Türkiye's exports to Turkmenistan primarily consist of textile products, energy, chemicals, and agricultural goods, while its imports include processed metals, electronics, food, textiles, industrial goods, processed foods, construction materials, vehicles, and medicines (World Bank, 2023).

The economic infrastructure of the Turkic world presents opportunities to elevate joint cooperation to a higher level. Areas such as the defense industry, tourism economy, and establishment of joint production enterprises merit attention from the Turkic world. Türkiye's recent strides in developing the defense industry underscore the potential for close collaboration with other Turkic countries in this sector, which could foster more independent actions among the Turkic states. Additionally, the establishment of new energy lines connecting the Turkic states to Türkiye promises to bolster trade relations with Europe. With Europe-Asia trade valued at \$3 trillion, the Turkic world stands poised to serve as a vital bridge. It's imperative to involve representatives from the private sector in this process and expand initiatives for mutual investment, projects, and aid across various sectors.

In 2021, the volume of foreign trade between Türkiye and the Turkic states reached \$7.57 billion. Despite a more than tenfold increase since 1995 and observed developmental momentum, the indicators suggest that the full economic potential between the parties has yet to be realized. This underscores the importance of enhancing economic relations with the Turkic states, which currently constitute 1.94% of Türkiye's foreign trade, through quota applications, investments, and joint projects. On balance, Türkiye is an essential partner of the Turkic States in export and import. At the same time, it is impossible to mention a highly significant foreign trade capacity considering the amounts and its share within the total foreign trade (Table 1).

Table 1. Trade data of Turkic States

States	Import (Billion \$)	Share (%)	Export (Billion \$)	Share (%)
Azerbaijan	2,81	12,6	1,84	15,7
Kazakhstan	2,13	4,5	0,927	2,4
Uzbekistan	1,63	11,6	1,65	6,9
Kyrgyzstan	0,090	5,4	0,321	5,6
Turkmenistan	0,710	23,1	0,984	25,8
Total	7,37	8,4	5,72	6,9

Source: OTS, 2023

Looking at the foreign trade of the Turkic states with Türkiye, Azerbaijan emerges as the largest economic partner, followed by Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Kyrgyzstan. Türkiye's exports to the Turkic states are dominated by machinery and mechanical devices (\$843.56 million), electrical machines and devices (\$364.78 million), textiles (\$315.18 million), iron and steel (\$294.50 million), furniture (\$189.63 million), motor land vehicles (\$177.4 million), and air transport and parts (\$172.63 million). Imports include copper (\$1.08 billion), cotton (\$497.97 million), aluminum (\$270.37 million), mineral fuel (\$176.27 million), zinc (\$167.24 million), and plastic (\$161.41 million), occupying significant positions (Istikbal, 2023).

Analysis of foreign trade by sectors reveals that Türkiye's exports span various sectors and processing industries, while imports predominantly consist of natural resources and agricultural products. This current trade profile, reminiscent of the foreign trade profile of Central Asian states, suggests that Türkiye has the potential to share its knowledge and expertise in the manufacturing industry with its fraternal countries.

PROSPECTS OF ECONOMIC INTEGRATION AMONG TURKIC STATES

Economic relations among the Turkic states are advancing each year, with trade expanding and mutually beneficial cooperation in investment. Azerbaijan has invested over \$14 billion in the Organization of Turkic States (OTS) countries, while OTS countries have invested more than \$12 billion in Azerbaijan's economy. There are ample opportunities to further enhance these economic ties, including projects like the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway line and the Trans-Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline (TANAP), which could potentially link other Turkic-speaking countries. Moreover, the expansion of investments and online trade among OTS countries is seen as a significant opportunity (Turkmenbashi Summit, 2022).

In recent years, economic relations between the parties have seen significant development. During the first 10 months of 2022, trade turnover between Azerbaijan and Türkiye reached \$5 billion, while trade turnover between Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan amounted to \$400 million. The trade volume between Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan has surged by five times this year in comparison to the previous year, indicating a significant growth in economic relations between the two countries.

On December 4, 2022, a tripartite summit took place in Turkmenbashi, Turkmenistan, with the leaders of Azerbaijan, Türkiye, and Turkmenistan in attendance. Azerbaijan is a strategic partner with Turkmenistan under a 2017 agreement, and a strategic ally with Türkiye under the 2021 Shusha Declaration. During the summit, discussions were held on steps to further expand cooperation among the three countries in all areas, including trade, energy, and transportation, leading to agreements being reached. The Joint Statement of the First Summit meeting and tripartite documents covering energy, trade, economy, customs, transport, science, education, and culture represent tangible steps taken in this direction.

Speaking at the Turkmenbashi summit, President Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan announced that Azerbaijan's trade turnover with Türkiye had increased by 45% to \$5 billion in January-October 2022. He highlighted that approximately \$20 billion had been invested from Azerbaijan into the Turkish economy, with about \$14 billion reciprocally invested from Türkiye into Azerbaijan's economy. Aliyev emphasized that trade turnover with Turkmenistan had increased fivefold this year, marking a record indicator. Additionally, he emphasized the notable advancements in transportation and logistics within Azerbaijan, Türkiye, and Turkmenistan, highlighting the effective completion of various projects by the trio of nations. These projects, Aliyev stated, open up new opportunities for cooperation in transportation connections (Turkmenbashi Summit, 2022).

The growth in trade necessitates the development of logistics infrastructure. Currently, Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan are expanding their logistics capabilities on opposite shores of the Caspian Sea, while Türkiye is enhancing its logistics capabilities in the Mediterranean and Black Seas. Over \$100 million has been invested to increase the cargo transfer volume of the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway from 1 million tons to 5 million tons. Plans include the acquisition of new tankers, ferries, and cargo ships to augment sea transit capacity, and an additional 9 cargo planes are slated to increase air transit capacity. The increasing volume of trade demands the creation of fresh transportation passages, like the Zangezur corridor, in conjunction with the customary trade routes. Aliyev noted that Azerbaijan has already completed 40% of the railway line and 70% of the road required for the opening of the Zangezur corridor (Turkmenbashi Summit, 2022).

The outcomes of the Turkmenbashi summit underscore its significance as a pivotal stage in the advancement of the Azerbaijan-Türkiye-Turkmenistan tripartite format. This format complements the multifaceted bilateral relations existing between these countries and aims to further develop relations among the Turkic states based on common interests and benefits.

Beyond cultural and historical ties, Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan share similar geographical constraints—they lack access to open seas and oceans. This shared circumstance motivates both sides to activate diplomacy on various fronts. Over the past three decades, Baku has primarily cultivated relations in the Western direction, while Ashgabat has focused on the Eastern direction. Nevertheless, the transfer of achievements, resources, and avenues of communication is now seen as an essential need. This exchange, besides yielding economic benefits for Azerbaijan, Türkiye, and Turkmenistan, will also contribute to enhancing the political weight of all three parties.

Energy plays a crucial role in these multilateral relations. Turkmenistan, ranking fourth globally in terms of natural gas reserves, primarily exports its gas to China. In 2019, Turkmenistan accounted for over 60% of China's gas imports via pipelines. Despite this, Russia's sale of energy to China at a preferential price undermines Turkmenistan's position in the Asian market. Russia does not serve as a viable alternative market for Turkmenistan. Officially wary of Western sanctions, Ashgabat refrains from fostering relations with Moscow. However, Russia has intermittently blocked the transportation of Kazakh oil to pressure the West, diminishing Ashgabat's trust in Moscow.

While gas prices in Asia have fallen, in August 2022, the price of one cubic meter of gas in the European market reached \$2,700. It's undeniable that this figure will be even higher during the winter months. It is essential for Turkmenistan to take into account Europe, for the purpose of diversification and to reap economic advantages. Besides China, transporting gas to Europe can enhance Turkmenistan's political standing in the international arena and create opportunities for attracting new investments to the country. Azerbaijan and Türkiye stand ready to assist Turkmenistan in this endeavor. There's already a specific energy agreement between the parties. In 2021, Azerbaijan agreed to purchase 1.5 billion cubic meters of gas from Turkmenistan in the form of a swap deal through Iran. With Turkmen gas, Azerbaijan fulfills local demand and gains the opportunity to enhance its export potential towards the West. In the coming years, the construction of additional energy pipelines will allow Turkmenistan to transport gas to Europe through Azerbaijan and Türkiye.

CONCLUSION

While Türkiye underscores the shift of the world's center from the West to the East with the "*Asia Again*" approach, it acknowledges the importance of maintaining balanced relations with Kazakhstan, Russia, and China. Uzbekistan is opening its economy to the world, Turkmenistan is striving to expand its export opportunities, and Kyrgyzstan is seeking to attract financial resources through foreign investment. Azerbaijan is gearing up for a new economic resurgence by reclaiming its occupied territories. Fundamentally, the Turkic sphere, developing in the midst of the evolving global panorama, has embarked on a fresh chapter. Fostering bonds through structured institutions, the Turkic states are spearheading the transformations of this new era. In this context, the Turkic world stands to benefit more from increased economic integration. The natural resources Türkiye requires are abundant in the post-Soviet Turkic states, while these states look up to Türkiye's advanced manufacturing industry as a model. Consequently, the Turkic world, aspiring to deepen cooperation in customs, tourism, trade, defense, and education, prioritizes the dissemination of prosperity. However, greater emphasis should be placed on joint investments, projects, and initiatives in the medium and long term. From this perspective, it's crucial to develop investments fostered under Türkiye's leadership in a mutual and balanced manner, as exemplified in Azerbaijan. Additionally, Turkic states ought to enhance trade relations with Türkiye and further bolster joint ventures across various sectors.

In February 2023, a powerful earthquake struck the south of Türkiye, centered in Kahramanmaraş, resulting in the deaths of 50,399 people and injuries to 107,204 others. The OTS countries swiftly responded, providing crucial first aid and participating in search and rescue operations. Azerbaijan emerged as the first and largest contributor to the aid efforts. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, speaking at the Extraordinary Summit of the heads of state of the OTS convened in Ankara in March 2023, expressed gratitude for the assistance rendered by Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan, emphasizing its immense value to Türkiye. At the conclusion of the summit, the OTS countries agreed to coordinated actions in response to natural disasters and other areas, as outlined in the Ankara Declaration issued thereafter (OTS Extraordinary Summit, 2023). The agreements reached during the Samarkand, Turkmenbashi, and Ankara summits signal a deepening of Turkic integration, fostering hopes for the establishment of an integration union akin to the European Union.

The development of economic relations between the Turkic states, as well as the economic and political strengthening of Türkiye in the South Caucasus and Central Asia, the important steps taken on the way to Turkic integration in recent years and the agreements signed, worry countries such as Russia, China and Iran, which have interests in these regions. It was an expected reaction that the mentioned states assessed Turkic integration as dangerous for their national and state interests and that they would create obstacles to it. Joint cooperation of Turkic states is necessary to prevent adverse effects on Turkic integration. Under President R.T. Erdoğan's administration, the development of economic relations among the Turkic states has been at the forefront of Türkiye's geopolitical plans. Observing the recent dynamics in the development of economic relations among the Turkic states, it is foreseeable that Turkic integration will deepen in the near future, potentially emerging as a significant power center. regional organizations like the Organization of Turkic States assume crucial responsibilities. By promoting resilience at the regional level, they can have a cascading effect on enhancing global resilience within the multilateral system, which operates on a rules-based order. "Turkic World Vision-2040" announces: "We are living in an age that requires a strategic vision to recognize and address the rapid changes worldwide and their impact on us" (OTS, 2021).

In the modern age, the dynamic development of Türkiye's economic relations with the Turkic states of Central Asia and the South Caucasus, the close cooperation of the Turkic states of these two regions in a bilateral and multilateral format, open wide opportunities for the realization of the idea of *Turkic integration*. In this context, Türkiye plays a central role in the integration of Turkic states, serving as the leading state in the Turkic world and unifying the economic potential of these states. The tendency towards integration among Turkic states should be highlighted. The active engagement of Turkic integration unions, which are comparable to the European Union, is expected to be a significant factor in international relations in the near future. Therefore, if the Turkic world places greater emphasis on economic cooperation and integration, it stands to reap significant benefits and enhance its strategic significance. Consequently, economic prosperity, foreign trade, and integration across various sectors within the Turkic world will flourish, paving the way for its emergence as a potent international power center in the future.

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Research Article

**INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AS A MEANS OF BUILDING
IMAGE AND REPUTATION: THE CASE OF AZERBAIJAN**

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ABSTRACT

Azerbaijan, a key player in the South Caucasus, has leveraged its participation in international organizations (IOs) to enhance its global image and reputation. Azerbaijan strategically uses international platforms to advance its global standing. This article explores the country's activities within the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, the Economic Cooperation Organization, and the Organization of Turkic States by analysing the country's approach in undertaking initiatives to build its international standing. This research emphasises Azerbaijan's role in shaping and driving cooperative endeavours on the global stage. The practical significance of the analyses is to offer insights into the dynamics of initiatives undertaken by Azerbaijan within international organizations, taking the perspective of emerging theoretical discussions on 'small states' in international relations. The method of the study is based on a systematic analysis of legal documents (i.e. declarations, agreements, and others), speeches, and news from the official websites of Azerbaijan and international organizations.

Keywords: Azerbaijan, International organizations, Reputation, Image-building, Rising minor power.

INTRODUCTION

There are two main competing perspectives – classical theories of international relations – on the role and significance of international organizations in international affairs, namely realism (or reductionism) and liberal institutionalism (or idealism). Realism and liberalism offer distinct and contrasting explanations regarding the relationships between the states and international organizations.

Liberal institutionalists highlight the potential for cooperation among states facilitated by IOs, emphasising the importance of rules and norms (Katzenstein et al., 1998: 647). In contrast, (neo)realists underscored the dominance of state interests within IOs and downplayed the impact of international organizations on policy outcomes, rendering IOs as discussion platforms and means to serve the interests of powerful states (Reinalda and Verbeek, 1998: 2). Liberal institutionalism counter-argues by saying that states do not solely act upon their interests, but also regard international law and order established by IOs.

In fact, the number of international institutions has been continuously growing since World War II. Governments across the world continue to allocate material and symbolic resources towards the sustenance and expansion of international organizations (Goodin and Klingemann, 1996: 467). State support for the expansion of international institutions implies that they fulfil functions that align with state interests. States' continued backing and investment in international institutions signify that these organizations perform functions deemed beneficial to state interests.

This partly explains why countries sometimes opt for international institutions to achieve their foreign policy goals. Realism acknowledges that cooperation through IOs is possible, though defined by the principle of relative gains (distribution of benefits) and concern about potential cheating, defection, or losses (Reinalda et al., 1998: 14). Therefore, international cooperation cannot be taken for granted as it is limited by its alignment with the national interests of states, with relative gains and losses being critical factors that influence the extent and sustainability of such cooperation.

Liberal institutionalism foresees exponentially growing cooperation among states in a globalised world underpinned by universal values and intellectual progress. Especially, the increasing globalisation of the economy enhances interdependence among various actors such as states. As these actors deal with the structural shifts linked to globalisation, they may find motivations to engage in international collaboration collectively.

For institutionalists, IOs create opportunities for states to engage in honest behaviour by providing credible information about each party and clarifying gains from cooperation, lowering transaction costs, establishing connections, and offering prominent reference points for fostering cooperation (Keohane and Martin, 1995: 45, 49). The idea of international organization advances a positive image in itself. For instance, advocates of the League of Nations were initially inspired by the 'open' diplomacy it entailed (Williams et al., 2012: 162).

While realism and liberalism as schools of thought in international relations offer insights about the role of states in international organizations, these insights can also help us to understand the means and methods of building image and reputation by states. State activities within IOs can be interpreted as directly or indirectly involving efforts that serve to improve their international image and reputation. A new wave of scholarship acknowledges that states prioritise their reputation, identity, and sense of community as part of international society (Ingebritsen, 2002: 12). Careful and systematic construction of ‘state image and reputation’ across IOs, using a broad repertoire of strategies, may result in positive perceptions of a state and its acceptance as ‘expert, mediator, impartial, reliable,’ etc.

One such strategy used to gain attention and create a certain image is “pseudo-events,” which are usually well planned and demonstrative of a country’s image-boosting intentions (Kunczik, 2002: 120). John H. Herz claimed: “It is perhaps no exaggeration to say that today half of power politics consists of image making. With the rising importance of publics in foreign affairs, image making has steadily increased” (Herz, 1981: 187). In shaping the international image of a state, international organizations are deemed indispensable actors, allowing states to implement image-building tools (Yeremieieva, 2022: 66). Interestingly, research conducted on the Czech Republic’s state policy of supporting Czech nationals in positions within international organizations suggested that it mainly served the purpose of enhancing the country’s international status (Hornát et al., 2023).

Although international organizations take the form of associations of states (intergovernmental) with actual power kept in state control, this control should not be understood as a monopoly zone exclusive to hegemonic powers but also shaped and influenced by rising minor powers (RMPs). In fact, member states’ behaviour within IOs can even go as far as “bolstering or staining the organization’s reputation” (Hafner-Burton and Schneider, 2019). In this article, we will see how a rising minor power wields its membership within IOs, constructs its identity, and projects a persona by initiating, leading, and/or contributing to global policies despite its relatively limited capacity (i.e. material resources).

Rising minor powers highly regard the potential of international organizations as multiple-actor fora where they may act as norm entrepreneurs shaping global politics; engage in discourse; frame global issues; and construct new identities in their relationships (Neumann and Gstöhl, 2006: 9–15; Long, 2017: 145). Multilateralism is considered indispensable for RMPs as a means to gain influence by using strategies like coalition-building and image-building (Thorhallsson and Steinsson, 2017: 2). In addition, within international bodies, RMPs focus on policy areas of great importance or where direct benefits are likely to compensate for their lack of overall structural power (Thorhallsson and Steinsson, 2017: 9).

Former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan reaffirmed that RMPs “give well out of proportion to their size” and “play a central and innovative role” in all issue areas of the United Nations (United Nations, 1998). It is argued that when traditional power resources are less critical – typically relevant in con-

ventional security matters – and factors like diplomatic competence and discursive power are more significant, RMPs can take on the role of a great power (Thorhallsson and Wivel, 2006: 658).

Therefore, RMPs' engagement in multilateral relations within IOs is not solely driven by the 'fear' of counteracting potential threats from great powers but also by the desire to emerge as international players with distinct character, which may lead to heightened activity within IOs, including setting global agendas. RMPs' belief in the 'systemic role' they play equally defines small powers' attitudes toward IOs (Keohane, 1969: 61). Alan Chong and Matthias Maass, professors of international studies, even exalt the power of 'small states,' which helps to stabilise international order by initiating efforts to address humanitarian and moral issues often overlooked by larger states, thus subtly influencing global affairs (Chong and Maass, 2010: 381).

This research paper investigates the following research question: "How does Azerbaijan build its image and reputation through participation in international organizations?" To answer this question, the author consulted legal documents, literature on rising minor powers or 'small states' as the literature refers to them, other official institutional documents, speeches, and relevant articles. Besides the literature review, data collection is mainly based on accessing key foreign policy documents and speeches/statements from official state websites (i.e. president.az, azerbaijan.az) and the websites of international organizations.

This research paper will be well substantiated with examples supporting certain claims, aspiring to include new geographies (CIS countries) into the small states discourse, which is mainly dominated by Scandinavian countries, Gulf countries, and the 'Four Asian Tigers'. The article will illustrate various initiatives announced by Azerbaijan through international organizations in fields like humanitarian aid, intercultural dialogue, promoting sustainable development, building stronger societal foundations, and investing in tourism, transportation, and economically important infrastructure projects and research. Azerbaijan's strategic use of multilateral platforms underscores its belief in the utility of international organizations as effective actors that can aid its cooperation-oriented policies and bolster its global standing.

AZERBAIJAN'S STRATEGIC INITIATIVES IN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Azerbaijan strategically uses international platforms to advance its global standing. In this section, the author explores the country's activities within the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, the Economic Cooperation Organization, and the Organization of Turkic States by analysing the country's approach in undertaking initiatives to build its international standing. The objective is to reveal how Azerbaijan constructs and projects an image through engagement with international organizations while aiming to enhance its reputation by taking initiatives in all spheres. The practical significance of the analyses is to offer insights into the dynamics of initiatives undertaken by Azerbaijan within international organizations, taking the perspective of emerging theoretical discussions on 'small states' in international relations.

Aligning with the rising minor power theories, Azerbaijan boosts its international reputation by hosting numerous significant events and fostering strong relationships within the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). In September 1995, Azerbaijan deepened its cooperation with the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) by hosting an international investment conference in Baku. This event marked the deepening of a fruitful partnership between Azerbaijan and the IDB (Şirəliyeva, 2023: 1061). Fast forward to June 2006, Baku hosted the 33rd Session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers, highlighting Azerbaijan's growing influence within the OIC. This session was followed by the 5th Session of the Islamic Conference of Tourism Ministers in September 2006, further establishing Baku as a hub for OIC activities. In November 2011, Baku also hosted the 29th meeting of COMSTECH, furthering cooperation among OIC member states.

In October 2014, Baku welcomed the 5th International Conference on 'The Role of Women in the Development of the Member Countries of the OIC,' drawing global attention to Azerbaijan's efforts in underscoring women's role in development. The 11th Islamic Conference of Tourism Ministers, held in Baku in June 2022, continued Azerbaijan's tradition of hosting important OIC meetings. These events, and others which will be mentioned below, span over three decades and indicate Azerbaijan's strategic use of its OIC membership to build its international image and reputation.

Azerbaijan's active participation and influence within the OIC have increased over the years, as demonstrated by its election as the chair of the Committee for Labour and Social Protection and as a member of the Executive Committee on Labour Issues for the OIC for the periods of 2014-2016 and 2018-2020, respectively. In April 2013, Baku hosted the 2nd conference of Labour Ministers of OIC member states.

During the conference, the establishment of the OIC Labour Centre² was proposed by President Ilham Aliyev, receiving unanimous approval from the heads of delegations. However, the centre was only inaugurated a decade later, in November 2023, within the framework of the 5th conference of Labour Ministers of OIC, which was again held in Baku. The 5th conference under the theme of "Innovative Solutions and Digitization of Labour and Employment Services in OIC Member States," illustrated Azerbaijan's determination to modernise labour and employment practices.

The 2nd conference also resulted in the adoption of the "OIC Framework for Cooperation on Labour, Employment, and Social Protection," a strategic plan aimed at tackling unemployment, boosting socio-economic development across member states as well as outlining future priorities in labour, migration, workforce development (Worldfolio, 2013; Mammadli, 2019: 131). Additionally, the Baku Declaration was issued, focusing on the creation of new opportunities in labour, employment, and social protection (Azerbaijan.az, n.d.). This meeting significantly strengthened the bonds and cooperation among OIC countries.

1 Note: The new institution complements the ongoing cooperation activities of the OIC General Secretariat in the areas of trade and investment, agriculture, and food security, tourism, education, science and technology, and health, among others.

Moreover, during the Baku meeting in 2013, President Aliyev highlighted Azerbaijan's substantial efforts to eradicate poverty and unemployment, positioning the country as a leading example of socio-economic progress within the Muslim world (Worldfolio, 2013). This recognition was further validated by acknowledgments from the United Nations and the World Bank, which praised Azerbaijan's achievements in meeting its Millennium Development Goals. Azerbaijan's contributions extend beyond labour initiatives to the establishment of key institutions within the OIC, such as the creation of a Youth Forum (regional centre) and a Journalists Association in Azerbaijan.

Baku played a pivotal role in encouraging cultural exchange between the West and the East by hosting the conference of the Council of Europe's Culture Ministers in 2008, inviting colleagues from the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (Habibbeyli, 2017: 41). Within the framework of this initiative, called the 'Baku Process,' Azerbaijan hosted the OIC Culture Ministers' Conference in 2009, this time allowing European countries' culture ministers to take part. The World Intercultural Dialogue Forum, held every two years, further promotes intercultural dialogue and understanding between the two organizations (Council of Europe and OIC) and civilizations.

'Baku Process' epitomises Baku's function as a mediator between European organizations and the OIC. The Baku Process is unique in that it merges intercultural dialogue initiatives based on the values and activities of both the Council of Europe and ICESCO, fostering mutual understanding and cooperation across cultural and religious divides.

In recognition of Azerbaijan's role as a cultural bridge between the Islamic world and European organizations, the OIC, through ICESCO, expressed strong confidence in Baku (Azerbaijan.az, n.d.). Consequently, Baku was declared the cultural capital of the Islamic world by the decision of ICESCO in 2009, and similarly in 2018, the city of Nakhchivan, and in 2024, the city of Shusha received the same prestigious title from the organization. Under this banner, the Azerbaijani government organised numerous events promoting intercultural and interreligious dialogue both domestically and internationally.

In June 2008, Baku organised the International Forum on 'Expanding the Role of Women in Cross-Cultural Dialogue,' which outlined Azerbaijan's plan to promote gender equality and intercultural dialogue simultaneously. Following the declaration of 2017 as the 'Year of Islamic Solidarity' in Azerbaijan, the country held the grandiose event of the 4th Islamic Solidarity Games in May 2017, which brought together athletes from 24 states. The Declaration of the 13th ECO Islamabad Summit in March 2017 endorsed Azerbaijan's initiatives to enhance Islamic solidarity through various activities.

These initiatives reinforced Azerbaijan's image as a unifying power within the Islamic world. In April 2018, Baku once again became a focal point for the OIC with the 4th Session of the Islamic Conference of Youth and Sport Ministers. This event attracted youth and sports ministers from over 40 OIC member countries, emphasising Azerbaijan's role in promoting youth development and sports.

Azerbaijan is also interested in building its reputation through organising international events and establishing new institutions within the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO). In 2013 and 2014, Azerbaijan hosted the 1st and 2nd Baku Forums of ECO Member States' Economic think-tanks. These forums brought together economic intellectuals to evaluate the prospects of growth and cooperation. Within the same period, Azerbaijan managed to hold the 1st and 2nd International Conferences on 'Energy, Regional Integration, and Socio-Economic Development,' creating fertile grounds for deeper cooperation within the ECO region.

In 2002, the former president of Azerbaijan, Heydar Aliyev, proposed the establishment of an ECO Research Centre in Baku to enhance the organization's effectiveness. Finally, after years, in March 2021, the Charter of the ECO Research Centre was signed at the 14th ECO Summit. Serving as the ECO think-tank, the centre's main objective is to facilitate regional cooperation between member states based on economic research, strategic planning, and empirical evidence.

During the 25th Meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers in November 2021, held in Turkmenistan, the Charter for the Clean Energy Centre for the ECO Region (CECECO) was adopted, with Azerbaijan selected as the host country. This selection was based on a competitive process, and the ECO Secretariat partnered with UNIDO and received financial support from the Austrian Development Agency to finalise the arrangements related to the establishment (CECECO, n.d.).

President Ilham Aliyev highlights Azerbaijan's commitment to strengthening cooperation within the ECO in various sectors, including healthcare, renewable energy, oil and gas, taxes, and disaster management (Economic Cooperation Organization, 2017). He once underscored Azerbaijan's dedication to developing ICT cooperation in the region, reinforcing the nation's role as a pivotal player in fostering regional integration and economic development.

In this respect, significant energy-related meetings of the organization were held in Baku in June 2021. The 4th ECO High-Level Experts Group Meeting on Energy was followed by the 4th ECO Energy Ministerial Meeting. The "Baku Declaration," which was adopted at the conclusion of the meeting, aims to intensify energy cooperation within the ECO. Additionally, the meeting resulted in the adoption of the ECO Energy Strategy 2030 and its Action Plan, the Charter of the Clean Energy Centre, and the Regional Electricity Market Roadmap.

Azerbaijan's ambition to become a transport hub is reflected in its substantial investments in transport and logistics infrastructure, positioning the country as a crucial player in the East-West and North-South transport corridors of Eurasia. President Ilham Aliyev frequently mentions Azerbaijan's strategic projects that serve to enhance the North-South and East-West transit corridors. By investing in seaports, railways, roads, and air transport, Azerbaijan aims to capitalise on its geographical location to become a regional transport centre (Economic Cooperation Organization, 2012).

The Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway, completed in October 2017, became a key link not only between Azerbaijan and Türkiye but also across continents, promising geopolitical and geo-economic benefits for all ECO member states. To increase diversification, in 2013, Azerbaijan hosted the 1st ECO High-Level Working Group Meeting focused on the ‘Ghazvin-Rasht-Astara (Iran)-Astara (Azerbaijan)’ Railway Project, garnering strong political support for the North-South Corridor (Economic Cooperation Organization, 2017). Azerbaijan had already completed its segment of this project, inviting further cooperation from other ECO countries.

Within the framework of the ECO, official reports have recently referred to the concept of a ‘Zangezur corridor’ in relation to the documents signed by Azerbaijan, Russia, and Armenia following the Second Karabakh War in 2020. This demonstrates Azerbaijan’s successful foreign policy in promoting the term ‘Zangezur corridor’³ within the ECO region and drawing the attention of key regional players to this new transportation route (Azerbaijan.az, n.d.).

On the other hand, Azerbaijan places special emphasis on improving its global economic stature and emerging as a significant investor country within the ECO. During the 12th ECO Summit, the President Aliyev, after listing economic achievements of Azerbaijan in reference to GDP growth, poverty reduction, employment rate, and country credit ratings, argued that Azerbaijan is rightfully a shareholder in the ECO Trade and Development Bank⁴, and thereby participates in major infrastructure and economic projects in ECO member states as an investor. “Azerbaijan has now started to invest abroad. We are conducting research to access new markets. Of course, we primarily invest in countries that are friendly and brotherly for us (Economic Cooperation Organization, 2012).

Azerbaijan is active within the Organization of Turkic States (OTS) through a series of strategic initiatives and hosting key events, which contribute to the reputation and image-building endeavours of the country. In November 2023, Azerbaijan’s leadership was highlighted at the Tenth Summit in Astana. Notable initiatives of the country included the establishment of a consular cooperation platform within the OTS, which was well received by member states, and the ‘Economic Glossary of the Turkic World’ project aimed at advancing academic integration in the domain of economics.

Aside from these initiatives, Azerbaijan’s constructive and supportive stance in the OTS was further demonstrated through initiatives to host new related/affiliated institutions of the organization. For example, at the Sixth Summit of the OTS in 2018, Azerbaijan took on the responsibility of dedicating special

2 Note: Zangezur corridor is a transportation route that passes through the southernmost borders of Armenia and connects Azerbaijan to Türkiye, which became dysfunctional after the First Karabakh War (1988-1994).

3 Note: The ECO Bank started to operate in 2008. In 2013 February, Azerbaijan became the 5th member of the bank. Currently, there are 6 members, namely Türkiye, Pakistan, Iran, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan, while Uzbekistan is still not part of the ETDB. The ECO Bank provides financial support for the purpose of development of agriculture, energy, transport, information technology, small and medium entrepreneurship, industry, service and other areas of the member countries. Source: <https://www.economy.gov.az/en/post/1645/iet-in-ticaret-ve-inkisaf-banki-ile-emekdasliq-muzakire-edilib>

Secretariat buildings for both the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic States (TurkPA) and the Turkic Culture and Heritage Foundation (TCHF) in Baku. This helped Azerbaijan to assume a role in supporting the institutional infrastructure of the OTS and facilitating its operations. At the Seventh Baku Summit of the OTS, participating countries expressed their gratitude and satisfaction with the official opening of the new premises in Baku.

During the challenging times of the COVID-19 pandemic in April 2020, Azerbaijan played an essential role by organizing an extraordinary meeting of the OTS Council of Heads of State. The meeting, named 'Solidarity and Cooperation in the Fight Against COVID-19,' also included participation from the Director-General of the WHO. This initiative led to the 1st video-conference meeting of Health Ministers of the OTS member and observer states in late April 2020, reinforcing Azerbaijan's leadership in promoting regional health cooperation and solidarity.

The year 2018 saw the organization of the 1st Turkic Council Young Leaders Forum in Nakhchivan, Azerbaijan. This initiative helped operationalise the Turkic Council Youth Platform, promoting a sense of unity and purpose among young leaders from OTS member states. In 2019, Azerbaijan hosted the International Conference on the 'Role of Turkic World Women in Achieving Sustainable Development Goals' in Baku. This event, organised jointly with the *Milli Majlis* (National Assembly of Azerbaijan), underscored Azerbaijan's influence in the confluence of gender equality and sustainable development issues within the Turkic world.

In 2016, Sheki was declared the 'Cultural Capital of the Turkic World' as part of TURKSOY's initiative. This designation created an opportunity to celebrate the country's historical and cultural significance and enhanced Azerbaijan's cultural diplomacy within the Turkic world. Shusha was similarly designated the 'Cultural Capital of the Turkic World 2023,' promoting a series of activities in the symbolic city. In addition, in July 2019, the National Meadow Festival held in Gadabay District of Azerbaijan illustrated the country's adherence to cultural preservation and community engagement.

In the realm of tourism, the TCHF, situated in Baku, carries out international projects, conferences, and publications on the cultural traces of the Turkic states (Organization of Turkic States, 2021). The first academic book, 'Azerbaijan on the Silk Road,' exemplifies these efforts, contributing to the promotion of Azerbaijani cultural heritage. During the 7th Meeting of the Ministers in Charge of Tourism of the OTS, held in May 2022 in Shamakhi (Azerbaijan), significant progress was made in advancing tourism-related projects. According to the meeting results, key initiatives were outlined, including increasing air connectivity between major cities, implementing the 'Modern Silk Road Joint Tour' and 'Turkic World Tourism Capital' projects, and developing winter and golf tourism across OTS member and observer states (Organization of Turkic States, 2022).

Earlier efforts to host OTS events include the 1st meeting of the heads of customs authorities of the member states, which took place in Nakhchivan in

October 2012, resulting in a declaration to enhance customs cooperation. In August 2013, the 3rd Cooperation Council of Turkic States (CCTS) Summit was held in Gabala, Azerbaijan, with a focus on Transport and Connection, further solidifying Azerbaijan's role in facilitating regional connectivity and trade.

Azerbaijan's activities within the OTS extend beyond intra-organizational cooperation, encompassing initiatives that foster global integration and humanitarian assistance. Noteworthy is Azerbaijan's initiative to host a conference on humanitarian aid and development assistance in 2019, aiming to integrate donor institutions from member states into the global humanitarian system and enhance cooperation in achieving sustainable development goals (Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States, 2019). Another example is Azerbaijan's vaccine donations to African countries under the auspices of the OTS, showing the country's global health initiatives and desire to establish inter-organizational cooperation.

In parallel, Azerbaijan has leveraged the OTS's capacity to gain reputation in international relations. By securing collective OTS support, Azerbaijan has advanced its global standing and garnered backing for significant international endeavours. In particular, Azerbaijan received OTS support for Baku's candidacy to host the ambitious World EXPO-2025⁵ and for nominations⁶ to UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage List (Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States, 2018).

Azerbaijan's global-scale initiatives in various areas to promote regional and international cooperation accentuate the 'initiative-taker' character of the state. Multilateral diplomacy has become a key determinant in the foreign policy of Azerbaijan. As mentioned above, the country's leadership initiated several conferences, established new centers (i.e. Clean Energy Centre, ECO Research Centre, Youth Forum), and led the adoption of many internationally relevant documents (i.e. Baku Declaration), which simultaneously serve the purpose of building the international image and demonstrating the goodwill of Azerbaijan.

Furthermore, achieving new levels of dialogue between nations and civilizations is among the aspirations of Azerbaijan's foreign policy. For instance, Azerbaijan initiated the bi-annual World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue under the Baku Process, which puts peace, dialogue, and understanding at the core of diplomacy. This process shows that Azerbaijan intends to play a 'linchpin' role in fostering security and solidarity as well as facilitating dialogue and connectivity (Center for Intercultural Dialogue, 2024).

Azerbaijan also projects its image by organizing global-scale events that thematically span from culture and sports to politics. Mega-events such as the 4th Islamic Solidarity Games (2017) and COP29 (2024) – deemed by some researchers as pseudo-events – arguably help Azerbaijan to construct a posi-

4 Note: In 2018, Baku lost the bid to Osaka (Japan) in a secret ballot to select the winner.

5 Note: A prime example is the successful inscription of the "Dolma making and sharing tradition," which is celebrated as a symbol of cultural identity in Azerbaijan.

tive identity by increasing awareness, reducing negative perceptions, and providing authentic associations with the host country (Dragin-Jensen and Kwiatkowski, 2018). In addition, Azerbaijan emerges as a ‘donor and investor’ in the international arena, as observed in the case of extending help to African nations with vaccination. This similarly improves the country’s reputation.

Last but not least, Azerbaijan promotes its national interests by investing in the creation of new fronts of cooperation. For instance, Azerbaijan assumed the role of ‘founder and initiator.’ As a founding member of the Organization of Turkic States, Azerbaijan demonstrates its commitment to enhancing cooperation among Turkic-speaking countries in various areas, guided by shared roots, history, and culture. Additionally, Azerbaijan is one of the initiators of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, displaying its constructive approach and role in increasing the transportation and transit potential of the region. As a founding member of the Organization for Democracy and Economic Development (GUAM), Azerbaijan actively engages in promoting democracy, security, economic development, and conflict resolution at a regional level. Through its active participation, chairmanship, and support for initiatives, Azerbaijan continues to be a key actor in shaping and advancing regional cooperation within these organizations.

CONCLUSION

Azerbaijan, an influential nation within the OIC, has actively engaged in initiatives that positively contribute to its international image. By hosting significant events, proposing impactful projects, and contributing to regional and global discussions within the OIC, Azerbaijan demonstrates its commitment to cultural heritage, labour and human rights, and socio-economic development.

In the cultural sphere, Azerbaijan promotes intercultural dialogue and gender equality, exemplified by the Baku Process and the International Forum on ‘Expanding the Role of Women in Cross-Cultural Dialogue.’ Azerbaijan’s significant investments in humanitarian aid, sports, and its focus on youth development serve as a reference point for other nations.

In the ECO, Azerbaijan has prioritised becoming a transport hub, investing heavily in transport infrastructure. Similarly, the country distinguished itself with a focus on sustainable and green development. For instance, Azerbaijan masterminded the establishment of the Clean Energy Centre for the ECO region. There seems to be a chance for the country to emerge as an expert in sharing best practices and tackling environmental sustainability issues.

Moreover, Azerbaijan’s initiatives within the OTS, such as hosting cultural events and conferences on social issues (i.e., gender equality), highlight its dedication to promoting cultural diplomacy and social issues. Additionally, Azerbaijan supported the institutional infrastructure of the OTS by providing Secretariat buildings and establishing cooperation platforms, ensuring smooth organizational operations and academic integration.

In conclusion, Azerbaijan's initiatives within international organizations like the OIC, ECO, and OTS demonstrate its comprehensive approach to enhancing its global image and reputation. By hosting significant events, fostering intercultural dialogue, promoting human rights (i.e., labour rights, gender equality), and investing in sustainable development, Azerbaijan positions itself as a proactive and influential player on the international stage. These efforts not only foster regional cooperation but also solidify Azerbaijan's identity as a forward-looking and dynamic nation, capable of contributing meaningfully to global discourses and developments.

Even though this research delves into the analysis of how Azerbaijan, as a small state, constructs its image and reputation within the limits and scope of international organizations, more meaningful analysis may emerge once the current research is further embedded into the 'small states' literature by comparisons to other small state nations such as Qatar and Singapore. Thus, departing from its limitations, this article may inspire future comparative research, taking new geographies into account.

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BOOK REVIEW

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Book Review

**MIGRATION, EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT –
PATHWAYS TO SUCCESSFUL INTEGRATION**

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Marianne Teräs, Ali Osman and Eva Eliasson (Eds.). Migration, Education and Employment Pathways to Successful Integration. Springer Nature Switzerland AG, 2024, pp. 208.

The book “Migration, Education and Employment – Pathways to Successful Integration” emerges from the project “Successful Integration of Migrants into and through Business and Work.” It highlights the crucial roles of language proficiency, motivation, and quality support networks in migrant integration. The book examines how returning skilled migrants to their previous jobs impacts work productivity and explores the politically charged nature of migration in Sweden, especially following the influx of refugees and asylum seekers in recent years. Sweden’s new government has initiated a “paradigm shift” in asylum and immigration policies since the 2022 general election.

A program for newcomers to Sweden aims to quickly acquaint them with the professional landscape and foster self-sufficiency. The public employment agency provides immigrants with a comprehensive 40-hour weekly schedule that includes Swedish language courses, social orientation, skill development, practical work experience, job search assistance, and guidance. This program is inclusive, accepting refugees with various educational backgrounds and offering them diverse opportunities to enter the labour market.

The 12-chapter book systematically addresses education and employment approaches influenced by historical contexts. It provides empirical, theoretical, and methodological insights into education, employment, and migrant integration, with a focus on Sweden, Switzerland, and Norway. These countries share robust welfare systems that shape migrant reception and integration initiatives.

The integration initiative, launched in March 2015 through a tripartite agreement among labour, employers, and the government, aims to implement effective measures for integrating migrants into various professions. The program

targets migrants and refugees with skilled backgrounds, offering over 40 career opportunities. The focus is not on training but on guiding migrants to achieve their professional goals in Sweden and secure employment successfully.

The book underscores that each country's migration policies and historical contexts affect integration processes. It highlights the importance of a diversified workforce for Sweden to remain competitive in the global market. A diverse workforce brings varied perspectives, enhancing the competitiveness of companies and public institutions, which must provide high-quality services to multinational clients. The paradigm shift in Sweden's policy includes allowing refugees to resettle throughout the country, reflecting a significant departure from previous frameworks.

Pilot training programs have been collaboratively organized by vocational education, retraining, and adult education organizations, with companies providing academic tuition fees. Companies with a history of hiring immigrants show high cultural awareness, and employers value immigrants' education and qualifications, creating competition among companies to attract skilled immigrants. The book demonstrates that new arrivals, particularly refugees, can gain practical work experience through pilot projects and internships, which also include high school-level instruction in mathematics, Swedish, and English. International job fairs, such as EURES, highlight job opportunities and mentoring programs, emphasizing practical assistance and skill development.

Social identity in the professional context is analysed, including concepts like self-determination and placement, revealing the dual nature of identity construction. The book examines gender, ethnicity, and class, particularly in Sweden, where gender equality rhetoric is strong. The integration term encompasses institutional activities designed to aid immigrants' social adaptation. Given the political debates on integration, refugee immigration remains a central issue in Swedish politics. The book notes that Sweden's refugee and immigrant integration policy began in the mid-1970s, founded on equality, freedom of choice, and partnership, aiming to shape the welfare state's and civil society's future.

In conclusion, the book differentiates various approaches to achieving integration through education and employment, emphasizing that successful integration is context-dependent and influenced by historical circumstances. It critically assesses whether state measures promote or hinder integration, acknowledging that such measures can inadvertently lead to exclusion based on migrant status. The study aims to transparently present trends in migrant integration processes, enriched by empirical research and migrants' perspectives.

The authors of the book skillfully combine empirical, theoretical, and methodological perspectives to examine the education, employment, and integration of migrants, drawing on extensive project outcomes supported by comprehensive data. This approach is a significant strength of the book that makes it stand out. The book delves deeply into the social and practical aspects of migration, helping to conceptualize optimal policy measures for successful migrant integration. The authors prioritize focusing on achievements and identifying the key ingredients for successful migration, answering the question "what to do?" rather than "what to avoid?" to provide smooth and efficient integration for immigrants. This practical approach sets the book apart from much of the existing literature on migration and related areas of study. The detailed analysis of the most suc-

successful practices in integrating migrants is particularly noteworthy and will be appreciated by readers.

However, one of the critical points about the book is the incongruence between the migration cases analysed and the overall theoretical and historical background of migration to Europe. The book provides broad statistical and historical data on migration to EU countries from non-European countries starting from the 1970s but attempts to extrapolate the outcomes of a project that ran from 2020 to 2022 in three European countries to the overall migration case to the EU. This approach overlooks the complexity and diversity of the numerous migration waves to Europe since the 1970s, which occurred under different political and socio-economic circumstances and varied across EU countries and countries of origin.

Regarding the structure, the book focuses more on Swedish cases, while the Swiss and Norwegian contexts are not as thoroughly covered. A more balanced analysis of all three country cases would enhance its comprehensiveness. The book also predominantly uses a discursive format with little use of charts and tables, which at times makes it difficult for readers to summarise and systematise the abundant empirical information provided.

The book offers a comprehensive examination of the factors contributing to the successful integration of migrants, with a focus on education and employment as crucial pathways. It combines empirical research, theoretical insights, and practical examples to offer a nuanced understanding of integration processes and challenges. Besides summarising the results of the “Successful Integration of Migrants in and through Vocation and Work” project, it highlights essential components for implementing migrant adaptation and management and helps set the right priorities in migration policy. The book deserves a prominent place and high evaluation in contemporary migration studies.

Editorial Principles

Eurasian Research Journal focuses on the history and current political, social and economic affairs of the countries of the Eurasian space. The journal also explores the economic, political and social transformation of the countries of Central Asia and the Turkic world.

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An article to be published in *Eurasian Research Journal* should not have been previously published or accepted for publication elsewhere. Papers presented at a conference or symposium may be accepted for publication if this is clearly indicated.

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Language of Publication

The language of the journal is English.

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Unpublished materials disclosed in a submitted manuscript must not be used in an editor's own research without the express written consent of the author. Privileged information or ideas obtained through peer review must be kept confidential and not used for personal advantage.

Declaration of competing interests

Any potential editorial conflicts of interest should be declared to the publisher in writing prior to the appointment of the editor and then updated if and when new conflicts arise. The publisher may publish such declarations in the journal.

The editor must not be involved in decisions about papers which s/he has written him/herself or have been written by family members or colleagues or which relate to products or services in which the editor has an interest. Further, any such submission must be subject to all of the journal's usual procedures, peer review must be handled independently of the relevant author/editor and their research groups, and there should be a clear statement to this effect on any such paper that is published.

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The editor should work to safeguard the integrity of the published record by reviewing and assessing reported or suspected misconduct (research, publication, reviewer and editorial), in conjunction with the publisher (or society).

Such measures will generally include contacting the author of the manuscript or paper and giving due consideration to the respective complaint or claims made, but may also include further communications to the relevant institutions and research bodies. The editor shall further make appropriate use of the publisher's systems for the detection of misconduct, such as plagiarism.

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Contribution to editorial decisions

Peer review assists the editor in making editorial decisions and through the editorial communications with the author may also assist the author in improving the paper. Peer review is an essential component of formal scholarly communication, and

lies at the heart of the scientific method. In addition to the specific ethics-related duties described below, reviewers are asked generally to treat authors and their work as they would like to be treated themselves and to observe good reviewing etiquette.

Any selected referee who feels unqualified to review the research reported in a manuscript or knows that its prompt review will be impossible should notify the editor and decline to participate in the review process.

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Any manuscripts received for review must be treated as confidential documents. Reviewers must not share the review or information about the paper with anyone or contact the authors directly without permission from the editor.

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Unpublished materials disclosed in a submitted manuscript must not be used in a reviewer's own research without the express written consent of the author. Privileged information or ideas obtained through peer review must be kept confidential and not used for personal advantage.

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A reviewer should be alert to potential ethical issues in the paper and should bring these to the attention of the editor, including any substantial similarity or overlap between the manuscript under consideration and any other published paper of which the reviewer has personal knowledge. Any statement that an observation, derivation, or argument had been previously reported should be accompanied by the relevant citation.

Standards of objectivity & competing interests

Reviews should be conducted objectively. Reviewers should be aware of any personal bias they may have and take this into account when reviewing a paper. Personal criticism of the author is inappropriate. Referees should express their views clearly with supporting arguments.

Reviewers should consult the Editor before agreeing to review a paper where they have potential conflicts of interest resulting from competitive, collaborative, or other relationships or connections with any of the authors, companies, or institutions connected to the papers.

If a reviewer suggests that an author includes citations to the reviewer's (or their associates') work, this must be for genuine scientific reasons and not with the intention of increasing the reviewer's citation count or enhancing the visibility of their work (or that of their associates).

Duties of Authors

Reporting standards

Authors of reports of original research should present an accurate account of the work performed as well as an objective discussion of its significance. Underlying data should be represented accurately in the paper. A paper should contain sufficient detail and references to permit others to replicate the work. Fraudulent or knowingly inaccurate statements constitute unethical behavior and are unacceptable.

Review and professional publication articles should also be accurate and objective, and editorial ‘opinion’ works should be clearly identified as such.

Data access and retention

Authors may be asked to provide the research data supporting their paper for editorial review and/or to comply with the open data requirements of the journal. Authors should be prepared to provide public access to such data, if practicable, and should be prepared to retain such data for a reasonable number of years after publication. Authors may refer to their journal’s Guide for Authors for further details.

Originality and acknowledgment of sources

The authors should ensure that they have written entirely original works, and if the authors have used the work and/or words of others, that this has been appropriately cited or quoted and permission has been obtained where necessary.

Proper acknowledgment of the work of others must always be given. Authors should cite publications that have influenced the reported work and that give the work appropriate context within the larger scholarly record. Information obtained privately, as in conversation, correspondence, or discussion with third parties, must not be used or reported without explicit, written permission from the source.

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An author should not in general publish manuscripts describing essentially the same research in more than one journal of primary publication. Submitting the same manuscript to more than one journal concurrently constitutes unethical behavior and is unacceptable.

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Information obtained in the course of confidential services, such as refereeing manuscripts or grant applications, must not be used without the explicit written permission of the author of the work involved in these services.

Authorship of the paper

Authorship should be limited to those who have made a significant contribution to the conception, design, execution, or interpretation of the reported study. All those who have made substantial contributions should be listed as co-authors.

Where there are others who have participated in certain substantive aspects of the paper (e.g. language editing or medical writing), they should be recognized in the acknowledgments section.

The corresponding author should ensure that all appropriate co-authors and no inappropriate co-authors are included in the paper and that all co-authors have seen and approved the final version of the paper and have agreed to its submission for publication.

Authors are expected to consider carefully the list and order of authors before submitting their manuscript and provide the definitive list of authors at the time of the original submission. Only in exceptional circumstances will the Editor consider (at their discretion) the addition, deletion or rearrangement of authors after the manuscript has been submitted and the author must clearly flag any such request to the Editor. All authors must agree with any such addition, removal or rearrangement.

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Declaration of competing interests

All authors should disclose in their manuscript any financial and personal relationships with other people or organizations that could be viewed as inappropriately influencing (bias) their work.

All sources of financial support for the conduct of the research and/or preparation of the article should be disclosed, as should the role of the sponsor(s), if any, in study design; in the collection, analysis and interpretation of data; in the writing of the report; and in the decision to submit the article for publication. If the funding source(s) had no such involvement then this should be stated.

Examples of potential conflicts of interest which should be disclosed include employment, consultancies, stock ownership, honoraria, paid expert testimony, patent applications/registrations, and grants or other funding. Potential conflicts of interest should be disclosed at the earliest possible stage.

Notification of fundamental errors

When an author discovers a significant error or inaccuracy in their own published work, it is the author's obligation to promptly notify the journal editor or publisher and cooperate with the editor to retract or correct the paper if deemed necessary by the editor. If the editor or the publisher learns from a third party that a published work contains an error, it is the obligation of the author to cooperate with the editor, including providing evidence to the editor where requested.

Image Integrity

It is not acceptable to enhance, obscure, move, remove, or introduce a specific feature within an image. Adjustments of brightness, contrast, or color balance are acceptable if and as long as they do not obscure or eliminate any information present in the original. Manipulating images for improved clarity is accepted, but manipulation for other purposes could be seen as scientific ethical abuse and will be dealt with accordingly.

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Please follow the steps listed below in order to register in the system:

1. Click the “Manuscript Handling System”. Select “New User” and register in the system by filling in your title, name, surname and other information.
2. Log into the system by entering your user name and password. Then click “Edit” under “My Profile”. On the page that appears fill in your personal information, and area of research (for associate professorship or tenure). Do not forget to click “Save” for each section.
3. If you would like to serve as a reviewer for our journal, click “Yes” for the relevant question found at the bottom of the screen. Then “Save” your answer.
4. In case of a malfunction of the system or you simply cannot submit the article through the system for any reason, you can send your article directly to erj@eurasian-research.org after making it comply with the style guidelines below.

Please follow the steps listed below to submit an article:

1. Log into the system by entering your user name and password. Then click “Author” on the upper menu.
2. Click “New Submission”.
3. Fill in all the required information concerning your submission and then upload the word file of your article to the system. **Make sure** that the word file you upload **does not** include an author name.
4. Once you make sure that all the required areas have been filled in, click “Send”.
5. After submitting your article, make sure you see this statement on the screen: “Your data have been successfully entered.”
6. Check to see if your article has been submitted from “My Submissions”.

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1. You will receive automatically generated emails when your article has been received and at every stage of the evaluation process.
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3. Please email info@eurasian-research.org regarding any queries regarding the system.

Publication fees

There are no submission fees, publication fees or page charges for this journal.

Style Guidelines

The following rules should be observed while preparing an article for submission to *Eurasian Research Journal*:

- 1. Title of the article:** The title should suit the content and express it in the best way, and should be written in **bold** letters. The title should consist of no more than 10-12 words.

2. Name(s) and address(es) of the author(s): The name(s) and surname(s) of the author(s) should be written in **bold** characters, and addresses should be in normal font and italicized; the institution(s) the author(s) is/are affiliated with, their contact and e-mail addresses should also be specified.

3. Abstract: The article should include an abstract in English at the beginning. The abstract should explain the topic clearly and concisely in a minimum of 75 and a maximum of 150 words. The abstract should not include references to sources, figures and charts. Keywords of 5 to 8 words should be placed at the end of the abstract. There should be a single space between the body of the abstract and the keywords. The keywords should be comprehensive and suitable to the content of the article. The English and Russian versions of the title, abstract and keywords should be placed at the end of the article. In case the Russian abstract is not submitted, it will be added later by the journal.

4. Body Text: The body of the article should be typed on A4 (29/7x21 cm) paper on MS Word in Size 12 Times New Roman or a similar font using 1,5 line spacing. Margins of 2,5 cm should be left on all sides and the pages should be numbered. Articles should not exceed 8.000 words excluding the abstract and bibliography. Passages that need to be emphasized in the text should not be bold but italicized. Double emphases like using both italics and quotation marks should be avoided.

5. Section Titles: The article may contain main and sub-titles to enable a smoother flow of information. The main titles (main sections, bibliography and appedices) should be fully capitalized while the sub-titles should have only their first letters capitalized and should be written in bold characters.

6. Tables and Figures: Tables should have numbers and captions. In tables vertical lines should not be used. Horizontal lines should be used only to separate the subtitles within the table. The table number should be written at the top, fully aligned to the left, and should not be in italics. The caption should be written in italics, and the first letter of each word in the caption should be capitalized. Tables should be placed where they are most appropriate in the text. Figures should be prepared in line with black-and-white printing. The numbers and captions of the figures should be centered right below the figures. The figure numbers should be written in italics followed by a full-stop. The caption should immediately follow the number. The caption should not be written in italics, and the first letter of each word should be capitalized. Below is an example table.

Table 1. *Information Concerning Publications in Eurasian Research Journal*

Publication type	Number of publication	Number of pages			Number of references		
		N	X	SS	N	X	SS
Article	96	2,042	21.3	7.5	2,646	27.6	15.8
Book review	4	30	7.5	4.4	31	7.8	8.3
Total	100	2,072	20.7	7.9	2,677	26.8	16.1

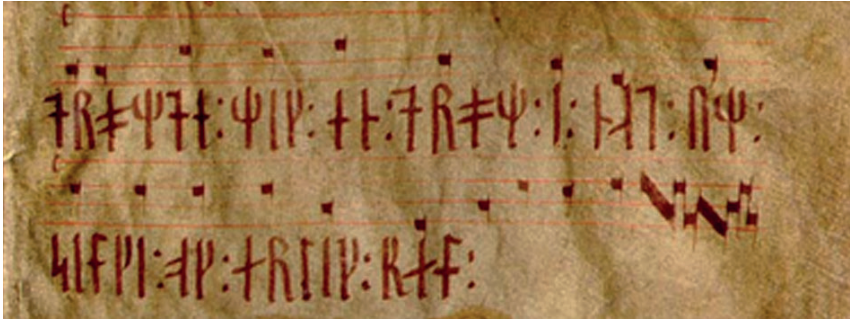
Source: Statistical Country Profiles

7. Pictures: Pictures should be attached to the articles scanned in high-resolution print quality. The same rules for figures and tables apply in naming pictures.

The number of pages for figures, tables and pictures should not exceed 10 pages (one-third of the article). Authors having the necessary technical equipment and software may themselves insert their figures, drawings and pictures into the text provided these are ready for printing.

Below is an example of a picture.

Picture 1. *Ancient Rune script*



Source: en.wiktionary.org

8. Quotations and Citations: Direct quotations should be placed in quotation marks. Quotations shorter than 2.5 lines should be placed within the flowing text. If the quotation is longer than 2.5 lines, it should be turned into a block quote with a 1.5 cm indentation on the right and left, and the font size should be 1 point smaller. Footnotes and endnotes should be avoided as much as possible. They should only be used for essential explanations and should be numbered automatically.

Citations within the text should be given in parentheses as follows:

(Koprulu 1944: 15)

When sources with several authors are cited, the surname of the first author is given and 'et. al' is added.

(Gokay et al. 2002: 18)

If the text already includes the name of the author, only the date should be given:

In this respect, Tanpinar (1976: 131) says ...

In sources and manuscripts with no publication date, only the surname of the author should be written; in encyclopedias and other sources without authors, only the name of the source should be written.

While quoting from a quotation, the original source should also be specified:

Koprulu (1926, qtd. in Celik 1998).

Personal interviews should be cited within the text by giving the surnames and dates; they should also be cited in the bibliography. Internet references should always include date of access and be cited in the bibliography.

www.turkedebiyatiisimlersozlugu.com [Accessed: 15.12.2014]

9. Transliteration of Ukrainian to English

Transliteration from the Ukrainian to the Latin alphabet should follow the system officially approved by the Ukrainian Cabinet of Ministers in 2010 (https://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/ungegn/docs/26th-gegn-docs/WP/WP21_Roma_system_Ukraine%20_

engl. .pdf). When transliterating place names, Ukrainian names are preferred to Russian equivalents: for example, Mykolaiv rather than Nikolaev, Kyiv rather than Kiev. However, for historical references to Ukrainian cities, it may be appropriate to use Russian names if they were in wide use at the time.

Please, use UK English in your manuscript.

10. References: References should be placed at the end of the text, the surnames of authors in alphabetical order. The work cited should be entered with the surname of the author placed at the beginning:

Example:

Isen, Mustafa (2010). *Tezkireden Biyografiye*. Istanbul: Kapi Yay.

Koprulu, Mehmet Fuat (1961). *Azeri Edebiyatının Tekamulu*. Istanbul: MEB Yay.

If a source has two authors, the surname of the first author should be placed first; it is not functional to place the surname of the other authors first in alphabetical order.

Example:

Taner, Refika and Asim Bezirci (1981). *Edebiyatımızda Secme Hikayeler*. Basvuru Kitaplari. Istanbul: Gozlem Yay.

If a source has more than three authors, the surname and name of the first author should be written, and the other authors should be indicated by et.al.

Example:

Akyuz, Kenan et al. (1958). *Fuzuli Turke Divan*. Ankara: Is Bankasi Yay.

The titles of books and journals should be italicized; article titles and book chapters should be placed in quotation marks. Page numbers need not be indicated for books. Shorter works like journals, encyclopedia entries and book chapters, however, require the indication of page numbers.

Example:

Berk, Ilhan (1997). *Poetika*. Istanbul: Yapi Kredi Yay.

Demir, Nurettin (2012). "Turkcede Evidensiyel". *Eurasian Research Journal, Turk Dunyasi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 62(2): 97-117. doi: <https://doi.org/10.53277/2519-2442-2021.2-01>.

Translator's, compiler's and editor's names (if there are any) should follow the author and title of the work:

Example:

Shaw, Stanford (1982). *Osmanli Imparatorlugu*. Trans. Mehmet Harmanci. Istanbul: Sermet Matb.

If several references by the same author need to be cited, then the name and surname of the author need not be repeated for subsequent entries following the first entry. A long dash may be used instead. Several references by the same author should be listed according to the alphabetical order of work titles.

Example:

Develi, Hayati (2002). *Evliya Celebi Seyahatnamesine Gore 17. Yuzyil Osmanli Turkcesinde Ses Benzesmesi ve Uyumlar*. Ankara: TDK Yay.

_____ (2003). *XVIII. Yuzyil Istanbul Hayatina Dair Risale-i Garibe*. Istanbul: Kitabevi.

If **more than one work by the same author of the same date** need to be cited, they should be indicated by (a, b).

Example:

Develi, Hayati (2002a). *Evliya Celebi Seyahatnamesine Gore 17. Yuzyil Osmanli Turkcesinde Ses Benzesmesi ve Uyumlar*. Ankara: TDK Yay.

Develi, Hayati (2002b). *XVIII. Yuzyil Istanbul Hayatina Dair Risale-i Garibe*. Istanbul: Kitabevi

For **encyclopedia entries**, if the author of the encyclopedia entry is known, the author's surname and name are written first. These are followed by the date of the entry, the title of the entry in quotation marks, the full name of the encyclopedia, its volume number, place of publication, publisher and page numbers:

Example:

Ipekten, Haluk (1991). "Azmi-zâde Mustafa Haleti". *İslam Ansiklopedisi*. C. 4. Istanbul: Turkiye Diyanet Vakfi Yay. 348-349.

For **theses and dissertations**, the following order should be followed: surname and name of the author, date, full title of thesis in italics, thesis type, city where the university is located, and the name of the university:

Example:

Karakaya, Burcu (2012). *Garibi'nin Yusuf u Zuleyha'si: Inceleme-Tenkitli Metin-Dizin*. Master's Thesis. Kirsehir: Ahi Evran Universitesi.

Handwritten manuscripts should be cited in the following way: Author. Title of Work. Library. Collection. Catalogue number. sheet.

Example:

Asım. *Zeyl-i Zubdetu'l-Es'ar*. Millet Kutuphanesi. A. Emiri Efendi. No. 1326. vr. 45a.

To cite a **study found on the Internet**, the following order should be followed: Author surname, Author name. "Title of message". Internet address. (Date of Access)

Example:

Turkiye Cumhuriyet Merkez Bankasi. "Gecinme Endeksi (Ucretliler)" Elektronik Veri Dagitim Sistemi. <http://evds.tcmb.gov.tr/> (Accessed: 04.02.2009).

An article accepted for publication but not yet published can be cited in the following way:

Example:

Atilim, Murat ve Ekin Tokat (2008). "Forecasting Oil Price Movements with Crack Spread Futures". *Energy Economics*. In print (doi:10.1016/j.eneco.2008.07.008).

GUIDELINES FOR SUBMITTING BOOK REVIEWS

Apart from Academic Articles, the Eurasian Research Journal (ERJ) publishes Book Reviews. Usually, there are two Book Reviews published in each issue of the journal. The following rules should be observed while preparing a Book Review for submission to the ERJ:

1. The topic of the book should match with the scope of the ERJ.
2. Only reviews on recently published books are accepted. The book that is to be reviewed must be published within less than a year before the intended date of the publication of ERJ.
3. A Book Review should contain a concise description, critical view, and/or evaluation of the meaning and significance of a book. A normal Book Review should contain approximately 800-1000 words.
4. Name(s) and address(es) of the author(s): The name(s) and surname(s) of the author(s) should be written in bold characters, and addresses should be in normal font and italicized; the institution(s) the author(s) is/are affiliated with, their contact and e-mail addresses should also be specified.
5. The text of a Book Review should be typed on A4 (29/7x21cm) paper on MS Word in Size 12 Times New Roman or a similar font using 1.5 line spacing. Margins of 2.5 cm should be left on all sides and the pages should be numbered.
6. Tables and Figures should not be used in a Book Review.
7. All Author(s) should refrain from using contractions, first or second person viewpoints, incomplete sentences, ambiguous terminology, and slang, informal style as well as wordy phrases.
8. Author(s) are recommended to proofread and copyedit their Book Review prior to submitting.

Book Reviews should be submitted using the Manuscript Handling System option at <http://erj.eurasian-research.org/yonetim/login/index.php>

