

**FACILITATIVE NATIONALISM: AN EXPLORATION OF TURKISH
FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS AZERBAIJAN AND KAZAKHSTAN**

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own work. This copy of this thesis has been supplied on condition that anyone who refers to it is aware that the copyright rests with its author. Therefore, all quotation and repetition of the ideas and information contained within this thesis must be fully referenced in any published or unpublished material.

ABSTRACT

This thesis explores Turkicness in Turkish state/national identity and its impact on Turkish foreign policy towards Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan. Both Turkicness in Turkish national identity and Turkey's relations with the Turkic republics are relatively understudied. A more developed interest in international relations scholarship has been Turkey's relations with the West or the Middle East, while studies of nationalism have focused predominantly on religious (Islamic) or secular aspects of Turkish national identity.

This thesis combines international relations theory with the study of nationalism to examine the impact of Turkicness in Turkish foreign policy towards Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan between the years 2002 and 2015. In doing so, it offers a historical exploration of the emergence and integration of the Turkic element of Turkish national identity into Turkish foreign policy. Taking a constructivist approach to the study of state identity in foreign policy, this thesis argues that the shared Turkic identity between Turkey and the two Turkic republics has facilitated cooperation in Turkish foreign policy.

This facilitative function of Turkicness is conceptually framed within the notion of 'facilitative nationalism': the main conceptual innovation of the thesis. The notion of facilitative nationalism is elaborated against the background of the two case studies that share elements of their national identities. Demonstrating how Turkic identity has been instrumental in the nation-building efforts of Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, this thesis explains the facilitative function of Turkicness in Turkish foreign policy towards the two states. Even though Turkey and the Turkic republics formally promote multiculturalism and civic nationalism, their bilateral relations are driven by Turkic ethnonational identity. The embrace of such strategic rationality by Turkish policymakers in the studied period has resulted in the creation of an amicable space for strategic manoeuvring and a sphere of influence for Turkey in Central Asia and the Caucasus.

The contribution of this thesis to knowledge is in presenting an exploration of Turkish foreign policy from an understudied perspective and within an understudied timeframe; in enhancing our understanding of the role of Turkicness in Turkish foreign policy in the region from the perspective of constructivism and through the notion of facilitative nationalism; and in providing empirical insights into bilateral relations with Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan through a small set of original interviews and through historical/archival research.

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NOTE ON LANGUAGE AND TERMINOLOGY

Unlike the non-phonetic English language, contemporary Turkish is phonetic. Turkey adopted a 29-letter Latin alphabet in 1928. This differs from the 26-letter English alphabet in both phonology and several of the letters.

The Turkish alphabet does not contain the letters *w*, *q* and *x* and adds the following non-English letters: *ç*, *ğ*, *ı*, *İ*, *ö*, *ş*, and *ü*. Pronunciation of these letters is as follows:

- *ç* is pronounced as *ch* in *charge*;
- *ğ* either lengthens the preceding vowel and is silent, or is pronounced as *y* in *yellow*, depending on the vowel that it follows;
- *ı* corresponds to the second syllable in *open* or *talent*;
- *İ* is pronounced as *i* in *internet*;
- *ö* is pronounced as the vowel in *fur*;
- *ş* is pronounced as *sh* in *shower*;
- *ü* is pronounced as the vowel in *cute*.

The pronunciation of some of the shared letters with English is also different:

- *a* is pronounced as in *sun* or *star*;
- *c* is pronounced as *j* in *jam* or *jar*;
- *g* is always pronounced as *g* in *garden*;
- *j* is pronounced as *s* in *pleasure*.

To assist readers, the terminological use of some words in this thesis also needs an initial explanation. The denominations *Turk*, *Turkic*, *Turkish*, *Kazakh* and *Kazakhstani* are usually used interchangeably and can lead to confusion. The words *Turkish* and *Turkic* have no difference in the Turkish language. The words *Turk* and *Turkic* can be counted as umbrella terms for the whole of the Turkic peoples, but the word *Turkish* denotes the people who live within the current borders of Turkey. The term *Kazakh* refers to the ethnic Kazakh people who live within the boundaries of today's Kazakhstan. The term *Kazakhstani* applies to any person who is from the state of Kazakhstan, regardless of ethnicity.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADR	Azerbaijan Democratic Republic
AKP	Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi or AK Parti (Justice and Development Party)
ANAP	Anavatan Partisi (Motherland Party)
APF	Azerbaijani Popular Front
BRI	One Belt One Road Initiative
BSEC	Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation
BTC	Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Pipeline
BTE	Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum Pipeline
BTK	Baku-Tbilisi-Kars Railway
CAC	Central Asia and the Caucasus
CCTS	Cooperation Council of Turkic-Speaking States
CHP	Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (Republican People's Party)
CICA	Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CSCP	Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform
CUP	Committee of Union and Progress
DP	Democrat Party
DSP	Demokratik Sol Parti (Democratic Left Party)
D-8	Developing-8
EAEU	Eurasian Economic Union
ECO	Economic Cooperation Organisation
EU	European Union
FETÖ	Fetullah Terrorist Organisation
HLSC	High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council
IR	International Relations
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MHP	Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi (Nationalist Movement Party)
MP	Member of Parliament
NUC	National Unity Committee
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

OIF	International Organisation of the Francophonie
OIC	Organisation of Islamic Cooperation
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PKK	Kurdistan Workers' Party
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organisation
TANAP	Trans-Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline
TAP	Trans-Adriatic Pipeline
TBMM	Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi (Grand National Assembly of Turkey)
TCP	Trans-Caspian Pipeline
TİKA	Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency
TRNC	Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus
TRT	Turkish Radio Television
TSC	Tractor Sport Club
TÜDEV	Turkish-Speaking States and Communities Friendship, Brotherhood Cooperation Foundation
TURKPA	Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic-Speaking Countries
TÜRKSOY	International Organisation of Turkic Culture
TWESCO	Turkic World Educational and Scientific Cooperation Organisation
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
USA	United States of America
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
YTB	The Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities

INTRODUCTION

Introduction to the Research

This thesis will explore the role and impact of Turkic identity on relations between Turkey and the Turkophone republics of Central Asia and the Caucasus (CAC). There are five Turkic republics other than Turkey itself; these are Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. Turkish relations with each of these countries are different, but two of them are particularly important for their proximity to Turkey: Azerbaijan, the only Turkic state of Transcaucasia; and Kazakhstan, in Central Asia. Turkey's relations with these two states, who share important elements of their ethnic and cultural identity, constitute the case studies of this thesis.

The research used the constructivist approach in International Relations (IR) to examine these relations by the relationship between state identity and interest formation. This was because of constructivism's recognition of changing state identities. In this thesis, it was argued that Turkey's Turkic state identity was formed in the late Ottoman period in an irredentist format and then evolved into a benign identity that determined Turkish interests as an enabler element in the CAC between the years 2002 and 2015. To investigate this phenomenon, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan were selected as the case studies of this thesis.

Gaining independence after the fall of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR, hereinafter the Soviet Union) in 1991, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, together with the other Turkic republics of the CAC, created a new potential sphere of diplomatic outreach for Turkey on the basis of shared Turkic ethnonational identity. Where other studies focus on Turkey's relations with the West or the Islamic world, this thesis examines an understudied element of Turkish national identity – its 'Turkicness' – and how this was transformed into Turkey's advantage in a dramatically changed regional geopolitical environment.

The years between 2002 and 2015 are especially significant in Turkish regional foreign policymaking since the fall of the Soviet Union, due to the high-level political and economic engagement with Turkic states in general, and Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan more specifically. Consequently, this thesis will focus on the consecutive governing terms of the Turkish Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* or *AK Parti*, AKP)¹ from 2002 to 2015 and their foreign policies towards Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan as specific case studies in order

¹ For the sake of consistency with the other political party acronyms used in this thesis, the acronym 'AKP' will be used throughout this thesis.

to understand and examine the impact of Turkic identity in Turkish foreign policy towards those two Turkic republics and its impact upon them.

This thesis will address nationalism in a way which indicates its instrumental role in leading Turkey's foreign policy towards the studied country cases. It will be argued that nationalism facilitates Turkish foreign policy towards the two republics in a particular way that helps us better understand the unique regional dynamics which have unfolded. Turkic identity is utilised as an instrument of Turkey's bilateral and regional relations with the Turkic republics of the CAC. This study introduces the term 'facilitative nationalism' to describe the ethnic and cultural affinities between Turkey and the case study states. The use of the qualifier 'facilitative' in this thesis refers to the functional role of Turkic identity in cross-border nationalism. Shared Turkic identity as a part of Turkey's state identity functions as a diplomatic asset that can promote and make relations closer between Turkey and the two studied countries.

The contribution of this thesis is twofold. On the one hand, it introduces the term 'facilitative nationalism' as a novel take in the study of nationalism that describes this specific function of shared ethnonational identity in foreign policy. This theoretical intervention reflects on current taxonomies of nationalism and builds upon them where a unique instrumental role of ethnonational identity can be identified in the studied cases. The thesis thus contributes to the study of nationalism in foreign policy by contributing to a new theoretical tool that enhances our understanding of the role of ethnonational identity in specific ethnohistorical contexts.

On the other hand, this thesis makes an empirical contribution by presenting data on the studied cases of Turkish foreign policy in the CAC regions on the basis of a set of eleven original interviews with foreign policy experts and practitioners. This data is analysed in view of the theoretical contribution to illustrate its usefulness in the study of Turkish foreign policy in the region. The study of nationalism and ethnonational identity in Turkey's foreign policy is linked to the eruption and subsequent persistence of nationalism following the end of the Cold War.

After the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, many predicted the disappearance of nationalism in the so-called 'New World Order', but were rapidly proved wrong (Gellner, 1994; Smith,

2007).² As Bell (2016: 67) described it, the “thawing of the Cold War” meant that “deeply-buried national passions were again germinating in long frozen soil”. In fact, the end of bipolar ideological world politics following the demise of the Soviet Union opened a Pandora’s box of ethnic and religious nationalisms across the former Soviet space. Some observers declared the advent of this era as the ‘New World Disorder’ (Anderson, 1992; Goodhand, 1999).

In the post-Cold War period, erupting ethnonational movements across the breadth of the ex-Soviet Union’s geographical area were responsible for many small-scale conflicts and civil wars. Groups with disparate ethnic, religious and cultural identities began to fight each other for power, influence and territory (e.g., the civil war in Tajikistan, the Russo-Chechen and Armeno-Azerbaijani conflicts). Seven decades of communism were replaced by national awakenings as the leading cause for the young states of the former Soviet Union in their nation-building ventures (Isaac and Polese, 2015; Balci, 2018).

The dissolution of the Soviet Union contributed to the creation of fifteen independent states in Eurasia, five of which are Turkic-speaking. The independent Turkic republics underwent a transition from internationalist socialism in the supranational Soviet body to idiosyncratic nation-states (Roy, 2000). At variance with the mainstream pessimism of the New World Disorder, the newly independent Turkic-speaking states presented huge possibilities for Turkey and its policymakers (Sengupta, 2014: 4). Azerbaijan from the Caucasus and Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan from Central Asia constituted a sphere of influence that Turkey could seemingly take for granted. However, these new opportunities came with their own complications and challenges, such as the destabilising conflicts mentioned above.

Turkey’s early engagement with the Turkic republics after the Cold War is seen largely as unsuccessful and out of touch with reality. This initial ‘euphoric’ period for Turkish engagement with the Turkic states in the CAC lasted for most of the first half of the 1990s (Aydin, 1996: 158; Lipovsky, 1996: 219; Onis, 2001: 67; Caman and Akyurt, 2011: 52). Turkey was the first to recognise the Turkic states’ newly declared sovereignty – opening the first embassies in these countries in order to penetrate a region previously completely closed to the world (Kut, 1994; Bozdaglioglu, 2003: 96-106). As constantly repeated by many

² The ‘New World Order’ was most famously used by the late American President George Herbert Bush in his speech in the Joint Session of Congress on 11 September 1990, then hailed as a beginning of a new era by the end of the Cold War (Bush, 1990).

scholars thus far (Aydin, 1996: 158; Kuscu, 2015: 90), Turkey's policies were overambitious and unrealistic during this period, and it was not until the second half of the 1990s that relations between Turkey and the Turkic states of the CAC began to move towards being institutionalised, strategic partnerships (Hunter, 2001: 13). However, the early engagement phase of Turkey with the CAC laid the foundations of further engagement with Azerbaijan and Turkic Central Asia.

Ethnic and cultural affinities between Turkey and the Turkic republics of the CAC played a determining role in consolidating Turkish relations with the CAC more broadly. The national identity of Turkey has been constructed within the boundaries of the Turkic civilizational past since the Young Turks in the late Ottoman period (Zurcher, 2010). Contrary to the irredentist nature of Turkism (*Türkçülük*) in the Young Turk era, the republican period of nationalism in Turkey actually turned the Young Turk legacy into foundations for the nation-building endeavour of the young nation of Turkey itself (Landau, 1995a). In the post-Cold War period, this national identity based on Turkic identification served as a strong basis for Turkish interaction with the Turkic states. Turkey's diplomatic outreach into this new domain of co-ethnics in the CAC was the latest stage in the evolving legacy of the Young Turk era.

The ex-Soviet Turkic republics embarked upon their nation-building journeys after the unfolding of the events of 1991, taking up their Turkic origins as a 'return' to their Turkic identity, and Turkey – as the only Turkic state without a Soviet experience – naturally came to the forefront to assist them. The United States of America (USA) and Europe also lined up in support behind Turkey in fear of an Iranian encroachment into the CAC (Robins, 1998: 140; Hunter, 1999: 71).³ It is argued in this thesis that this external backing remained subordinate to the embrace of common Turkicness between Turkey and the Turkophone republics. In fact, it was these ties which led many external powers to endorse Turkey's involvement with the former Soviet states of the CAC, as that nation had a natural way in by means of the five Turkic republics. By its Turkic ethnonational identity, Turkey was qualified to be a pioneer of the Western engagement with the former Soviet space.

The sense of belonging determined by Turkic ethnonational identity also helped to promote Turkish diplomatic engagement with the CAC. Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan are two of the most attached states to Turkey in terms of the sense of ethnonational belonging amongst

³ As early as 1992, the late American President George Herbert Bush declared that "Turkey is a model for the countries in the region, and especially to those newly independent republics of Central Asia" (quoted in Robins, 1998: 135).

Turkic republics (Ruzaliev, 2006: 43). They illuminate how the sense of ethnonational belonging to a cross-border nation can lead the international and regional policies of Turkey. On this score, examining national identity perceptions over Turkic ethnonational identity towards foreign policy processes helps us to chart the course of relations between Turkey and the studied countries in the studied period.

Research Problem

The phenomenon of nationalism in the post-Soviet domain is of significant interest to IR because of the conflictual potential it has been observed to possess in newly independent states (Dahbour and Ishay, 1995). This attracts significant academic attention because of the rise of intranational (ethnic) conflicts as well as its impact on the foreign policies of the ex-Soviet states. In Turkey, the issue of nationalism is largely examined from the angle of its fault lines or the presupposed detrimental impact that may be generated in the international affairs of Turkey, chiefly with its neighbours. From the abrupt rise of right-wing political movements across Europe versus the supranational identity of Europeanness to efforts to place nationalism into the liberal world order as an integrated notion (Tamir, 2019), the endurance of nationalism continues in political and public discourses.

From that ontological angle, understanding the impact of nationalism invites attention to the intricacies of its uses. Of the many forms of nationalism, this thesis problematises the impact of nationalism among the relations of states with a common ethnic, historical, cultural, or linguistic identity. Rather than being solely conducive to conflict between states, nationalism can also play a constructive role in building bilateral relations between states. In my study, I seek to explore how nationalism functions within relations between Turkey and the ex-Soviet Turkic republics of Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan. In particular, I set out to investigate how Turkic identity, and the nationalist narratives and policies it sustains, are pragmatically implemented in Turkish foreign policy towards these two kin republics in order to forge constructive bilateral relations. My main finding is that in the relations between Turkey and these two Turkic republics, the accommodation of the pattern of kinship and cultural affinity has resulted in successful political and economic cooperation.

This outcome is interpreted here through the tool of a facilitative nationalism: the main theoretical contribution of this thesis. What I have introduced as facilitative nationalism is the function and employment of nationalism in inter-state relations in terms of cooperation. The nationalism regarding Turkic ethnonational identity in the studied cases is examined through

its practicality in Turkish policy in the region. In constructing this tool, I unpack the narratives it rests upon, key of which seem to be those around Turkicness and Turkic state identity.

Thus, the leading question guiding this thesis is how nationalism affects bilateral relations in the two studied cases. In order to answer this question, I also unpack the below sub-questions:

- a) How has the Turkic element of Turkish state/national identity evolved in contemporary Turkish foreign policy?
- b) Where do we identify Turkic ethnonational identity as a facilitating element in Turkish foreign policy towards Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan?
- c) What role does Turkic ethnonational identity play in justifying political and economic cooperation in Turkish foreign policy towards the studied countries in the studied period?
- d) How consistent are the narratives of Turkic ethnonationalism in the domestic and foreign policy of Turkey?

The Novelty of the Research

The research of this thesis will fill an existing gap in the literature by examining the role of Turkic identity in Turkish foreign policy towards the two studied states in the studied period. An embrace of Turkic state identity in Turkish foreign policy towards the two studied states and the rest of the Turkic republics has not been subjected to a comprehensive examination compared to the relations toward the West or the Middle East. This thesis brings forward two main contributions to the literature. The first is theoretical. It is centred upon the explanatory tool of facilitative nationalism and its purpose in the practical impact of shared components of national identities as an asset in bilateral and multilateral relations. Turkish foreign policy towards Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan in the studied period can best be understood through the tool of facilitative nationalism. The second contribution of this thesis is empirical. It rests on a set of eleven original interviews with foreign policy experts regarding the narratives of Turkic ethnonational identity in Turkish foreign policy towards the studied states.

Turkish foreign policy towards the CAC attracted substantial academic attention in the 1990s after the end of the Soviet Union. During this decade, many scholarly works were produced, though only one PhD-level thesis was written in the UK regarding Turkish foreign policy

towards the Turkic republics (see Kasim, 2000). Although Turkey's engagement with Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, along with the other Turkic republics, attract insignificant public and academic attention, this thesis seeks to examine the common ties and commonalities Turkey shares with Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan and to explore their impact upon Turkish foreign policy in the CAC.

The thesis challenges the widely-regarded cultural codes of Turkish foreign policymaking in the studied period. In contrast to the Islamist references attributed to recent Turkish foreign policy, this thesis argues that the Islamic aspect of Turkish politics is only one aspect of Turkey's multi-faceted policymaking and that Turkic references are still at play in foreign policymaking towards the Turkic republics. Moreover, Turkic ethnonational identity has evolved into a practical phenomenon even though contemporary domestic Turkish policy is manifested more commonly over non-ethnonational identifications and multicultural governance, which will be argued later in the thesis.

In mainstream IR scholarship (Prizel, 1998; Roshwald, 2001; Woodwell, 2007), the function of nationalism is examined as a driving force in escalating conflict between states. The most important contribution of this thesis is that it explores nationalism from a relatively understudied angle, as a tool of foreign policy, and one that can have non-conflictual – in fact, constructive – outcomes in relations between states with common ethnonational or cultural identities. Turkey and the Turkophone states of the CAC are suitable examples of this practical role of nationalism.

The study of Turkish relations with Eurasia outside the Russian Federation (hereinafter Russia) remains subordinate to the substantial accumulation of literature on the relations of Turkey with the European Union (EU) and the Middle East. Kazakhstan, for example, does not attract much public and academic attention outside the country, including Turkey with a small number of scholars (Ipek, 2007; Kara and Yesilot, 2011; Ametbek, 2015; Kuscu, 2015; Yilmaz, 2016), while Azerbaijan is mostly studied in relation to its conflictual relations with Armenia. This thesis aims to put the two ex-Soviet Turkic republics into focus by exploring the role of nationalism as a foreign policy tool leading to determine Turkish interests in the region, rather than as a source of conflict. This is another aspect of the originality of the research.

A further aspect is linked to the interdisciplinary engagement between the study of nationalism and the study of IR. The tool of facilitative nationalism within that context is

regarded by this thesis as a superordinate concept to signify the international affairs under the frame of the determining role of national identity. Therefore, relations between the Slavic, Spanish-speaking or French-speaking states along with states of the Anglosphere might also be better understood from that perspective: but of course, this requires further research. In any case, the assumption is that nationalism's impact on foreign policy is better understood when we investigate relations of successful cooperation, as well as those of conflict. It has been established that approaches bringing nationalism into the pursuit of national interest can encourage an interpretation of nationalism as a practical tool serving the purpose of both the domestic cohesion of states (see Summers, 2016; Judis, 2018; Mounk, 2018; Tamir, 2019) and cooperative relations between states. This is the starting point of this thesis.

Research Design

This thesis is built on a research design based on two case studies of Turkey's instrumental use of Turkic identity in its foreign policy towards the CAC. The study is qualitative, relying on historical analysis and interviews with foreign policy experts and practitioners from Turkey, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan. The framework is interdisciplinary, combining the study of nationalism with IR.

The following sub-sections will elaborate on the full research design step-by-step, as well as the methodological setting of this thesis.

Selection of Case Studies

Although the value of the case study method is disputed, Bennet and Elman (2007: 172) consider that it contributes significantly to the subfields of IR, in contrast to others who consider this method as "unconnected, atheoretical, and idiographic". This study has found the case study method an effective tool for in-depth analysis of a small number of cases, as does Gerring (2004). Collier (1999: 4) attributes importance to the case study method for its role in equipping researchers with "an unusual capacity to see the general in particular". George and Bennett (2004: 19) underscore the advantages of case studies, including "their potential for achieving high conceptual validity" and "their strong procedures for fostering new hypotheses". This thesis thus aims to harness these advantages by employing the method of case study.

This thesis focuses on two country 'units' for an overview of a limited period of time (Gerring 2004: 342). The rationale behind the case selection of Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan is

linked to the unique place of these nation-states in Turkish foreign policy. Azerbaijan, the only Turkic state in the Caucasus, is the closest in culture and language to Turkey. Kazakhstan is a Central Asian Turkic state of primary importance for the Turkish foreign policy agenda in the region and is appropriate to be used as an example of the function of nationalism in foreign affairs between Turkey and any of the Turkophone states in the area. Moreover, the diligence invested by the leadership of Kazakhstan in Turkic cooperation, accompanied by a vibrant course of relations, grants Kazakhstan distinction in comparison with the other three Turkic states in Central Asia, namely Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan.

Countries with large Turkic minorities such as Iran, China and Bulgaria were also excluded from the scope of the research because these countries do not fit into the same employment of nationalism in a Turkish foreign policy setting in terms of their engagement with Turkey compared to Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan. Besides, the Turkic minorities are part of kin-state nationalism (elaborated on page 52-53), which is outside the context of this research.

The scope of this thesis also differs from the discussion of pan-nationalism in regard to the consideration that pan-nationalism largely aims “to unify in a single cultural or political community several, usually contiguous, states on the basis of shared cultural characteristics or a ‘family of cultures’” (Smith, 1991: 171). In fact, pan-nationalism is mainly political and refers to a more aggressive form of nationalism, as history demonstrates through the occurrence of pan-nationalist movements such as pan-Slavism or pan-Turkism (see Chapter 2 for its emergence and evolution). It is cliché that almost every political and economic activity of cooperation of Turkey with Turkic republics is seen as ‘pan-Turkist’. This referral lacks depth and, in fact, does not reflect the holistic delineation of the relations between Turkey and the Turkic republics in contemporary Turkish diplomacy.

Although the literature on the topic still demonstrates constant connotations with pan-Turkism as a phenomenon, the contemporary engagement of Turkey with the Turkic republics is deeply depoliticised and thus cannot be directly referred to pan-nationalism, or pan-Turkism, to be more specific. No ambition to territorially unify the Turkic republics is seen on the agenda of Turkish foreign policy or that of the rest of the Turkic republics. Pan-Turkism was an element of Turkish foreign policy before and during World War I and it appeared to be in an irredentist setting. In contrast, the contemporary premises of Turkey’s Turkic identity are drastically reduced to cultural manifestations rather than political pan-

Turkism but have remained as an asset in Turkish policy towards the CAC and were eventually functional for foreign policymaking processes in the region. Moreover, there is no territorial link (aside from Turkey's minor border to the Azerbaijani exclave of Nakhchivan), nor a territorial ambition of any of the Turkic republics, including Turkey, to unify the Turkic lands into one single political entity. In sum, this thesis helps explain the role of the official and societal narratives over Turkic ethnonational identity between Turkey and the studied states and their outcomes in the international affairs of Turkey towards the country cases.

Justification of the Timeframe

It is important to limit the scope of the time period studied in order to keep the research to a manageable size, to focus on a recent time period which is yet understudied, and to give a more detailed outlook of a specific period in Turkish foreign policy towards the studied countries. The timeframe of this study covers nearly 13 years from 2002 to 2015, spanning three AKP governments. This focus is driven by an interest in the nature of Turkish foreign policy towards the two states in a period when their bilateral relations with Turkey intensified. This period covers Turkey's foreign policy from the beginning of the AKP period in Turkish politics following the general elections on 3 November 2002 to the date of the general election on 7 June 2015, which led to an interim government due to the failure of the political parties in Turkey to secure a majority in parliament.

This period saw three different prime ministers: Abdullah Gül (2002-2003), Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (2003-2014) and Ahmet Davutoğlu (2014-2015). From the general elections of 2002 onwards, Gül, one of the founding members of the AKP, served as Prime Minister until Erdoğan took over the premiership on 14 March 2003. The scope of this thesis thereby spans three full terms of the AKP completed by three different premiers. From the perspective of Azerbaijan's and Kazakhstan's independent statehood, the period between 2002 and 2015 is characterised by an intensified interest in relations with Turkey.

This thesis aims to identify what explains these intensified relations and their outcomes. It employs the concept of facilitative nationalism to enhance the understanding of Turkey's foreign policy towards Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, and to highlight the two states' positive responses to Turkey's foreign policy agenda. Additionally, earlier periods of Turkey's policy towards the Caucasus and Central Asia are widely studied and analysed.

As the political and ideological successor of the late Turkish President Turgut Özal (1989-1993), the AKP period of Turkish foreign policy resembles the early Turkish diplomatic

activity showed by Özal towards the newly independent Turkic states of the CAC in the early 1990s. As far as relations with the Turkophone states of the CAC are concerned, the second upward trend of relations is seen in Turkey's AKP period. With the increasing level of relations on one hand and the recent debates on the attributes of contemporary Turkish foreign policy on the other, the defined period is of significance for an updated examination that also refers to the novelty of the research.

Overall, the studied period is reflective of the influence of the shared Turkic identity embraced by the foreign policymaking circle of Turkey of the time towards the studied countries. Considering the level of relations developed in political, economic and cultural spheres, the role of the commonalities between Turkey and the studied cases is significant, along with that of the other Turkic republics. For the examination of nationalism in facilitating form, the two case studies have the potential to portray the course of relations on the basis of shared identity in the defined time period. In this vein, the under-analysed period of Turkish foreign policy on the topic is well-suited to the research design. The understudied period in question carries the potential to reflect Turkish policy towards Azerbaijan and Turkic Central Asia.

Lastly, it is important to note that the period of the AKP rule is important because the AKP is widely considered as a pro-Islamic and neo-Ottoman political party. It is worth looking at how such a party engages with non-Ottoman territories, which in the case of this thesis, the Turkic republics of Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan.

Methodology

This thesis employs a qualitative methodology. Gaining mainstream acceptance in the social sciences after the 1970s (Allwood, 2012: 1418), qualitative research offers a suitable framework for the topic of this research in the sense that the analytical aspect of the research resides with qualitative data. As Bennett and Elman (2007: 178) state, qualitatively crafted research designs, “especially the intensive study of one or a few cases, allow for the development of differentiated and more closely focused concepts”. This thesis will, therefore, utilise a qualitative approach with the two chosen cases studies.

Qualitative research comprises widely acknowledged characteristics such as “natural setting”, “multiple sources of data”, “reflexivity” and “holistic account” (Creswell, 2014: 185-186). These characteristics are more valuable than the quantitative approach in this context because they obtain more reflective findings. In-depth interviews conducted individually with a small

number of participants are utilised to acquire an in-depth ‘insider’ view of the topic. The rationale on choosing interviews stems from their capacity to reflect genuine insights on the topic from practitioners and strategy developers of foreign policymaking towards the affected region. The research will examine how Turkic ethnonational identity affects Turkish policy in the CAC in the focused time period from a historical context and in terms of Turkish cooperative engagement in the region. Interviews are able to equip this research to reach concrete and reliable results in understanding the phenomenon of Turkic civilizational past in the twenty-first century.

As qualitative research is useful in utilising interviews and documents (governmental and institutional), this research also employed official documents. This is because governmental and institutional documents provide first-hand evidence that solidifies and empowers the arguments of this thesis. The documents of this thesis are first-hand data of official governmental papers, research reports and other related documents that enable us to grasp the *geist* of the foreign policymakers of Turkey and the studied countries.

In-depth Interviews

The data collected by semi-structured in-depth interviews is “the empirical backbone of much qualitative research in social sciences” (Campbell et al., 2013: 295). The in-depth interview method is useful because “[interviews] provide much more detailed information than what is available through other data collection methods”, as well as “a more relaxed atmosphere in which to collect information” (Boyce and Neale, 2006: 3). In-depth interviews are a natural extension of qualitative research and are widespread across the social sciences, especially for those studying “culture” and “norms” within a recent time period (Rathbun, 2008: 690). A significant body of scholars of IR and Nationalism Studies rely upon in-depth interviews due to their validity and reliability in reflecting disparate perspectives. For research projects concerning policymaking, in-depth interviews are “the best tool for establishing how subjective factors influence political decision-making, the motivations of those involved, and the role of agency in events of interest” (Rathbun, 2008: 686).

This thesis continues this same research line in taking advantage of in-depth interviews and relies on a set of eleven individual interviews. The interviews were conducted between February and November 2018 in a face-to-face setting or via telecommunication. The duration of the interviews varied between 30-45 minutes. Significant importance was attached to the diversity of the political alignments of the Turkish participants in order to

address the research questions using a wide range of viewpoints and to investigate the role of Turkic ethnonational identity narratives in the case of Turkish foreign policymaking and its impact on Turkish policy in the region. The participants were chosen from a range of political affiliations, including Members of Parliament (MPs) from the ruling AKP, the Nationalist Movement Party (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*, MHP), and the Republican People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, CHP). The MPs were selected based on their involvement in legislation concerning foreign policy or membership of parliamentary groups related to Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan at the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (*Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi*, TBMM). The purpose of the interviews with Turkish foreign policy experts was to capture a range of perspectives on the foreign policymaking process, in order to identify the role of Turkic identity narratives in facilitating foreign policy processes of Turkey with the studied countries.

The instrumental role of Turkic identity within Turkish foreign policy could not have been employed successfully without a positive reception on behalf of the two states under study here. Thus, it is important to capture the perspectives of foreign policy experts from Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, too. Interviewees from the two states included MPs, academics and government officials. Two of the interviewees from Azerbaijan are direct stakeholders in foreign policymaking processes that involve relations with Turkey, as they are members of the National Assembly of Azerbaijan. One of the four interviewees from Kazakhstan holds a governmental post and the other three interviewees are prominent academics studying foreign policy and experts of foreign affairs think-tanks. The interviews conducted for this thesis were designed to be semi-structured.

This methodological choice is linked to the suitability of the semi-structured interview to qualitative research (Wengraf, 2001). The conduct of interviews come with several potential advantages and pitfalls. Boyce and Neale (2006: 3-4) draw attention to the risks of bias from the participants, time-intensity and less generalisability of the interview data, as well as the impact of unskilled interviewers. Of these four potential problems, only the time-intensive nature of the interviews posed a problem for this thesis, considering the limited time period available for the research. This issue was handled in part by pre-planned interview schedules to fit in with the timetable of the interviewees. The risk of bias from the interviewees was tackled by a critical approach to the insights of the participants, taking into account additional factors that may have affected those insights. The limitations in generalisability of the interview data did not affect the research, as the research does not aim to generalise the

phenomenon studied, but rather to explore the two cases in their idiosyncrasies. Two sessions of applied training have been received by the interviewer to avoid any pitfalls that may stem from lack of experience.

The interview data gathered from the interviewees was processed through coding, followed by thematic analysis. For the validity of the coding, Campbell et al. (2013: 295) stipulate three reliability points which measure to what extent the coding strategy provides “stability”, “accuracy” and “reproducibility”. Pinpoints of the covered topics, which were the Turkic ethnonational narratives and their impact on Turkish foreign policy; insights on Kazakhstani nation-building and its language reform; and perceptions of Turkey and Turkic civilizational past, were created based on the interview questions and the interview data for the points that deviated from the pre-arranged interview questions. The reliability measures were considered in coding the interview data. Coding was done manually rather than with software.

Following the coding process, thematic analysis was employed for analysis of the interview data. As a widely-practised analytical approach in qualitative research, thematic analysis is a reliable way to process interview data (Bryman, 2012). At the beginning of the analysis, the audio recordings of the interviews were listened to several times and verbatim transcriptions made. Further to this, the verbatim transcription of the interviews was completed. The transcribed data was subsequently scrutinised and retraced in order for the researcher to maintain familiarity with the content. The significant amount of time needed for the transcription was justified by reasoning that transcription “informs the early stages of analysis” and helps “develop a far more thorough understanding” of the interviews (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 88).

Interdisciplinary Design of the Research

Multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research approaches⁴ are deployed in the social sciences because of their capacity to mobilise multiple compatible disciplines for a single research problem (Choi and Pak, 2006). They allow the use of different methods and the accumulated knowledge of more than one single discipline. Interdisciplinary research offers a synthesis of multiple disciplines, synchronised and interconnected by the overarching aim of a particular research project. Nissani (1997: 201) states that “interdisciplinary” contribute to the tacit “unity of knowledge” and Gunn (1992: 252) declares that

⁴ This is a simplification (excepting disciplinarity) of the distinctions of Nissani (1997: 203), who describes the mainstream dismantling of interdisciplinarity into the sub-branches of “multidisciplinarity, pluridisciplinarity, crossdisciplinarity, and disciplinarity”.

interdisciplinary research is a deep-rooted tradition in the history of science, emanating from a pragmatic response to the “dilemma of disciplinary essentialism”.

In distinction to multidisciplinary and transdisciplinarity, interdisciplinary research suggests the joint efforts of a body of scholars from various disciplines without rigid adherence to the limits of a particular discipline or generating a joint line of conceptualisation exceeding the sphere of research of each different discipline involved (Nissani, 1997). In this thesis, an interdisciplinarity design uniting the study of nationalism with that of IR was deployed to explore Turkish foreign policy towards Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan.

In contrast with the limits of disciplinarity in a single field of study, interdisciplinarity procures for researchers the space for a broader outlook to generate answers to their research questions. Lowe and Phillipson (2009: 1173) state that a single discipline is not “hermetic and homogenous” but rather “fluid”, carrying “permeable boundaries”. Indeed, present-day problems of life require researchers to turn interdisciplinarian in order “to capture multi-dimensional phenomena, to produce complex explanations, or to solve intricate problems” (Mansilla, 2005: 14). Choi and Pak (2006: 360) encapsulate interdisciplinary research by using the analogy of a ‘melting pot’ in which each discipline in interdisciplinary research is blended into a mix of the cross-disciplinary model, without losing their complete specifications.

In regard to the research track concerned with the nature of relations between Turkey and the Turkophone states based on kinship and the shared Turkic ethnonational identity, interdisciplinarity can be utilised as a researcher-oriented tool to examine the function of nationalism in Turkish foreign policy towards Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan. The employment of interdisciplinary research methods in the case of Turkish foreign policy is of significance because Turkic identity and the Turkophone states are one aspect of multiple-faceted Turkish foreign policymaking.

The integrative nature of disciplinarity as elaborated above provides multiple lenses to the research rather than remaining in the boundaries of a single discipline such as IR. The ‘purposeful’ feature of interdisciplinarity is of significant use in research concerned with an explanation of the setting of the studied cases in Turkish foreign policy (Mansilla, 2005: 18). Tying nationalism and IR together in the context of Turkish policy towards the studied countries is authentic by nature because it has remained outside academic attention in the twenty-first century.

Data Resources

Besides the in-depth interviews, both primary and secondary resources of the research were selected for their suitability to address research questions. The references are, as a result, a comprehensive collection of work from the fields of national identity, nationalism, IR, Turkish foreign policy and the Turkic republics of the CAC. The resources are given categorically, as detailed below.

Data for the analysis of Turkish foreign policy towards the studied cases has been gathered from a broad selection of sources. Speeches, parliamentary minutes, legal documents (laws and constitutions), governmental/non-governmental reports, research statistics, and public opinions polls, as well as newspaper and magazine articles from the defined study period, have been collected and analysed. These have been identified on the basis of their relevance to the historical analysis of the research and their capacity to evidentially reflect the events that are related to the studied period. In order to frame the empirical sections of the thesis, the data on the empirical parts have been identified in accordance with their reflexivity of the phenomenon of the relations between Turkey and the studied country cases. In addition to the in-depth interviews conducted with policymakers and strategy-developers, the primary resources contributed to the originality of the research by their novelty, provided first-hand accounts of the events and strengthened the arguments brought forward.

NGO publications and other digitised sources such as the parliamentary archives and governmental decrees are situated in the corpus of primary resources of the research. Diversity and reliability in the referenced think-tank reports and research outputs were taken into consideration. Notable think/fact-tanks from a variety of countries, such as Pew Research Center from the USA, the Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House) from the United Kingdom (UK), and the Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research (*Siyaset, Ekonomi ve Toplum Araştırmaları Vakfı*, SETA) from Turkey are some examples. Among these, SETA is additionally valuable because it is considered to be close to the AKP government.

The secondary sources of information that this research utilised constitute a broad canvas of references ranging from scholarly and popular books, and print and non-print journal articles, to newspaper and magazine articles after the time of the event(s) in question. The research benefited from key scholars and thinkers on nationalism and Turkish foreign policy, combined with prominent authorities on the domestic and foreign policies of Azerbaijan and

Kazakhstan. Periodical and non-periodical journals and magazines also contributed to the research in the form of tertiary data. The newspapers and magazines referenced in the research were chosen after careful consideration. Most of the newspapers that were referenced rank amongst the highest circulation volume within their country. For example, one of the most referenced, the Turkish newspaper *Hürriyet* and its English-language version *Hürriyet Daily News*, is usually the most-circulated newspaper in Turkey. The news outlets from Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan are likewise a reliable source of news in their field of coverage and their number of readers.

Thesis Outline

The introduction of this thesis is followed by Chapter 1, a literature review on nationalism and theoretical discussions on IR, as well as regarding Turkish foreign policy. This chapter revolves around the phenomenon of nationalism and its brief seminal accumulation in accordance with the niche of the research. The research gap in the literature is delineated as the function of nationalism in Turkey's relations with the Turkophone states of the CAC at large, and more particularly towards the case study states of Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan. This chapter thereby sets a conceptual basis for the course of Turkish relations with the two country cases. The role of nationalism in the foreign policymaking processes of other states with cross-border allegiances are also set out to corroborate the arguments in the conceptualisation of the topic. The rationale to be equipped with a constructivist approach to IR is explained comparatively.

Chapter 2 provides a historical background of Turkish nationalism from its emergence in the late Ottoman period by an examination of its Turkic roots to its evolution into the mainstream through the republican era (from 1923 to the present day). As the linchpin of Turkish politics for most of the country's republican history, nationalism is argued to comprise a key element in Turkish foreign policy. This chapter will examine the history of Turkish foreign policy towards the studied countries from the Young Turks of the late Ottoman period. The legacy of the Young Turks within Turkish political life that has resonated throughout Turkey's republican history, and the role of the same legacy within Turkish diplomatic opening and policymaking vis-à-vis the Turkic states of the CAC after their independence, creates the basis for the interpretation of Turkish foreign policy towards Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan in the period 2002-2015.

Chapter 3 delves into the first case study country, Azerbaijan, and its setting in Turkish foreign policy. The similar perception of ‘nation’ in Azerbaijan and Turkey and Turkic ethnonational identity’s reflectivity on Turkish foreign policy constitute the main theme of the chapter. It offers an account of the function of the shared Turkic identity in the context of relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan. The chapter also provides an in-depth examination of Turkish-Azerbaijani relations in political and economic spheres. Furthermore, the Track II diplomacy activities of Turkey in Azerbaijan and their impact upon Turkish foreign policy is examined briefly.

Chapter 4 examines the second case study country of Kazakhstan and the essential character of its relations with Turkey from 2002 to 2015. The chapter hinges on the parallel national consciousness and state identity of both Turkey and Kazakhstan. The interconnected nature of relations depends on the nation-building endeavour of Kazakhstan for full-fledged independence and domestic stability. The chapter argues the role of Turkic ethnonational identity of the two, which are embraced by the governing elite of both Turkey and Kazakhstan and how this shared component of their national identities affects political and economic relations between the two states. This chapter also examines the Track II diplomacy of Turkey in this country.

The conclusion includes a summary of the research and a review of the arguments and methodology in tandem with the contribution to the literature. It also sums up the findings of the research and propounds prospects for further research in similar cases. The concluding remarks of the topic are amalgamated with the application of the same research design on the lines of international relations of states with commonalities. The findings of the research expand the horizon in relation to Turkish foreign policy within the ambit of nationalism.

CHAPTER 1

LITERATURE REVIEW AND

CONCEPTUAL BASIS

1.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature on Turkish foreign policy with regard to theories of nationalism. The analysis of Turkish foreign policy will be incorporated into a study of nationalism, paving the way to the presentation of the main contribution this thesis makes: the concept of facilitative nationalism as an explanatory tool in understanding Turkish foreign policy towards Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan.

Turkish nationalism, with an emphasis on IR, will follow a revisiting of mainstream accounts of the study of nationalism. The examination of nationalism and its importance to the study of IR is put forward for a better understanding of the relationship between nationalism and Turkish foreign policy, with the aim of presenting the determining impact of nationalism and national loyalties in the foreign policymaking process of Turkey in the context of nationalism as an enabler element.

Different accounts have been generated and contested previously on the origins and impact of nationalism (Kohn, 1965; Gellner, 1983; Smith, 1998; Ozkirimli, 2000), but the modern era of nationalism is more identifiable by its impact on people and also states. A wide-ranging definition of nationalism is examined in order to characterise various forms of nationalism depending on the context. It is important to note that each country has different nationalisms and also that different national movements are characterised as unique nationalisms (Ozkirimli, 2000: 228).

Likewise, the exploration of nationalism in facilitative form aims to reveal the impact of nationalism in the foreign policymaking processes of Turkey towards the Turkic republics. It is the result of an endeavour to specify a unique form of nationalism conceived to clear the way to easier diplomacy, especially in cases of political and economic cooperation. Consequently, the role of Turkish nationalism in Turkish foreign policy towards the studied cases of Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan represents a wider picture that casts light on the loyalties over ethnonational links, religion and culture in the foreign policy behaviour of many countries which have cross-border affinities.

Conceptually, the focus of this chapter is also explaining the rationale for studying Turkish foreign policy through nationalism (Stockmann, 2017: 2), and the prism of the constructivist approach to IR by not focusing on realist assumptions of power politics. Mylonas and Kuo (2017: 223) argue that scholars are divided into two groups: (a) those who interpret

nationalism as 'inherently war-prone' and (b) scholars who investigate nationalism through its different varieties. The nationalism examined in this study focuses on the latter. I study nationalism as an interest-constituting context for the conducting of foreign policy, in particular, with states that share components of their national identity (i.e. the Turkic identity shared by Turkey with Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan). This stems from the emergence of culture and identity after the Cold War: as one scholar has asserted, 'culture is the software of the mind' (quoted in Hudson, 2007: 106). The importance of identity and culture in the post-Cold War period and lack of attention to the Turkic identity overall and Turkish foreign policy, in particular, are incorporated into a conceptual framework in the context of the role of Turkic identity in Turkish foreign policy. The explanatory role of constructivism in comparison with some other mainstream theories was argued critically, paving the way to the most explanatory approach of constructivism in examining Turkic identity narratives towards Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan.

1.2 Theories of Nationalism

Nationalism can be regarded as an integral part of IR for its influential impetus on relations of states. Woodwell (2007: 1-2) touches upon the dominance of communist, capitalist, democratic and fascist ideologies in the previous century but emphasises that nationalism has been a neglected notion. Nationalism, enduring as a modern phenomenon, is often deeply embedded within foreign policymaking. Regardless of the level of awareness foreign policymakers acquire on nationalism, it exists in the process of various means of foreign policy (Prizel, 1998). Wirth (1936: 723) highlights that for “the significant role played by nationalism in current world-affairs, its study has attracted a great body of scholars and produced an enormous literature”.

Indeed, the notion of nationalism can play an instrumental role in international relations. It is thus possible to suggest that nationalism does not always necessarily come to the surface in aggressive state behaviour in world politics. Haas (1986: 741) comments on the centrality of nationalism in international relations; “that even in the area of international economic relations, all types of nationalism contain the seed for peaceful as well as bellicose international contact”. Mayall (1990: 5) touches upon the impact of nationalism on international relations and affirms that no matter whether the impact of nationalism is considered “as benign or as a malignant growth” it is a fact that “national sentiment is pervasive and central to an understanding of the modern world”.

Without exception, any attempt at understanding modern Turkish foreign policy will at some point bring forward the phenomenon of nationalism. Regarding its historical background and location at the junction of three continents, Turkey is a country of multiple identities that attract considerable attention from scholars of Nationalism Studies. In this thesis, after exploring the origins and basics of the development of nationalism, Turkish nationalism and its incorporation into Turkish foreign policy will be examined. For the scope of the research, national identity will also be touched upon by the rationale that the concepts of Nationalism Studies will be used in the following chapters of the thesis.

It is almost inconceivable to study nationalism without reference to the concept of national identity. Smith (1991: 14) defines national identity through five elements: “a named human population sharing an historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members”. Fawn (2003: 2) underscores that “the construction of a national identity governs foreign policy and the extent to which foreign policy is used to express [national identity] within and outside the country”. Indeed, national identity and foreign policy are intertwined, and the concept of national identity involves foreign policymaking processes. Turkey represents no exception to this national identity-foreign policy relationship. Elements of national identity retain their place in Turkish foreign policy. Turkish national identity, for example, is brought into the foreign policy equation towards Central Asia, especially its Turkic facet (Sasley, 2010).

Turkish national identity is a combination of Turkic and Islamic elements (Zubaida, 1996). Due to the nation-building experience of Turkey along the lines of the Turkic ancestry of the Central Asian Turks, the Turkic component is a result of efforts to regenerate a nation based on the Turkic past of the nation. The Islamic component was the essential part of Ottoman society but was rejected by the founding fathers of the Republic (although Islam has been articulated in the national identity of Turkey’s later years, starting from the 1950s and reifying itself since the 1980s) (Uzer, 2016: 164-165). The notion of ‘Turkish-Islamic synthesis’ – a term coined by İbrahim Kafesoğlu – has created the myths of Turkish national identity (Kafesoglu, 1985). The Turkic identity of republican Turkey has generated a natural bond with Turkic Central Asia and Azerbaijan.

Among the Turkic states, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan stand out as the most receptive to the Turkic roots and their reflections, as will be examined in detail in Chapters 3 and 4. Even

though Azerbaijan etymologically refers to a ‘land of fire’, reflecting a territorial connotation, Azerbaijan (as well as Kazakhstan) represents a strong Turkic ethnonational emphasis in its national identity (Cummings, 2005; Tokluoglu, 2005).⁵ Taken together, Turkish, Azerbaijani and Kazakhstani national identities overlap in their Turkic past and culture deriving from the common myths and memories. Islam as a common bond also comes to the fore, but it is contended that this is usually subordinate to ethnonational ties.

1.2.1 Definitions of Nationalism

Nationalism leads scholars into an effort to create definitions. Nationalism simply defined by Kohn (1965: 9) is “a state of mind, in which a supreme loyalty of the individual is felt to be due the nation-state”. Kedourie (1960: 9) sees nationalism as an invented European ‘ideology’ of post-1789 France and describes it as “humanity [...] naturally divided into nations, that nations are known by certain characteristics”. One could wish the definition of nationalism to be confined to those above, but its definition is perhaps one of the most, if not the most, eclectic and diverse in the fields of political science and IR. Different definitions of nationalism are contested intensely. After all, it can be defined as one’s sentimental sense of belonging to an ethnonational, religious or cultural group of people.

Barrington (1997: 712) critically attempts to reveal the “misuse” and “loose” definitions of ‘nation’ and ‘nationalism’ and to reach a standardisation in their definitions. Barrington (1997: 714) considers that relying on an equation of ‘nationalism’ and ‘patriotism’ is an instance of misuse in political science. As Connor (1994, cited in Smith, 1998: 162) also points out, nationalism and patriotism should be treated as two distinct notions. This is because nationalism is more about allegiance to nationhood, but patriotism is more about institutions and values of a country. In this context, patriotism can be regarded as a more benign phenomenon than nationalism, which can be at times bellicose. The nuance between these terms makes it important to distinguish what type of nationalism is at issue and how nationalism is defined.

The issue of defining nationalism was a matter of discussion during the interviews conducted for the research. Haluk İpek, an MP and chairman of the Turkey-Azerbaijan and Turkey-Kazakhstan Inter-Parliamentary Friendship Groups of the TBMM, which was created for clarification on the definition and perception of nationalism, stated that the term ‘nationalism’ is distinctively varied in Turkey. İpek continued to affirm that nationalism usually implies

⁵ ‘Land of fire’ is what the geographical area of Azerbaijan is called.

ethnic linkages elsewhere, contrary to its Turkish interpretation as *'milletperverlik'* (one's love for citizens of a certain country) regardless of ethnic connotation, implying patriotism, or non-ethnic meaning (İpek, interviewed, 2018). One issue with the study of nationalism lies in the effort to judge nationalism rather than trying to understand and analyse it, and there is a huge gap in the perceptions of the notion in the West and the rest of the world. Like Barrington's (1997) endeavour, Connor (1994, 89-117) also argues that key terms in the field are used interchangeably, and endeavours to define what 'nation' and 'ethnic group' literally are by arguing whether ancestry of a nation is still relevant to be included in the concept of the nation.

The polysemy of nationalism is a matter of divergence on the origins of the term as well. Kedourie (1960: 9) begins his account of nationalism by stating its place of birth: "Nationalism is a doctrine invented in Europe at the beginning of the nineteenth century". In contrast to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries when religion was a sovereign fabric of nations, the phenomenon of nationalism came to be a driving force in the eighteenth century (Kohn, 1965: 9). The twentieth century saw its rise and, as a concept of political science, nationalism was incubated pre-eminently in the post-French Revolution epoch of history (Kohn, 1965: 10).

All in all, the French Revolution is widely regarded as a key milestone in the emergence of nationalism. This relates to the argument that nationalism began as a European phenomenon and rapidly developed until the beginning of World War II in 1939. Stoddard (1917: 13) considers that "Modern Europe's great dynamic has been nationality". Aside from this Eurocentric account of the emergence of nationalism, the American Revolution in 1787 is also referred to as an incubation period for nationalism (Savelle, 1962; Wimmer and Feinstein, 2010). On the other hand, Kohn (1940), for instance, is critical of the above and advances the account that nationalism by its modern meaning dates back to the English Revolution of the seventeenth century.

Beyond the numerous attempts in the definition of nationalism, the sub-divisions of nationalism are also numberless. There are various denominations of nationalism, consistent with its diverse sequence of definitions. This perspective appears to be reasonable to some extent in relation to an abstract notion or phenomenon like nationalism as a means to specify its variant forms. It is contended that nationalism is what people make of it. It is diverse and subject to the variables of territory and people. From this point of view, this thesis makes the

case for investigating nationalism in the context of Turkicness and its instrumentality in Turkish foreign policy towards the studied countries. This idea is encouraged by the fact that there is a huge variety of nationalisms in every country and community.

1.2.2 Variety in Nationalism

The complexity and diversity that nationalism bears by definition in many ways indicate a large variety of qualifiers attributed to it to specify different fashions of nationalism. In a world of nations with much complexity regarding national identity, borders and boundaries, as well as ethnonational and religious allegiances, one can assert that sub-divisions of nationalism are an elemental result of this diversity. It is no surprise that there is a distinct authentic nationalism for each nation (Mellor, 1989: 22). From this point of view, it is fair to state that nationalism is one of the most difficult ideas, if not the most difficult, of political science due to its eclecticism by its nature.

Contrastingly, Barrington (1997: 715) approaches the existence of varied nationalisms critically against an ‘infinite number’ of what he calls ‘something nationalisms’, reducing the understanding of nationalism to “defining the nation and defining its territory”. There are two pitfalls in the commentary on the idea of restricting the conceptualisation of new types of nationalism. The first is the failure to take the inherent relativism of the social sciences, perhaps specifically that of political science, into account. The accumulation of political science and IR is a compound of diverse ideas and varied approaches in the quest to define and categorise. Therefore, an attempt to reduce different definitions of nationalism into a single interpretation is visibly not only unnecessary but also restrictive in comprehending the complex study of nationalism. The adjectives that nationalism acquires, in many aspects, are qualifiers to clarify the obscure nature of different nationalisms in various genres of nations.

However, Barrington (1997: 715) agrees that ‘ethnic nationalism’ and ‘separatist nationalism’ are distinctly existent, and stresses that he is critical of the attempts to label every situation as nationalism by referring to an adjective (‘something’). The qualifiers ‘ethnic’ and ‘separatist’ in his own examples refine the notion of ‘nationalism’ to make more sense of two variant situations related to nationalism derived from ethnic and separatist motivations.

Secondly, such an approach towards creating a monopoly in the definition and types of nationalism constrains those who focus on the broad study of nationalism in specifying so as not to confuse the readers of Nationalism Studies; and in clarifying for ease of understanding

and sense-making. After all, it is known that the meaning of nationalism has evolved in its spread across Europe to America and the rest of the world (Greenfeld, 1992).

Ultimately, while there are various approaches as to the consciousness of ‘nationhood’ and ‘ethnicity’, as Smith (1991; 1998) contends existed even in the Middle Ages, the emergence of nation-states seems to be modern, as the last two centuries saw the creation of many nations (see Figure 1 below). The historiography of the emergence of nation-states sharply intensifies in the twentieth century, which indicates how the key terms of nationhood, ethnicity, and identity formation came into play in the modern period of history (Wimmer and Feinstein, 2010: 765).

Figure 1 demonstrates the radical increase in the number of nation-states in the twentieth century, primarily in the post-colonial regions. Mayall (1990: 35) interprets the radical rise of nation-states as the combination of “the prescriptive principle of sovereignty and the popular principle of national self-determination” and remarks that these two principles resulted in “the creation of over 100 new states and the development of the first truly global international society that the world had known”. After this, nationalism came to the fore as an international notion. After the emergence of nationalism, different accounts were generated on its origins but its impact in the international realm neglected. Among the post-Soviet states emerged after the demise of the Soviet Union, for example, the relations between Turkey and Turkic republics remained an understudied topic from the perspective of Nationalism Studies.

This figure has been intentionally removed for copyright reasons.

Figure 1: The trend in the creation of nation-states from 1820 to 2000 (Wimmer and Feinstein, 2010: 765).

1.2.2.1 On the Origins of Nationalism: ‘Primordialism’ and ‘Modernism’

‘Primordialism’ refers to the belief that “nationality is a ‘natural’ part of human beings” and takes the origins of nationalism back to remote times (Ozkirimli, 2000: 64). In contrast, ‘modernism’ proposes that “nations and nationalisms were social constructs and cultural creations of modernity” (Smith, 1998: 22). These approaches in Nationalism Studies still cover a substantial niche. The debates concerning the modernism and primordialism of nationalism concentrate on the birth of nationalism. Primordialism was put forward by Anthony D. Smith, who argues for the pre-modern origins of nations and ethnicity (Smith, 1998: 146-153). Brubaker (1996), aligning with the modernist approach, disagrees with Smith’s approach on the origins of nations. In any case, primordialist and modernist approaches are still in a contest to justify the origins of nationalism (Coakley, 2017). As noted previously, the creation of nation-states has mostly occurred in the recent episode of history and thus the advent of nationalism as we know it requires a modernist lens to examine political and international issues.

In opposition to modernist scholars, the theorists of primordialism date the origins of ethnicity and nation to ancient times, claiming that ethnic and national consciousness existed well before the ubiquity of the French Revolution’s ideational terms of ‘liberty’, ‘equality’ and ‘fraternity’ (Smith, 1998: 145-169). Smith (2009: 25) methodically conceptualises his approach of primordialism by ‘ethno-symbolism’ to propose an alternative for Nationalism Studies, interpreting “cultural elements of symbol, myth, memory, value and tradition to be crucial to an analysis of ethnicity, nations and nationalism”.

In contrast to mainstream paradigms of nationalism, Smith (1998) not only alternates the interpretation of nations and nationalism but also categorises them as ‘primordialism’, ‘perennialism’, ‘ethno-symbolism’, ‘constructionism’, ‘instrumentalism’, ‘modernism’ and ‘postmodernism’ (compiled succinctly in Coakley, 2017: 6). ‘Primordialism’, ‘perennialism’, and ‘ethno-symbolism’ stress ancient roots of nations; whereas ‘constructionism’, ‘instrumentalism’, ‘modernism’ and ‘post-modernism’ are reliant on the interpretation of ‘nation’ as a modern phenomenon. Among these, instrumentalism is significant in demonstrating the use of nationalism for the interests of elites in a particular country. However, this usually refers to the instrumentality of nationalism in domestic politics and not inter-state relations (Smith, 1998: 155). This is why examining the instrumentality of nationalism in inter-state relations is crucial.

Furthermore, in the post-modernist approach, Anderson (2006) justifies the origins of nations as ‘imagined communities’, emphasising that nations are constructed imaginatively by members of nations who have the notion of a ‘we-ness’ attachment for their fellow citizens, though they have never met all of them in person (Shils, 1957: 132). For Anderson (2006: 46), the allegiance on the phenomenon of the ‘nation’ is derived from the rise of capitalism and ‘print technology’, which allowed the mass circulation of newspapers and magazines that everyone could access daily.

Kedourie (1960) draws attention to the intellectual capacity of the nineteenth century around nationalism that created a sense of national consciousness. In the modernist tenet of nationalism, modern-age phenomena such as capitalism and industrialisation occupy a significant niche. It is noteworthy that critical perspectives on capitalism and industrialisation in relation to nationalism, in general, appear in the interpretation of most scholars who side with modernism (Gellner, 1983; Anderson, 2006). The Marxist historian Hobsbawm (1992) is one of the like-minded members of this tradition, seeing nationalism as a modern phenomenon that has risen with the advent of capitalism. These accounts were and still are entwined with right and left ideologies which sometimes lack an objective outlook to nationalism but create diversity in its interpretations.

The different paradigms on the origins of the nation, national identity and nationalism were followed by a taxonomic line of different nationalisms. Regarding this wide variety of variant nationalisms, however, an interest towards the impact of cross-border attachments of nations remained low. This thesis problematised and tried to conceptualise the impact of one of the cross-border ethnonational loyalty of Turkey as a different type of nationalism. On types of nationalism, the next sub-section will mostly concentrate on ethnic and civic interpretations of nationalism, which are usually major material for debate in the study of nationalism, and also of pan-nationalism, due to its connection to the topic covered in this thesis.

1.2.3 Types of Nationalism

As far as the literature of the study of nationalism is concerned, it is obvious that many scholars of nationalism have concerned themselves with classifying diverse types of nationalism that have arisen from the complex world of nations. As early as 1936, Wirth (1936: 723) suggests that scholars should not take nationalism into account as a homogeneous entity, offering four different types of nationalism located only in Europe: “hegemony nationalism, particularistic nationalism, marginal nationalism and the nationalism

of minorities”.⁶ Barrington (1997: note 14) states his discontinuation on counting the number of different nationalisms, “after finding nearly thirty”. During this research, over forty various nationalisms with different qualifiers have been reviewed to some degree. This indicates that the endeavour to categorise and qualify various forms of nationalism has a long history.

This subject has been discussed previously in sub-section 1.3.2 in terms of the demand to rely on various modifiers to cast light on different types of nationalism in different cases. The diverse nature of nationalism requires scholars to specify the nationalism that they are endeavouring to describe. To name a few, ‘ethnic nationalism’ and ‘civic nationalism’ (Brubaker, 1999) and ‘banal nationalism’ (Billig, 1995) are outstanding types which still resonate in the study of nationalism. The types of ethnic policy practices by England, Germany, the USA and France differ on the lines of ethnic and civic nationalism. Whilst England, France and the USA follow civic and territory-based nationalism, Germany and Russia stand on the side of the ethnic type of nationalism (Greenfeld, 1992; Yack, 1996).

German-style nationalism is one of the pure instances of ethnic nationalism, relying on culture and ethnic dynasty (Dusche, 2010). The citizenship regime of Germany includes a consistently declared right to grant every ethnic German citizenship, regardless of their territory or country of residence (Akturk, 2013: 157-158). Kohn (1965: 30) categorises nationalism as Western and Eastern; Russia, Germany and India fall more into the Eastern ethnic nationalism rather than the civic Western nationalism. The ideas of liberty, citizenship and territorial nationalism of the French Revolution subscribe France to civic nationalism, which is contrary to the German practice of nationalism, relying on a spiritual ‘romanticism’ of the idea of the nation, which is ethnic in its nature (Smith, 1998: 16; Nathans, 2004; Akturk, 2012: 47-73).

Akturk (2012: 5-6) brings forward a fresh conceptualisation, what he calls the “regime of ethnicity” of countries as “monoethnic”, “multiethnic” and “antiethnic” based on the emphasis of ethnicity in certain countries. From this conceptualisation, France represents civic nationalism, aligning with an ‘antiethnic’ attribute of nationalism that is based on territory. It is a problematic categorisation in the literature of nationalism that Western-style civic nationalism is acceptable in any sense, and that the Eastern ethnic nationalism is malign.

⁶ ‘Hegemony nationalism’ implies the unification movements such as those in Italy and Germany. ‘Particularistic nationalism’ refers to demands for self-determination, and ‘marginal nationalism’ denotes border minorities that have ties with a bordering nation. The ‘nationalism of minorities’ are nationalistic movements of minorities in Europe (Wirth, 1936: 725-737).

Such categorisation remains inside the boundaries of a Euro-centric approach to the study of nationalism. Critically, Yack (1996), relying on the liberalism of the Enlightenment, considers that civic nationalism is legitimised in the name of patriotism, though civic nationalism, too, is malign.

Ethnic and civic nationalism are categorised by the “regimes of ethnicity” conduct of governance in multiple states, including Turkey (Akturk, 2012: 8). Akturk’s (2012) account clashes with Kohn’s (1965) approach of labelling all nationalisms in the east as ethnic and romantic. The Soviet Union and its successor Russia, archetypally, are counted as part of the ‘multiethnic’ facet, institutionalising diversity in a poly-ethnic harmony (Akturk, 2012: 8).

France, the birthplace of the French Revolution, also symbolises state-sponsored nationalism, whose synonym may be said to be nation-building, to denote officially manifested and endorsed nationalism (Linz, 1993; Kuzio, 2001). Hobsbawm (quoted in 1992: 44) exemplifies Italian unification and nation-building, following the words of Massimo d’Azeglio, an Italian nationalist philosopher: “We have made the Italy, now we have to make Italians”. Though perhaps not on the scale of Italian nation-building, Turkey is one of the instances that underwent a nation-building process under a framework of ‘Turkishness’, ‘creating’ a people after a bitter process of nation-building, mostly at the expense of the ethnic minorities. Akturk (2013: 229) states that Turkey, during the republican era, is inherently ‘antiethnic’, though he also argues that the AKP period of Turkish politics has turned it also into a ‘multiethnic’ trait. It is true that for domestic politics in Turkey, more civic and multicultural governance has been promoted in the recent political period (Yavuz, 2009: 91; Hale, 2013: 138); but for the relations with Turkic republics, an ethnonational connotation in foreign policy appears to be intact, and this is usually outside academic attention.

Aside from more historical accounts of nationalism, Billig (1995: 93) reveals traits of nationalism which are not easily noticed, especially in the Western states. The unremarked characteristics of nationalism, such as ‘flagging’, newspaper headlines, etc., were fleshed out in Billig’s conceptualisation of ‘banal nationalism’: the reproduction of generally subtle nationalism in daily life (Billig, 1995: 93). Billig’s (1995) term ‘banal nationalism’ is reflected in the daily lives of people and is more or less inconspicuous due to its habitualness. The ‘banality’ feeds not only intranational but also an international ubiquity of nationalism. In agreement with Kedourie (1960: 141) in handling nationalism as an ideology, according to

Billig (1995: 53), nationalism, “which spread throughout the world, was always an international ideology”. Taking the international origin of nationalism into account, it is in the interest of the scholars of IR to include nationalism in IR research.

1.2.4 Significance of Nationalism in IR

Due to its international orientation, nationalism has been subject to the attention of IR scholars to grasp a sense of the international behaviour of states. The endeavour to incorporate nationalism into IR has arguably followed an unsteady trajectory. Stullerova (2014: 320) states that for “at least three decades, nationalism has not been among the central themes in IR theory”. One can interpret this view as too sharp, but the current volume of work regarding nationalism in IR suggests that IR scholars have distanced themselves from nationalism in explaining state behaviour. It is, however, hard to make sense of nationalism without delving into international society, requiring an inter-state level approach. As Kostagiannis (2013: 842) propounds, the amalgamation between nationalism and IR favours a better understanding of world politics.

It is indeed deficient to suggest that a nation is homogenous, subject to a single disciplinary analysis. In the world of nations, the characteristics of each nation are formed not only by intranational interactions but also in the international context. Moreover, what proves that nationalism is intrinsically international is the fact that one can be nationalist by the existence of other nations than one’s own (Billig, 1995: 83). One can thus feel in need of claiming distinctiveness or superiority in comparison with other existing nations. In addition to this, pan-nationalism, for instance, can be a matter of fact for the people of common ethnonational or cultural bonds who live in a country other than a home country, generating cross-border impact.

As Stockmann (2017: 6) argues, Anglo-American supremacy in the discipline of IR has led to the neglect of ‘nationalism’ and ‘internationalism’ in the study of IR. Although IR has benefited from the concepts borrowed from Nationalism Studies, the scholars of IR have ignored the study of nationalism. However, a quick look at the scholars of non-Anglophone Europe demonstrates that the study of IR was borne into the studies of these scholars on nationhood at the beginning of the twentieth century (Stockmann, 2017: 6).

Similarly, Billig (1995) views ‘nationalism’ and ‘internationalism’ as two interlocked ideologies. According to Billig (1995: 61), “An outward-looking element of internationalism is part of nationalism and has accompanied the rise of nationalism historically”. From this

standpoint, the interconnected phenomena of nationalism and internationalism can contribute immensely to theorising IR. In this regard, Stockmann (2017: 6) comments upon the mainstream tendency of neglecting nationalism and internationalism despite that IR borrowed its key concepts from Nationalism Studies.

In summary, one can rightly suggest that nationalism and IR can mutually benefit from each other. Aside from the existential chicken-and-egg problem between nationalism and IR, scholars of both nationalism and IR have potential in upgrading conceptualisation in their own fields, provided they integrate both areas of study.

The next section will acknowledge the linkage between nationalism and IR by mapping the integration of Turkish nationalism into Turkish foreign policy. By doing so, the authenticity of Turkic nationalism incorporated within Turkish international affairs, with special reference to the Turkophone states, will cast light on Turkish foreign policy rationales toward the Turkic republics.

1.2.5 A Revisiting of Nationalism in Turkish Foreign Policy

Turkish nationalism began as a saviour phenomenon in the late Ottoman period in an effort to save a swiftly shrinking pre-national empire. The Young Turks, who were in power from 1908 to 1918, placed considerable reliance on nationalism through an expansionist policy, providing access to the rest of the Turkic world under pan-Turkist ideals (Kohn, 1965: 63; Mayall, 1997: 12). Having aggressively emphasised reliance on Turkic identity, this expansionist policy was an unsuccessful attempt at every turn. Nonetheless, the presence of nationalism in Turkishness through emphasising Central Asian Turkic roots remained intact after the dissolution of the Ottoman state and persisted within the succeeding Turkish Republic in its endeavour for nation-building and modernisation (Meeker, 2001).

Turkish nationalism in the Republic began in a secular fashion before gradually moving into conservative forms in the successor governments of the multi-party system established in 1946. A conservative form of nationalism – setting a premium on Islam – has come to the fore most visibly in the AKP period of Turkish politics. According to Uzer (2016: 05), the conservative form of national identity is comprised of “Islamic, Turkish, Ottoman, and Western components, in descending order”. These four facets of Turkish national identity manifest themselves accordingly by domestic and international means.

The four elements above were visible in Turkish politics from 2002 to 2015. All components were functional for various discourses employed in domestic or international politics. It is argued in this thesis that the element of Turkishness deriving from Turkic origins surpassed the other three components in the case of the Turkic-speaking states of the CAC. Tajikistan – not counted as a Turkic republic here – is counted as one of the Turkic states in Central Asia by some accounts, such as that of Jacob M. Landau (1995b: 77). Nevertheless, regarding Tajik ethnic and cultural elements, as well as the overwhelming consensus on its categorisation as a non-Turkic state, Tajikistan is ordinarily deemed to be a non-Turkic state for its cultural and linguistic proximity to Iran, despite stronger religious bonds with Turkey on the grounds of Sunni Islam. The weight of Turkic identity in building relations with those five Turkic-speaking states is evident.

The common Turkic identity created a cross-border ‘imagined community’ of the Turkic-speaking people, stretching from the Balkans to China. The phrase “from the Adriatic to the Great Wall of China” is typically used by Turkish intellectuals and political figures to denote the new sphere of the outreach of Turkey in wider Eurasia in the Post-Cold War period (Oran, 1998: 457). According to Kut (1994: 13), the American strategist Henry A. Kissinger coined the adage, which can be taken at face value in the context of American support for Turkey in the CAC.⁷

In the aftermath of the dissolution of Soviet Union, Fukuyama (1992) was triumphant in asserting the end of the ideologies which shaped the international political, social and economic landscape during the Cold War and announcing the proclaimed dominance of liberalism and democracy by describing the ‘end of history’. The fact that ideologies such as nationalism survived and even strengthened in many parts of the world proves Fukuyama’s prediction to be false.

Smith (1999: 255) argues that at the end of the 1990s, the world saw a “sudden and dramatic resurgence” of nationalism that proved many wrong that nationalism would be irrelevant after the end of the Cold War. The rise of many nation-states after the disintegration of the Soviet Union in tandem with Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia indicated the existence of nationalism in the modern world (Smith, 1999: 255). Regarding the foreseen decline of nations in the age of globalisation, state sovereignty is eroded, but the sense of nationhood and nationalism

⁷ Uzer (2016: 8), on the contrary, says that the late Ottoman writer Şemsettin Sami first characterised the Turkic world ‘from the Adriatic to the Great Wall of China’. However, the phrase was apparently used before by Vámbéry in his 1864 book, telling his travels in Central Asia (Vambéry, 1864: 435).

remains intact in the postmodern period (Smith, 2007). This suggests that the idea of the nation is more enduring than state sovereignty, which declined with the spread of globalisation.

What is new in the assertion of the ‘end of history’, however, is that nationalism has hybridised with a liberal angle, paving the way to different forms, as well as cooperation for the Turkic world. Fukuyama (1992: 257) sees the UK in its period of decolonisation and Turkey, similarly, as “power maximizers”, pointing out that states need to maximise their power not through military means but by increasing economic power in the context of liberal and democratic governance.

Vying for influence in the CAC, the Turkic republics with strong ties offered Turkey myriad political and economic opportunities, and the shared Turkic identity cleared the way towards maximising this potential. In that vein, George Orwell notes that nationalism is “inseparable from the desire for power” and defines nationalism in the context of self-interest as a sense of belonging to a nation and perceiving “no other duty than that of advancing its interests” (Orwell, 2018: 2).

Above all, no prophecy was needed to foresee that the post-Cold War era would dictate softer ways of power-maximising for second-tier powers such as Turkey. Mounk (2018) argues that a ‘post-national future’ is unrealistic in the near future and the only concern with nationalism as a “defining political force” is in determining what type it will be and whether it fits into the liberal world order. This is to suggest that the post-Cold War political and economic system will require reconciliation with the idea of nationalism with a liberal outlook, which is presumably the world order Fukuyama foretold.

Judis (2018) and Summers (2016) share similar accounts with Mounk (2018) in embracing nationalism to take advantage of the ends of solving today’s political and social problems. The call for a ‘multicultural nationalism’, for instance, serves the end of achieving unity in diversity for the imperative of an increasingly globalising world (Kernerman, 2008; Modood, 2017). The idea of multicultural nationalism may be crafted to adjust to globalisation and can deliver an inclusionary identity for all in inherently immigration countries such as the USA and Canada. The debates around going through an American ‘melting pot’ or ‘salad bowl’ or a Canadian ‘mosaic’ to bring more cohesion into domestic politics present proposals to fit into the nationalism of multicultural societies (Kymlicka, 2009: 72; Akiner, 2010). The

persistence of nationalism in the post-Cold War era may, to some extent, stem from its instrumentality.

After the Soviet period, nationalism emerged as instrumental in transition from the communist mindset to the creation of new nation-states. The phenomenon of nationalism revealed itself in ethnic and religious forms and came to the surface in the post-Cold War era in the Caucasian and Central Asian Turkic republics (Hunter, Thomas and Melikishvili, 2004: 175). The reason behind the receptive attitude towards the nationalism of the Turkic states may be found in their missing the heyday of the rise of nationalism towards the end of the twentieth century due to the Soviet dominance that forced them to adopt Soviet nationality policies in building national identity, which was not compatible with the mainstream accounts of nationalism (Bolukbasi, 2001: 38). It is a key element that in the post-Soviet spaces of the Caucasus, Central Asia and Eastern Europe, as Fischer (2006: 62) says; “the collapse of Soviet communism has left a void of meaning that nationalism is rushing to fill” since the end of the Cold War.

Eventually, as Jacob M. Landau surveys rightly, the irredentist form of the pan-Turkic nationalism of the late Ottoman period evolved into political and economic collaboration following the fall of the Soviet Union. In his 1995 book-length work entitled *Pan-Turkism: From Irredentism to Cooperation*, Landau elaborates how the aggressive and irredentist fashion of Turkish, or Turkic, nationalism has evolved into cooperation since the Young Turks to the early 1990s. Notably, during the presidency of Özal and Turkey’s recent political period, a series of cooperative initiatives were put in place in pursuit of becoming a regional power as Turkish influence extended into the CAC, facilitated by the common Turkic identity. One important pitfall with Landau’s work is that the seventh chapter of the book titled “From Irredentism to Solidarity” looks at the Turkish interaction with the Turkic republics and communities from the prism of pan-Turkist ideology, without a focus on Turkic identity. This has been a mainstream approach to examining Turkish foreign policy towards the Turkic republics in general (Landau, 1995a: 194).

1.2.6 Pan-Nationalism and the Discussions of Pan-Turkism

Pan-nationalism is inherently international. It is also closely related to the discussions of this thesis because there is an academically simplistic approach to the topic of Turkey’s relations with the Turkic world in the context of pan-Turkism. As a signifying trait of the international dimension of nationalism, ‘pan-nationalism’ – one of the cross-border types of nationalism –

implies cross-border territorial ambitions (Ludke, 2012). Cross-border and usually irredentist by its nature, pan-nationalism asserts territorial claims other than one's own national land. Pan-nationalism occupies a prominent place in the studies of nationalism, manifesting itself in a wide range from pan-Slavism, Megali Idea and pan-Turkism, to pan-Germanism, to name a few. Many of these present attributes of "anti-modernist, aggressively nationalist and illiberal character" (Ludke, 2012: 6).

The literature concerning Turkey's relations with the Turkic republics is seen from the prism of the pan-movement of pan-Turkism. Landau (1995a: 1) equates irredentism with pan-Turkism, designating the ideology of pan-Turkism as not even one of the pan-nationalisms (not every pan-ideology is irredentist such as pan-Europeanism) but one of the irredentist movements, seeking expansionist ambitions. Balcer (2012: 151), for example, examines Turkey's relations with the Turkic republics descriptively, as he calls it, "between energy and soft pan-Turkism". The academic inclination towards investigating these relations by touching upon pan-Turkism is quite usual. However, the term pan-Turkism is only espoused by the grassroots of the MHP, which is on the fringes of the Turkish political spectrum. Looking at every aspect of relations between Turkey and the Turkic republics from the discussions of pan-Turkism is not only irrelevant but also regrettably simplistic, as the topic is narrowed to a specific 'ism' among the pan-movements. It is suggested that what has been discussed in this thesis differs from pan-nationalism and that the research focuses on the impact of Turkic identity on Turkey's relations with the two case countries.

As noted, the use of nationalism over the Turkic identity of Turkey in its relations with the two studied cases is called 'facilitative' in the current work. This is fundamentally different from the usual discussions of pan-Turkism on the topic of Turkish policy in the CAC. The way the Turkish policy towards the Turkic republics is examined in terms of pan-Turkism is futile in the twenty-first century. This thesis argues that the ways in which the recent foreign policy of Turkey towards the studied countries was formed and the Turkic facet of Turkish national identity have an influence on this policy. Aside from the discussion of the orientation of Turkish foreign policy (because Turkey is probably one of the countries whose foreign policy orientation has been questioned the most) in this period, I argue that Turkic identity has evolved into a foreign policy asset in contemporary Turkish policy in the CAC. In addition to this, pan-nationalism usually refers to irredentist and aggressive forms of nationalism, but the main focus of this thesis is cooperation between Turkey and the two studied countries.

1.3 The Study of Foreign Policy and Nationalism

As is the case with all conceptual discussions in IR, foreign policy has been conceptualised differently from different theoretical positions. In simple terms, “a nation’s foreign policy is the totality of its approach to and dealings with external environment” (Abegunrin, 2003: 69). Thus, the study of the behaviour of a nation-state towards other states constitutes the main subject and object of study of foreign policy. The post-World War II period oversaw the rise of post-colonial and post-war nations gaining their own independence and forming idiosyncratic nation-states. The inflation in the number of nation-states to more than 100 required more interaction among them (Mayall, 1990: 35). These interactions attached more importance to the study of foreign policy.

Rittberger (2004: 1) argues that the study of IR is not merely comprised of grand world politics but also individual foreign policies; this author further emphasises that world politics is derivative of the foreign policies of nation-states and other international actors such as NGOs working internationally. The study of these individual foreign policies is examined through the lens of various theoretical approaches in IR, of which the established dominant paradigms in terms of the study of foreign policy (focusing on the relations between states and their external environment) have been realism, liberalism, and constructivism. In what follows I will briefly sketch their main focus in the study of foreign policy, in order to justify my engagement with constructivism as a main framework for the purposes of this study.

The realist school of IR consolidated as a distinct paradigm in IR theory after World War II and interpreted international politics through hard power and interest-driven policies of nation-states. The pessimistic and hard power-driven environment of the Cold War period seemed to affirm the realist interpretation of foreign policy and great power politics. Morgenthau (1948) emphasised the explanatory value of human nature in understanding the behaviour of states, and relied on the interest-based morality of the Renaissance period Italian philosopher Machiavelli. Thus, the realist school emphasised a power-centred framework in examining world politics. Classical realism understanding of inter-state relations argued that there is the condition of anarchy in the absence of a higher authority than the state. Building upon this, Waltz (1979) – the founding father of neorealism – underscores the centrality of anarchy in understanding the realist world: it is through self-interested behaviour that survival in such a world is ensured. According to Waltz, the anarchical international system should be

the main focus of an analysis of foreign policy. To realists concerned with the effect of the international system on state behaviour, nationalism as a domestic concern is largely irrelevant to understanding the behaviour of states internationally. This is with the general exception of war-making, because wars waged on nationalist campaign did occur between individual states in the period Waltz scrutinised.

It was only with the unexpected end of the Cold War that the credibility of the realist school came under question: neo-realists had failed to predict or explain such a momentous event in world politics (Lawson, 2015: 157). Realists' overwhelming reliance on hard-power and Machiavellian self-interested international politics could not explain the 'New World Order' of multi-lateral cooperation and international law which characterised the first years after the end of Cold War (in particular around the First Iraq War). Yet another conundrum for realists was brought forward by what seemed like a renewed relevance of identity, culture and religion, all of which featured prominently in the first post-Cold War years. The main material concerns of the realist theorists – nuclear proliferation and state survival – began to give way to new theoretical and policy agendas.

Nationalism in the realist worldview is usually examined as a tool for mass mobilisation against another state: allegiance to the state is seen as relevant to world politics in as much as it legitimises state sovereignty internally. Waltz engages with nationalism from this angle, saying that “men once felt a loyalty to church that made them willing to sacrifice their lives in war for it” but “in modern times, felt a similar loyalty to the national state” (Waltz, 2001: 177). While this view reflects the changing public allegiances from religion to nationality, it lacks the cross-border attachments of nations, suggesting rather a clear-cut allegiance to the national state structure, and ignoring the complex world of multiple and overlapping identities of societies and communities inhabiting modern states. Moreover, state identities are not always clearly or fully compatible with ethnonational identities, which does not necessarily enable or facilitate nationalist allegiance to states against others, presumably, hostile states. Thus, realism seems unable to capture the complex role of Turkic ethnonational identity in the relations between states, which is the object of study of this thesis.

Liberalism is another central IR perspective which has engaged with the study of foreign policy. The liberal school of IR came to prominence after World War I, offering the theoretical foundation which realists came to challenge. Liberalism offers a decidedly positive view of the foreign policies of states. The main contribution of liberal theory in the

study of foreign policy is its focus on supranational organisations which spearhead cooperation among states (Vucetic, 2010: 29). The former American President Woodrow Wilson is closely associated with the liberal school due to his ideational investment in international organisations after World War I. Cooperation among states and an internationalist perspective on international politics emerged as a more optimistic worldview than the realist school of IR theory (Moravcsik, 1992). Liberal IR theory has engaged with nationalism largely through the notion of national self-determination and the idea of democratic legitimacy in the international system. Democratic states, which tend to more appropriately represent their citizens' political claims, behave better internationally. Nationalism is thus relied upon to ensure the establishment of democratic order and to prevent the occurrence of war. A negative correlation between democracy and war was theorised as 'democratic peace theory', which focused on war-making mechanisms in international politics rather than ethnonational and cultural identities of states (Lawson, 2017: 43).

As self-determination is closely associated with nationalism, a link between democracy and nationalism was established, but liberalism's main focus has been internationalist. The outstanding place of internationalism left little room for studying and understanding the role and impact of cross-border ethnonational identities and the inter-subjective role of norms and ideas in foreign policy. Yet, nationalism never really left the realm of international relations, despite the two dominant IR paradigms making much of it in their foreign policy equations. The nation-state's use of nationalism and the impact of nationalism beyond the study of conflict continues to remain relevant in IR, so an analysis of foreign policy that can explain nationalism's significance is necessary. A third, now established as mainstream, paradigm of IR theory – constructivism, fares considerably better in achieving this goal than either realism or liberalism have. In the post-Cold War period, it was the emergence of constructivism that managed to incorporate both the role of nationalism, national and state identity, and socially constructed norm and values into foreign policy (Mylonas and Kuo, 2017: 241). It is constructivism as a theoretical approach that frames the study of the enabling role of nationalism in the shared ethnonational identity between Turkey and the two countries studied in this thesis.

1.3.1 Constructivism in the Study of IR

Constructivism in IR was introduced by Onuf (1989) and was framed as an IR theory by Wendt (1992). Constructivism addressed critically both realist and liberal shortcomings in explaining the end of the Cold War. Constructivists focused on the emergence and significance of social identities. Constructivists see national identity as such socially constructed identity which affects how states perceive each other and respond to each other in their interactions. Constructivists explain that the “nineteenth-century discovery of the national idea and psychological power of national identity” paved the way for the “rise to the ideology of nation-state” (Onuf, 1989: 243). In social theory, ‘collective identity’ occupies a central place and is instrumental in “redefining the boundaries of Self and Other”. This is particularly relevant to social identities which overlap, such as national/nation-state identities with cross-border attachments (Wendt, 1999: 338).

Constructivism does not provide a holistic explanatory lens for interpreting international politics. Rather, it gives the framework within which any given social interaction, including that between states, can be more fully understood. Numerous scholars asserted their own take on constructivism in IR. Finnemore and Sicking (2001), Katzenstein (1996) and Hopf (1998) examined the ‘constitutive’ nature of identity in defining interests of states from slightly different angles.

More importantly, constructivists underscore the importance of state identity in explaining and analysing state behaviour on the international stage. Wendt asserts that the impossibility of empirical studies of foreign policy “unless we have a framework for doing systemic research that makes state identity and interest an issue for both theoretical and empirical inquiry” (Wendt, 1992: 423). Hopf (1998: 195) emphasises the domestically-sourced identity that both “constrain[s] and enable[s] state identity, interests, and actions abroad”. It was also pointed out by Hopf (1998: 195) that a state has to construct a national identity and then this identity is “empowered through institutionalization and authorization, to exert a constitutive or causative influence on state policy”.

The foreign policy of a state is thus directly linked to the role of national identity in view of perceiving, formulating and projecting state interests abroad. According to constructivists, identities are not permanent constructs and change over time and across space. In this sense, a state can have multiple overlapping and changeable identities, as was noted in the discussion on Turkey. These identities emerge domestically and are transferred to the international

realm. We cannot, from a constructivist point of view, understand accurately the relationship between states, without factoring in the role of national identities and their interactions. The study of nationalism thus appears as a natural complement to the study of foreign policy.

It is the starting premise of this thesis that Turkish foreign policy towards the countries studied here can best be understood, within a broader constructivist frame, in the context of nationalism and the insights it provides in theorising national identities. Starting from a clear understanding of identities in Turkish foreign policy enables us to discern the nation-building process of the country and its evolving state identity in the recent period as significant in Turkey's relations with the CAC. Turkey evolved into a nation-state after a long imperial period in 1923 and the identity formation of the republic needs to be integrated into this thesis for a better understanding of Turkish policy towards the studied countries.

Another promise of constructivism in IR stems from its emphasis on the relativity of identities. It is a classic example that the Western perceptions on the Iranian state changed after the 1979 Islamic Revolution, including a radical transformation from a West-friendly Shah government to the anti-Western Islamic government. This leads to the discussion that “constructed corporate identities determine the *direction* and *intention* of states’ foreign policies” (Bozdaglioglu, 2003: 29-30, emphasis in original). According to the distinction of state identity, states may decide to go along well other states. Turkic identity of Turkey, for example, does not carry the same connotation to Azerbaijan and Greece. Azerbaijan would respond positively to Turkic identity as a part of the Turkic nationhood, whereas Greece would likely perceive the same identity negatively because of the historical rivalry between the two nations. Moreover, nationalism generated over the state identities would be perceived relatively by different nation-states.

On the whole, any analysis of the modern nation-state is insufficient without touching upon nationalism (Lawson, 2017: 36-41). The classical IR theories, however, “treat nationalism in a largely ad hoc manner” (Mylonas and Kuo, 2017: 229), unlike constructivism which provides a working framework for analysis. More than taking nationalism as auxiliary, it enables us to place nationalism at the centre of the study of foreign policy. “National affiliation such as patriotism or national attachment” is significant to foreign policymaking (Mylonas and Kuo, 2017: 226). Although nationalism usually derives from domestic politics, it can transcend national boundaries of a state and affect its foreign policy.

As a subfield of the study of IR, the study of foreign policy is subject to the application using different combinations of concepts (Alden and Aran, 2012). Among these concepts, national identity and nationalism are two components involved in the study of foreign policy. This stems from the rise of concepts such as identity and culture in the post-Cold War period. Huntington (1993) drew attention to this in his futurism of ‘clash of civilisations’ following the end of the Cold War, arguing the existence of civilisational basins of the world without designating a separate civilisational group for the Turkic world.

Since the 1990s, identity is more significant in international politics than grand ideological stances such as socialism or capitalism. As a derivative of national identities, nationalism emerged as a natural part of foreign policies of states such as the post-Soviet republics. The relationship between nationalism and foreign policy occurred in a twofold manner. The first integration between the two is concerned with the effort to understand the sources of conflicts and wars. The second is to explain foreign policy behaviours of states in terms of different types of nationalism, let it be malign or positive such as peaceful transborder attachments (Mylonas and Kuo, 2017: 226). Therefore, cross-border national loyalties also involve such foreign policy analysis.

Elements of the national identity of states are the departure point of nationalism. What makes a state a uniquely distinct nation is its separate national identity. As national identity is more visible than the Cold War period, it has been more compelling to take national identity at the centre of the study of foreign policy, as Prizel (1998) does this with a comprehensive list of cases ranging from Poland, Ukraine to Russia. Because national identity and foreign policy are also interactive and contribute to the evolution of each other mutually (Alden and Aran, 2012: 105, 109). The involvement of national identity in the foreign policymaking process leads to the study of nationalism in analysing the foreign policy of a state as nationalism is a derivative of national identity.

1.3.2 The Study of Turkish Foreign Policy Through Nationalism

As Sasley (2010: 191) says, Turkish foreign policy has long been “woefully under theorized, with a tendency toward the descriptive”. The culturally and geographically unique position of Turkey has been seen as the main reason for this neglect. A body of scholarly works recently attempted to study Turkish foreign policy through constructivism and national identity took a central place in these works (Sasley, 2010: 191, Bozdaglioglu, 2003). As pointed out previously, Turkey has multiple identities derived from its historical and cultural background.

This multiplicity of identities is responsible for the creation of multiple nationalisms. In this vein, these nationalisms are reflected in the foreign policy of the country. Foreign policy hyperactivity that has been seen since 2002 went in tandem with the employability of different facets of Turkish national identity. Turkic, Islamic, and European facets of Turkish national identity came to the surface at various times and created a multi-directional foreign policy for Turkey (Onis, 2011).

Among the different facets of Turkish national identity affecting foreign policy, the Turkic identity is an understudied phenomenon. Although the mainstream neo-Ottoman or Western-oriented references attributed to contemporary Turkish foreign policy, a specific focus on Turkic identity remained out of much attention in the Turkish foreign policymaking processes. The nation-building process of Turkey was based on the Turkic origins of the Turkish that stretch into Central Asia. The state nationalism of the early founding elite endorsed nationhood on the basis of ethnonational Turkishness. This Turkishness included strong elements of the Turkic civilisational background of the Turks in Central Asia (Poulton, 1997: 87-129).

The impact of Turkic identity on contemporary Turkey has been consequential for Turkey's relations with the independent Turkic states. A discourse on the Turkic past and Turkic commonalities are embedded in the state behaviour of Turkey in foreign policy; this includes the period since 2002. Although many scholarly works have been produced on Turkey's foreign policy orientation on the grounds of Islamism in this period, Turkish policy in the CAC and the role of the Turkic identity of Turkey has received little attention. Turkic identity has given the foreign policymaking apparatus of Turkey a realm of international activity.

As discussed earlier, the extant literature on Turkey's Turkicness was largely narrowed to discussions of pan-Turkism, taking the phenomenon into a single-sided examination of territorial and irredentist ambitions whose believers consist of small minorities in Turkey and Turkic republics and communities. Additionally, pan-Turkist ambitions did not exist in the official foreign policy agenda of Turkey apart from the late Ottoman period. Therefore, the recent manifestations of Turkic identity in Turkey and the Turkic republics have been principally culture-oriented rather than political pan-nationalism, becoming an element in the interaction of Turkey with the other Turkic republics. This is most apparently visible between Turkey, Azerbaijan, and Kazakhstan.

The argument to assert that Turkic identity and interactions with Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan are out of the context of pan-Turkism does not mean nationalism is not involved in the relations. The we-feeling of the three republics over Turkicness leads this research to include nationalism because a distinction between ‘we’ and ‘other’ exists in the case of Turkey with respect to the studied republics.

The commonalities between Turkey and the studied countries are regarded as the contributing element in Turkey’s policy in the CAC (Bal, 1998; Uzer, 2011: 158; Caman and Akyurt, 2011: 46; Cinar, 2013: 257; Sengupta, 2014: VI). The impact of such benign nationalism in the context of Turkey’s Turkicness is called facilitative to denote the enabler role of one state identity component shared by other states as a collective identity.

1.4 Facilitative Nationalism and Foreign Policy

As reviewed before, different accounts on nationalism have been rearticulated since the rise of nationalism as a modern field of study. Various qualifiers have been accumulated to specify a special type of nationalism. These qualifiers are meant to stress both domestic and international affairs of a certain country or a nation. Nationalism may be regarded as a more influential phenomenon in the construction of international relations of states, especially in times of conflicts among two or more states.

Regarding foreign policymaking – different from domestic senses of nationalism as a force of political and social mobilisation inside a country – nationalism is also subject to the mobilisation of diplomatic affairs on an international scale. From this point of view, it matters which countries are in engagement. If relations occur between two historically hostile nations such as India and Pakistan (see Varshney, 1991), nationalism generally manifests itself in aggressive and otherising form due to animosities embedded in their national identity. Even irredentist discourses step in at times of escalating tension. Each country prides itself in its superiorities over the encountered nation and exchanges polarising speeches by the deictic distinction of ‘we’ versus ‘them’.

Variously, nationalism reflects a more affiliating force in relations between countries of common ethnicity, culture, or religion. Turkic ethnonational identity is one of the instances that represent this sort of affiliating force for the course of relations between Turkey and the Turkophone republics. Turkish nationalism can be an agitating factor at times of Turkish foreign policymaking towards countries with mutual antagonism in relations with Turkey

such as Greece or Armenia (see McCarthy, 2015; Sofos and Ozkirimli, 2010). Nationalism in Turkey becomes an undermining factor in building constructive relations with these neighbouring countries.

On the other hand, Turkic ethnonationalism is something to be constructive and is an element of building cooperative relations with the Turkic world, especially Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan. The ethnonational and cultural bonds enhance ties between the three states in political, economic, and social cooperation. Away from an irredentist notion of Turkic pan-nationalism (see Chapter 2), the shared identity over the kinship informs a solidaristic orientation in Turkish, Azerbaijani, and Kazakh foreign policies in the modern period.

From the perspective of ideologies, the ideology of nationalism (if nationalism is taken as an ideology) itself is one of the important elements in explaining the recent acts of cooperation between Turkey and the Turkic republics. It is this sense that the Turkic facet of Turkish national identity is an asset for Turkey's relations with the Turkic republics. For the Turkish opening to the CAC, Turkic ethnonationalism is subject to easing cooperation, thus clearing the way to the political and economic influence of Turkey in combatting Iranian and Russian advancements (Kazemi and Ajdari, 1998: 60-62; Cummings, 2001). From this standpoint, nationalism is akin to neo-Ottomanism, pro-Islamism, and Westernism for its instrumentality for Turkish policymaking.

The used qualifier 'facilitative', with respect to nationalism, describes the determining factor of the shared Turkic identity in bilateral or multilateral relations of Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, including the other Turkic republics in a broad sense. The shared Turkic identity is taken into the centre in this endeavour. The qualifier submits to the idea that, by a shared collective identity, interstate relations revolve around an informal course of interactions that create a tendency toward mutual trust and cooperation.

The qualifier to nationalism, the adjective of 'facilitative', originates from the role that is played to facilitate relations in Turkish relations with their co-ethnic states in the CAC. Turkish national identity was largely formed in the late Ottoman and early republican eras (see Chapter 2) and evolved into a facilitator force in the contemporary Turkish foreign policy through the relations with the Turkophone republics. The emergence of independent Turkic states in the CAC ushered in a space of influence – at least at the surface – for Turkey. The 'fraternal' and the cross-border notion of Turkicness, as a determining factor, was put into the foreign policy equation in the case of relations with the Turkic world.

Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan are two of the Turkic republics with which Turkey has been enjoying probably the most stable and consistent relations since their independence from the Soviet Union. The two studied countries are self-evident examples of the extent that the nationalism over the shared Turkic identity is a facilitator force in the efforts of cooperation and international-scale solidarity. The shared Turkic origins, underpinned by the republican nation-building process based on the Central Asian Turkic origins, are the basis of the political and economic entente among the three co-ethnic states.

Nationalism is not only a facilitator force among Turkey and the rest of the Turkic states. Nationalism, as a facilitating element, rises to the occasion at times in the cases of the Slavic nations, Spanish-speaking Hispanophone, the countries of Francophonie, and the Anglosphere. The bond for most of these instances falls not necessarily and merely into ethnonational kinship. Common language, religion, culture, and shared value-system tie various countries into a framework of an affiliated group of states. This phenomenon is evident in the case of shared elements of national identity. The next sub-section will delve into a discussion of a varied facet of nationalism that plays a facilitative role in particular cases other than that of the Turkic world. The conceptualisation of the role of the shared myths and components of nationalism in inter-state relations of states can be better understood by a myriad of different instances. Due to the scarcity of literature on the field for a functional output of nationalism for interstate relations, the section carries the potential to broaden the research horizon; this will be elaborated in the conclusion of the thesis as further research prospects for the rest of the Turkic republics.

1.4.1 Cross-border Attachments and Nationalism Elsewhere

The creation of nation-states and national affinities in the breadth of nation-building can be regarded as a larger form of tribal or lowest-grade of allegiances of a bigger social body. In the age of nation-states, a nation-state may be inclined to stick to cross-border ethnonational and religious adherence. Hazony (2018: 75) puts it from the beginning of group adherence from inter-clan to inter-state allegiances:

Are there limits to the consolidation, by means of which clans unite as tribes, and tribes as nations, extending the loyalties of individuals outward? We know that nations can develop attachments of tribes to one another in the formation of the nation. There is such a thing [...] as a “family of nations,” as the English-speaking nations often regard themselves.

Besides the attachment between Turkey, Azerbaijan, and Kazakhstan or the Turkic world altogether, nationalism as a facilitator factor is also visible in the Slavic world. Kohn (1960)

argues how the alienation of Slavs, depicting them as a backward nation compared to Europeans, led the Slavic intellectuals into pan-Slavic romanticism of Slavic ethnonational identity and culture, building a sense of Slavic consciousness. The national consciousness endorsed by the othering from other nations has created myths of Slavness and cross-border loyalties. Although the Slavdom of Europe is divided by sectarian dissimilarity between Orthodox (Eastern Slavs) and Catholic (Western Slavs), the ethnonational identity is also an important aspect in addition to sectarian attachments.

Slavic consciousness, from Tsarist Russia to post-Soviet Russia, is evident to anyone who examines foreign policy from the perspective of national identity (Roshwald, 2001: 19-27). Slavic ethnicity, Orthodox Christendom, and the influence of common Slavic languages, to some degree, inform a sentiment of historical and cultural bonds (Goldblatt, 1986). Goldblatt (1986: 353) points out the “existence of a premodern type of supranational spiritual solidarity” and that this solidarity “was based on the common Orthodox Slavic heritage”. Huntington (1993: 43) points out a ‘Slavic-Orthodox’ civilisational zone that emerged after the end of the Cold War. A long-standing quest of Russia for influence in the relations of the Balkans or in Eastern Europe, where most of the co-ethnic and co-religionists of Russia reside, can exemplify a Slavic consciousness involved. Though the latest trends of Russian foreign policy under the incumbent President Vladimir Putin show signs of irredentism (given the annexation of Crimea and Russian intervention in eastern Ukraine) to be followed rather than cooperation.

However, the relations of Russia with its co-ethnic and co-religionist states are also on good terms. Russo-Belarusian relations is one of the examples of common ethnonational, cultural, and religious ties binding two nations closely. The president of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, criticises the USA’s “notorious Belarus Democracy Act [an act to support the democratisation of Belarus], which, he claimed, sought to [...] break the bonds between Belarus and Russia” (quoted in Ambrosio, 2006: 423). The bonds that Lukashenko was citing were probably not all political and economic but also cultural, religious, and ethnonational and that Belarus shares with Russia.

It is to suggest, then, that Slavic sets of norms did and will play a role between Russia and the rest of the Slavic states. In this regard, nationalisms of different kinds: ethnonational over Slavdom, religious over Orthodox Christendom, or civic/territorial over Slavic values and territory can constitute an important factor in inter-Slavic relations. Nationality and religion

are involved in the construction of bilateral as well as multilateral relations of the Slavic nations. Similar cross-border attachments exist between Turkey and the Turkic republics and these make Turkey more advantageous in the CAC to compete with Russia.

As with the role of common ties among the Slavic nations, Spanish-speaking nations display easy relations in their international affairs with Spanish-speaking states of South America. The linguistic bond of Spanish, as well as religious ties of Catholicism, are disposed to create a conducive environment for closer relations. In this vein, McMahon (2004: 660) sees language as “the most obvious and the most important of these shared features”. An article in *The Economist* asserts that “linguistic and cultural affinities attract Latin American investors” [to Spain] (*The Economist*, 2014a). In addition to the economic dimension, Wang (2016a) questions whether there is a 'familial relation' between Spain and Spanish-speaking South America⁸ and summarises the nature of relations between them in terms of cooperation:

Spain [...] still regards relations with Latin America as a top foreign policy priority, and maintains strong political, business and cultural links with Latin America. [...] In Spain, many people, including government officials, believe that Madrid's relation with Spanish-speaking Latin America is a “special” one: characterized by a common language and a shared cultural history and identity.

There is a collective bond that affects the volume and ease of relations between Spain and the Spanish-speaking states of South America. A common *Hispanidad* identity, as a determining factor, plays a pivotal role in facilitating relations between Spain and the Spanish-speaking states of South America (Stavans and Jaksic, 2011).⁹ As a result of the ties between Spain and Spanish-speaking South America, Spanish multinational companies largely operate in South America, the biggest portion of Spanish foreign aid flows to South America and in turn, lead to greater engagement in foreign policy between Spain and the Spanish-speaking states (Wang, 2016a).

The states of the Anglosphere are no exception in harvesting easily-established relations compared to those of non-Anglophone. The English-speaking nations of the USA, UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and some other Anglophone states are closely engaged in almost most fields of cooperation (Vucetic, 2011: 1-8). In addition to this, for the linguistic and cultural elements in common, the Commonwealth of Nations can be regarded as a platform of overlapping interests and collaboration at large.

⁹ The 'Hispanidad' here refers to the Spanish-speaking group of states and peoples and their similar culture (see Stavans and Jaksic, 2011).

‘The special relationship’ between the USA and the UK, for instance, represents an example of identity politics. What drives both countries to engage in ‘special’ political, economic, cultural, and military relations is a matter of historical, linguistic, cultural, and religious¹⁰ bonds. There is widely-known domination of the WASP (White, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant) in the political life of the USA. These three determinants match the predominant characteristics of the UK. Even if we put aside the other commonalities between the two nations, the common set of values in political (liberalism) and economic (capitalism) standpoints remain apparent to bring both nations closer. Dinmuhammed Ametbek (interviewed, 2018), a foreign policy-developing think-tank expert at Ankara Centre for Crisis and Policy Studies (ANKASAM), underscores the linguistic, cultural, and historical ties that define the course of relations between the USA and UK:

Why does the USA sustain a strategic partnership and a special relationship with the UK and not with France or Spain? The answer surely corresponds to the common linguistic, cultural and historical bonds that create a strategic partnership.

Bennett (2002: 111) emphasises familial rules to be a part of the Anglosphere which, he declares – apart from ethnic and linguistic commonalities – “individualism, rule of law, honoring contracts and covenants and the elevation of freedom to the first rank of political and cultural values”. Bennett comments upon mutual cooperative institutions among the Anglosphere nations and existing potential in further economic, technological, and social cooperation:

The Anglosphere potential is to expand these close collaborations into deeper ties in trade, defense, free movement of peoples, and scientific cooperation, all bound by our common language, culture and values. Anglosphere theorists promote more and stronger cooperative institutions, not to build some English-speaking superstate on the model of the European Union, or to annex Britain, Canada, or Australia to the United States, but rather protect the English-speaking nations’ common values from external threats and internal fantasies. (Bennett, 2002: 112)

Given the fact that the nations of the Anglosphere share numerous affinities, the political, economic, cultural, and diplomatic engagement is more probable in terms of cooperation. The sense of common identity and an imagined cross-border sense of nationhood help shape more collaborative and closer relations among the states of the Anglophone. The attachments are also seen in the findings of Vucetic (2010: 43), who empirically suggests that “English-speaking states/nations tend to be more willing” to join American-waged wars in various countries than non-Anglophone states. Vucetic had also prospected to embark upon a further research on the topic to investigate “why and how English-speaking states came to cooperate, integrate and fight together” (Vucetic, 2010: 43). His book-length work in 2011, which can

¹⁰ Both states are Protestant powerhouses.

be assumed as his prospected further research in 2010, examines the outline of the member states of the Anglosphere and their 'collective identity' to act in harmony on the international stage and the inclination to cooperate more potentially than non-Anglosphere states (Vucetic, 2011: 38).

The return of the ties between the UK and the Commonwealth countries also creates a sizeable amount of business capacity. The volume of business of the British companies exceeds \$1 trillion in Africa alone (Hirsch, 2018). It is therefore no surprise that the UK, as on the brink of Brexit negotiations to pull out from the EU in 2018, first focused on reclaiming its trading relationships with the member states of the Commonwealth (e.g., Nigeria, Australia) to offset the potential damage to the UK economy of leaving the European Single Market. The Anglosphere consists of a crucial facet of British policymaking, usually endorsed more by its Anglo-American orientation than its Anglo-European identity (Kenny and Pearce, 2018).

In addition to the cases above, the French-speaking nations of the International Organisation of La Francophonie (*Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie*, OIF) reflects the soft power of linguistic and cultural links between France and the rest of the OIF members. One can surely become critical of the colonial attributes in its nature coming from its colonial history, but the OIF and the commonalities of the French-speaking states remain as a factor that makes these states more open to solidarity to each other. The OIF declares its mission as endeavouring to solidify solidaristic state behaviour among 61-member states (OIF, 2018). For the number of member states as almost one-third of the total United Nations (UN) member states, the aimed solidarity has the potential to rule a sphere of influence for UN decisions and to define common interests of the members.

The incumbent president of France, Emmanuel Macron, ambitiously vowed that “French will be the first language of Africa”, and “perhaps the world” in his speech during his state visit to French-speaking Burkina Faso in 2017 (quoted in Poole, 2017). Macron’s remarks implied the deixis of ‘we, the French speakers’ are mustered in the future of the French language, as the language is the only visible attachment between the Muslim majority African nation of Burkina Faso and France.

Cultural and linguistic loyalties largely become the starting point for the rest of the fields for further international engagement. Economic purposes remain at the top of the ‘solidarity’ among the French-speaking nations. Even though non-economic elements are being

emphasised amongst these countries, the OIF “has always considered the importance of reinforcing an economic dimension” (Hillnotes, 2016). Cultural, educational, and social cooperation, to some extent, rearticulates itself into economic magnitude. Purtas (2017: 97), for example, finds the same similarity between the International Organisation of Turkic Culture or TÜRKSÖY (see section 2.7 for more detail) and La Francophonie in fostering cooperation among their member states.

1.4.2 The Case of Turkey and the Turkic World

Collective identity and its reflection in the international realm exist in Turkey’s foreign policy towards the Turkic republics. However, this is a case different from the examples mentioned in the previous section because the British, Russian, Spanish or French examples of international collective identity usually stem from these countries’ attribute as a mother country towards their co-ethnic or co-religious states. Turkey has an imperial past with Middle Eastern nations, but no colonial or imperial past with the Turkic republics apart from commonalities stemming from its state identity. Moreover, no contemporary irredentist ambitions exist on Turkey’s foreign policy agenda towards these countries. The most visible impetus in Turkey’s interaction with these states seems to be the collective Turkic identity embedded in Turkey’s state identity.

The historically constructed Turkicness of Turkey remains to date along with the country’s other identities. As the constructivist approach suggests, a state as a political unit can have multiple identities, and these identities can change over time and place. In the late Ottoman period, a component of Turkic irredentism emerged in the national identity of the Ottoman Empire, but did not ensue for the successor Turkish Republic. This was because state identities and interests change. Wendt (1994: 387) explains changing identities using the examples of Germany and Serbia in 1994:

[T]he depth and exclusivity of national identities varies greatly. German national identity in 1939 was chauvinist and exclusivist, while today it coexists with a significant European component; Serbian identity has moved in the opposite direction, from coexistence with Yugoslavian identity to chauvinism. This suggests that how nationalism affects state interests should be treated as an open, empirical issue.

An important question remains: how does the nationalism produced by Turkey’s Turkic state identity affect Turkey’s interests towards the Turkic republics? This question includes Turkish foreign policy towards all Turkic republics, but this thesis focuses only on the country cases of five of them. The national and state identity of Turkey has changed over time since the establishment of the Republic, and the studied period problematises the

reflections of Turkey's identity into its foreign policy towards these countries. Among the different attributes – such as pro-Islamic or neo-Ottoman – attached to recent Turkish foreign policy, this thesis attempts to demystify the appearance of a Turkic ethnonational identity in Turkish foreign policy.

As a caveat, it is important to note that the scope of this study is different from kin-state nationalism, which refers to a homeland state with a majority ethnic group and their diaspora residing outside the homeland. Diasporas outside a kin-state are drawn to their kin-state and usually maintain bonds due to their ethnic, cultural or linguistic ties. For instance, Waterbury (2011) investigated Hungary as a kin-state for the minorities of Hungarian origin who live in the states neighbouring Hungary, most notably in Romania. More interestingly, Quinlan (2005) found commonalities between Ireland and the Southern USA, where a significant number of Americans of Irish descent reside. Despite the melting-pot nature of American society, for the Americans of Irish origin who live in the Bible Belt and maintain their Irish origins, Ireland remains a kin-state. Similarly, Turkey is attached to the Turkic world by its nation-building peculiarities over its Turkic identity.

With the demise of the Soviet Union, however, the Turkic peoples of the CAC had their own sovereign states, in which comprised a majority. Compared to the minority status of Turks in the former Soviet Union, it is now irrelevant to conclude that the relationship between Turkey and the other independent Turkic states falls into the category of kin-state. This alteration in the categorisation of the Turkic people in the CAC, who are no longer ethnonational minority groups in the immense Soviet state, requires placing the relationships between Turkey and other Turkic republics in a different category. In the present research, this different category aligns with an examination of nationalism and the national consciousness of the Turkic countries by focusing on Turkish foreign policy. The Turkic minorities in China, Bulgaria and Afghanistan are thus not relevant to the scope of this thesis. As the case study method focuses on a small number of cases based on relevancy, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan were chosen as cases for consideration here. The other Turkic republics – Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan – remain outside the scope of the thesis. The fully-independent Turkic republics only could be chosen as a case study because Turkic minorities in different countries should be better examined from the perspective of kin-state nationalism. In sum, kin-state nationalism and what is studied here are distinct in their scope.

1.5 Conclusion

Nationalism and its origins were reviewed, and types of nationalism touched upon analytically in the literature review as a basis for the arguments in the following chapters. The phenomenon of national identity is resilient in unilateral world politics after the end of the Cold War. Ontologically, nationalism is varied in its implications for inter-state relations. The foreign affairs of Turkey towards the Turkic states, in this regard, are derived from a common Turkic identity that constituted Turkey's interests during the post-Cold War period.

The study of foreign policy forms a robust link with nationalism. This relationship does not necessarily involve the causes of war in every case. Nationalism, as an active component of foreign policy behaviour, takes part in both conflictual and cooperative cases. Turkish foreign policy is consistent with that duality. The Turkic identity of Turkey is a benign driver of diplomatic mobilisation in the CAC. The embrace of Turkic identity by the Turkish state elite is functional and intrinsically affects the Turkish diplomatic approach to Turkic states and communities. In a broader sense, the collaboration between Turkey and the Turkic republics – ranging from institutional to economic, social and cultural domains – indicates how nationalism based on shared Turkic identity has evolved into a safer space of diplomacy through loyalties to a cross-border attachment. In this diplomatic space, the harmonies between 'familial' states take over the discourse, leading into cross-border attachments. Consequently, the Turkic facet of Turkish national identity facilitates Turkey's foreign towards the Turkic republics.

CHAPTER 2
TURKICNESS, NATIONALISM AND
FOREIGN POLICY
A HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

Gellner (1994: 31) outlines that “nationalism has been the least disruptive” in most of the countries in Western Europe “because in those countries the de facto marriage of state and culture occurred before the age of nationalism”. Nationalism in the Middle East, in comparison with Europe and the Balkans, was late in becoming influential (Roshwald, 2001: 57). The late blooming had clear ramifications. Akin to those derived from the late adoption of nationalism or indeed the nation, in the case of Germany and Russia, resulting in ethnic nationalism. With the wave of nationalism spreading eastwards, the separatist resurgences split the Ottoman Empire into dozens of nation-states that span three regions: the Middle East, North Africa and the Balkans. The consequences of bitter processes of divorce continued to spread, starting from the Greek secession from the Ottoman Empire in 1821 (Miller, 1966: 75). The trend of the rise of ethnic nationalism and separatism never ceased until the end of World War I, resulting in the dissolution of the Ottoman state.

A Turkic national revival was one of the beacons of hope to save the Empire from collapse (Akcura, 2016: 15). Turkism, in an irredentist form on the part of the Young Turks to regain the power of the Ottoman Empire, gained popularity before World War I and was doomed to be disregarded. However, the legacy of Turkism in political and social spheres was felt in the Turkish Republic that followed (Zurcher, 2010: 211). Since then, Turkic ethnonational identity has resonated profoundly through the Turkish political spectrum, but not an aggressive and irredentist format of Turkism adopted by the new Turkish Republic. Domestic politics, however, due to the nation-building process of the early Turkish Republic, resembled the practices of the Young Turks at the expense of minorities and for the sake of modernisation (Zeydanlioglu, 2008).

The contemporary period of Turkish foreign policy with respect to the CAC is entangled with its roots in the past, going back more than a century. This chapter will, therefore, present the birth and consolidation of the nationalist doctrine in Turkish discourse. In historical sequence, the process of the infiltration of nationalism into Turkish foreign policy behaviour will illuminate how the period of foreign policymaking in Turkey that is the focus of this thesis was shaped.

It is difficult to separate Turkish foreign policy from its past, requiring scholars and researchers to present a glimpse of historical background (Yanik, 2011: 80). For that reason, the historical background will be provided in this chapter to present a comprehensive insight

into Turkish foreign policy in relation to Nationalism Studies. By shining light on Turkey's past, a brief history of Turkish foreign policy since the late Ottoman period will be linked with the role of nationalism today.

Like five separate republican periods of France, Zurcher (2004: 244) categorises the post-1960 coup period up to 1980 as the 'Second Republic' due to a new democratic transition following the 1960 military intervention in Turkey. The period from 1980 to present is categorised as the 'Third Republic' (Zurcher, 2004: 278). In a similar categorisation, White (2014: 24-38) divides Turkish political history into three separate republics. She considers that the 'First Republic' spans a space of time from 1908 to 1950, when the first truly free and fair democratic elections were held. The 'Second Republic' era is an interval of 30 years until another military intervention in 1980. The Third Republic refers to the beginning of the current Turkish Republic after 1980.

In this chapter, the republican era is divided into the following three republican periods: (a) the First Republic (1923-1960), (b) the Second Republic (1960-1980) and (c) the Third Republic (1980 to present). Turkish nationalism in the late Ottoman period is outlined as a separate era due to its place in the monarchical history of Turkey.

This chapter will paint a detailed picture of the transformation from the religion-based theocratic governance into the nationality-based governmental system in accordance with the *zeitgeist* between the late Ottoman and republican eras, stretching into the AKP period of Turkish foreign policymaking. This chapter will argue that religion played the biggest role in people's identity through most of the Ottoman history, whereas the new Turkish Republic as a successor of the Ottoman Empire embarked on a nation-building process based on Turkishness and Turkic ethnonational identity as its state identity. This divergence indicated the diminishing role of religions and the rise of ethnonational belonging not only among the non-Turkish communities of the Empire but also the Turkish core of the society.

2.2 The Late Ottoman Period: Discovery of a Hinterland

The discovery of Turkic ethnonational identity began with Turk 'émigrés' who fled the Russian Empire (Roshwald, 2001: 57). These dissident émigrés had to leave the Russian territories as their politically motivated Turkist activities potentially endangered Russian control in the CAC (Uzer, 2016: 3). These intellectuals were influenced by pan-Slavic sentiments prevailing in the Russian Empire and drawn to the ideas of unification of all Turks

under the banner of Turkic identity in Eurasia (Roshwald, 2001: 62; Uzer, 2016: 3). The late Ottoman intellectuals were in search of solutions to halt the diminishing of the Empire's territories triggered by the rise of nationalism across Europe and the Middle East. It was, however, the new age of nationalities and the superior reign of religion was already fading. By its multi-ethnic/multi-religious make-up, the rise of nationalism across the large territory of the Ottoman Empire created a terminal threat for the future of the state. In tandem with the other multi-ethnic empires such as Tsarist Russia, the beginning of the twentieth century was about to bring these empires to an inevitable end (Fortna, 2013: 1).

The administrative regime of the Ottoman Empire, the so-called 'Millet System', allowed both Muslim and non-Muslim subjects to live their lives by way of their religion (Barkey, 2007: 9). In other words, ethnicity was of secondary importance compared to the primacy of religion in society. The Millet System provided "an ad hoc procedure" for the "integration of non-Muslim religious communities into the empire" (Barkey, 2007: 9).

The term 'millet' is defined as a 'nation', deprived of ethnic connotations. The apparatus of the Millet System with legal pluralism for each segment of society played a vital role in unifying Ottoman society against separatism, as well as in maintaining its harmony. Christians comprised the majority of the Ottoman society until the early sixteenth-century and there were four principal components of Ottoman society as later as 1844: Muslims, Orthodoxes, Catholics and Jews. It is safe to conclude that the fundamental emphasis in Ottoman society was on religion rather than ethnicity. The Muslims were sure of various ethnic backgrounds but their classification in society remained regardless of their ethnonational sub-identities (Akturk, 2013: 52-53).

Despite the Millet System securing harmony among the multi-ethnic, multi-faith Ottoman society over centuries, Turkish nationalism developed over Turkic ethnonational identity in the Ottoman Empire along with a series of nationalist-separatist movements of ethnic groups of the Ottomans (Miller, 1966: 474-494). The Greeks were the first to break from the Ottoman state, gaining their independence from the Ottomans in 1821 (Shaw and Shaw, 1977: 9). Following the successful Greek independence movement, Serbians, Romanians, Bosniaks, Bulgarians, Macedonians and Arabs gained their independence in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The Muslims of the Empire and the ruling Sultan Abdulhamid II (remaining on the throne between 1876 and 1909) reacted to the wave of rising nationalism in religious form. Pan-

Islamism was seen by the Sultan and a corpus of Ottoman intellectuals as the only option to save the Empire from shrinking (Pears, 1917: 150, 162). According to Hans (1958: 6), the idea of pan-Islamism was “the first movement resembling modern nationalism”. Pan-Islamist sentiments cleared the way for Turkic ethnonationalism. Nevertheless, once Arab nationalism proved its popularity in the Arabian Peninsula and the Ottoman Levant, the idea of Islamic solidarity was already abandoned (Kayali, 1997).

At the time of the late Ottoman period, pan-Islamism was one of three ideologies conceptualised by the Ottoman ideologue Yusuf Akçura’s - a Russian émigré of Tatar origin – 1904 article entitled *Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset* (Three Types of Policy). The article published by Akçura in Cairo catalysed the dissemination of two more thoughts, pan-Turkism and Ottomanism (Akcura and Fehmi, 1981). The three different policies were by-products of the efforts to preserve the Empire. The idea of Ottomanism pledged to utilise the Ottoman supranational identity as an overarching supra-identity with the ambition of unifying various sub-identities under the banner of a single Ottoman state (Urer, 2009: 51-52). The inclusive character of the supra-identity of Ottomanism proposed under the aphorism of *İttihad-ı Anasır* (Union of Nations) (Urer, 2009: 51), and was reinforced by the first Ottoman constitution, *Kanun-i Esasi* (constitution), proclaiming equal constitutional citizenship for each ethnic and religious community (Ulker, 2005: 620).

Discordant with the idea of Ottomanism, Turkism proposed by Akçura relied upon Turkic ethnonational identity for a greater Turkic union, uniting the Turks of the CAC “based on race” (Akçura and Fehmi, 1981: 5). The Islam-based policy elaborated by Akçura had the ambition to create a Muslim unity under the leadership of the Ottoman state (Akçura, 2016). The three policies emerged as pragmatic considerations to save the Empire and resembled different currents of nationalism of the time.

The wave of nationalism that spread from Western Europe to the Balkans caused more trouble for the Ottoman state and hit its peak in the First Balkan War in 1912. During this period, the Ottomans strove to overcome the secessionist movements and sought new modes of survival. All the nationalist self-determination movements that had arisen in the Empire in the first half of the nineteenth century produced an impact in triggering Turkish nationalism with Turkic past among the Turkish elite of the Empire (Cagaptay, 2006: 8). The wave of nationalism across the Ottoman territories emanated from “the rationale [that] came from European philosophers and Orientalists” (Shaw and Shaw, 1977: 260).

The Balkans Wars (1912-1913) resulted in the defeat of the Ottomans and the Greeks, Bulgarians, Serbians and Montenegrins announced victory. The victory of the Balkan nations against the Ottoman state increased the popularity to some extent of the ethnonational-populist nationalism in the Empire. In the domain of rising nationalist sentiments in the country, Turkish nationalism found a convenient ecosystem to flourish among the Turkish (Cagaptay, 2006: 8). Among these, Akçura, one of the founding fathers of Turkish nationalism, was in rejection of “Ottoman nation policy” and drawn to ethnonationalism that had a profound impact in the 1910s (Arai, 2011: 20).

The Balkan Wars proved, through the revolts of Balkan nations, the infeasibility of Ottomanism. Moreover, the failures in the Ottoman and Islamic solidarity policies led the Ottoman elite to an intellectual phase of Turkism with the emergence of various magazines and journals concerning Turks inside and beyond the borders of the country. *Türk Derneği* (Turkish Foundation), *Genç Kalemler* (Young Writers), *Türk Yurdu* (Turkish Homeland), *İslam Mecmuası* (Islamic Journal) were some of the magazines published by the Turkish nationalist intellectuals (Arai, 2011: 21). These publications also had an Islamic intonation. The Turkist intellectuals acknowledged the role that Islam played in their outreach to the religious Turkic communities of the CAC. Islam is seen as one of the unifying determinants in the two regions (Landau, 1995a: 8, 46).

Before the above-mentioned intellectual background work on Turkism that took place, ideological roots of nationalism on Turkic ethnogenesis had already been underlined by non-Turkic intellectuals. For instance, German-born Russian Vasily Radloff, who was one of the founders of Turkology, or Hungarian Turkologist Ármin Vámbéry – who travelled and lived across the CAC and Ottoman Empire – sowed the seeds of Turkic revivalism in the second half of the nineteenth century (Uzer, 2016: 24, 29, 38). Both Radloff, and Vámbéry directly, or indirectly, were generating a mindset of awakening Turkic ethnogenesis.

When nationalist currents escalated in the Empire, the Turkish elite found itself in a convenient position for introducing Turkish nationalism by developing materials that included features of Turkic identity. Bennigsen (1984) points out that some of the non-Ottoman ideologues of Turkism forged a broader interpretation of pan-Turkism named as ‘pan-Turanism’ or simply Turanism. According to Bennigsen (1984: 39), Islamic or Turkic pan-movements, which are “ideologies based on supranational, religious and ethnonational identities, are not the result of a long historical evolution” and in his point of view, both

ideologies came into existence “in Russia at the end of the nineteenth century among Crimean and Volga Tatar intellectuals”. Hur (2015) suggests that Turanism, a version of pan-Turkic ideals, is a “Hungarian invention”, which was invented and promoted to alleviate Hungarian isolation and weakness between the two great powers of Austria and Russia.

The Hungarian case presumably explains why the Turks of Russia were inclined to Turkic revivalism, which may be seen as a minority reaction against the powerful majority. The Hungarians and Finnish are counted in the European Turkic communities in the Turanian context, given their linguistic similarities in the language family of Ural-Altai (Stoddart, 1917; Akcali and Korkut, 2012). Finland is known for hosting Turkist (Azerbaijani) dissidents from the Soviet Union running their intellectual activities in the country and publishing a newspaper called *Yeni Turan* (New Turan) in the early 1930s. The newspaper was dedicated to informing about “the struggles for independence of the Turkic peoples in the Soviet Union and about Finland for the Turks” (Halen and Martikainen, 2015: 93). The Hungarians are, however, the most inclined to emphasise their Turkic origins, mostly promoted by some of the political and social groups in Hungary. Still today, a *kurultai* (*kurultay*) or ‘congress’ is organised in Hungary every year by the Hungarian Turan Foundation to gather Turkic peoples from all over Eurasia, and the organisation takes support from Turkey’s Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (*Türk İşbirliği ve Koordinasyon Ajansı, TİKA*). *Kurultay* is seen as a showcase of Turkic art and sports while aiming to promote friendly relations between Turkey and Hungary together with the other Turkic republics and communities (Inanc, 2015).

As an extension of this, Victor Orban, the incumbent Prime Minister of Hungary, attended the sixth summit of the Cooperation Council of Turkic-Speaking States (CCTS, aka Turkic Council) to represent his country as an observer state in the Kyrgyz city of Cholpon-Ata in September 2018 and expressed solidarity with the Turkic republics (*Daily Sabah*, 2018). Regarding the intention to foster relations with the Turkic states of the CCTS, this move from the Hungarian government is more justified by the granting of observer status from the CCTS. At the CCTS summit, Orban commented that Hungary “is standing on Kipchak Turks’ principles” and “ready to establish strategic cooperation with countries in the council (*Daily Sabah*, 2018). Orban also referred to “common cultural and historical ties with the Turkic states” and added that “they would like to work closely with the Turkic Council” before expressing his appreciation for granting his country observer status in the Council (CCTS, 2018). It was later in early January 2019, that Orban signed a governmental decree to

establish a research institute to explore the Turkic origins of the Hungarians at issue, and in September 2019, a CCTS office was inaugurated in Budapest (Samar, 2019; *Daily Sabah*, 2019).

In sum, the wide range of research undertaken and exposition of the cultural background of the Turks provided the material to put forward narratives of Turkic ethnonational identity in the country despite the difference that throughout the governance of Sultan Abdulhamid II, “Pan-Islamism became an official ideology and grew considerably in importance” (Bozdaglioglu, 2008: 58). In contrast to the policy of Abdulhamid II, Turkic ethnonational sentiments had begun to flourish contrarily to the official ideology of the state. The power behind the nationalist movement against the official state ideology was the Ottoman Turkish intelligentsia, influenced by the rising phenomenon of nationalism in Europe, namely the Young Turks (Arai, 2011).

The Young Turks may be regarded as an underrated part of Turkish political and intellectual history, despite “the Young Turks’ enormous importance in the modern history of Turkey” (Zurcher, 2010: 95). Indeed, the Young Turks’ way of policymaking with a strong emphasis on Turkism and Turkification still resonates in the Turkish political spectrum. The resonance of the Young Turks in the rest of republican history is the legacy of their divergence from the traditional Ottoman polity and giving priority to ethnonational identity rather than religion.

2.2.1 The Young Turks: Turkism in Power

Turkism in the late Ottoman period commenced with a group of young bureaucratic elite known as the Young Turks. The Young Turk movement began as a Western-oriented, secular movement with an emphasis on Turkish/Turkic ethnogenesis in the 1880s¹¹. Many of the group members were French-educated embracing the rising liberal parliamentary values of Europe of the time for modernisation (see Mardin, 2000). The politically motivated Young Turks had experienced a long battle against the reign of Abdulhamid II, discrediting it as a 33-year-long (1876-1909) period of oppression of the Ottoman communities (Pears, 1917: 283-294). The Young Turks adopted French-oriented positivism which further encouraged nationalism-driven policies and sparing less room for religion. This reliance on positivist science comprised fundamental tenets of the young Ottoman revolutionary elite (Taglia, 2015: 122).

¹¹ The term ‘Young Turk’ comes from Western journalists to separate the old Ottoman state establishment from those of the young reformist group of people (Hale, 1994: 36).

It is difficult, however, to allege that the Young Turks were unvarying in their intellectual and ideological orientation. Zurcher (2010: 96) divides the Young Turks into six different influential groups in the late Ottoman period stretching into the early republican era:

(1) the founders of the Young Turk movement; (2) the leaders of the 1908 constitutional revolution; (3) the politically active officers in the Ottoman army; (4) the members of the central committee (CC) of the CUP; (5) the leadership of the nationalist resistance after World War I and (6) the early republican ruling elite.

As noted, Sultan Abdulhamid II, aligned to the three types of ideology of the late Ottoman period, was drawn into the Islamic revival of the state, leaving him at odds with the Young Turk ideological insurgency. On the contrary to the pan-Islamic purposes of the ruling Sultan, the Young Turks were driven by the ideas of Turkic ethnonational glorification, with less concern for religious commonality in the country or elsewhere. This clash of ideas between the Young Turks and the Sultan would see many members of the Young Turks end up in exile (Hanioglu, 1995: 87). Most of the exiled members of the Young Turks moved to France where their inspiration for Turkism was shaped further by the notion of ‘nation’ in Europe. The transfer of the notion of nationalism and other European sentiments of the time to Ottoman Turkey was accelerated by publications of the Young Turks in exile. The Young Turks commenced a movement that took the origins of the Turks to time immemorial, which meant prior to the embrace of Islam by the Turks, and this genealogy had an impact on the Turks of the CAC under Russian rule (Toynbee and Kirkwood, 1976: 56). Once the reign of Abdulhamid II weakened at the beginning of the twentieth century, the Young Turk-led Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) plotted a *coup d'état* against the Sultan in 1908 (Meeker, 2001: 279).

The members of the CUP successfully managed to mount a coup against the ruling Sultan Abdulhamid II, followed by the takeover of the government. The Sultan remained in power for one more year following the Young Turk revolution (Zurcher, 2010: 274). Turkist intellectuals who carried out their political activities in Russia or elsewhere had the chance to move to the Ottoman land – and among them was Yusuf Akçura, though he never joined the CUP (Akçura, 2016: 3).

The abdication of the Sultan under coercion from the Young Turks propelled Young Turk ideology into the government. Thereafter, nationalism, secularism, and republican thought began to be pillars of the Ottoman state. In accordance with the Young Turk ideals, Turkish nationalism had occasion to dominate domestic politics and subsequently, foreign policy with the establishment of the CUP was committed to promoting Turkic ethnonationalism. This

nationalistic endeavour came at the expense of the rights and welfare of non-Turkish subjects (Kayali, 1997: 5).

The rule of the CUP under the Young Turks came along with an ambitious Turkification project in administration (Ulker, 2005). Eversley (1923) argues that “the Young Turks had added new difficulties and more causes of complaint by their attempts to Turkify everything” such as “by their extension of the conscription to the Christian population” that was not the case before (Eversley, 1923: 353). Turkism at home created a backlash even among the non-Turkish Muslims such as Arabs and Muslim Albanians (Ahmad, 2014).

The Young Turk governance was based on the national revival of Turkic ethnonationalism and this also created a sphere of influence for the Turks of the CAC for national revival (Zenkovsky, 1958: 254). At the time of the 1908 Revolution, the revival of Turkish/Turkic nationalism by the CUP officials caused clashes among ideologues of the other two mainstream types of policies across the intellectual spectrum. In short, although the intellectual dynamism of the Young Turks created excitement in the Turkic pockets of the CAC, the ramifications of their policies cancelled out the supposedly positive effects at home brought about by policies of Turkification (Ulker, 2005: 622).

On the matter of rising state-level, officially-endorsed nationalism, nationalist tendencies were inevitable amongst the government officials at the time because of the rising nationalist movements of the other ethnic and religious groups in the Arabian Peninsula and the Balkans (Findley, 2010). According to Zurcher (2010: 39); “both chronological and geographical factors governed these choices, and questions about the Young Turks and nationalism cannot be answered without noting those factors”. The Young Turks’ rise to power clashed, of course, with the other ethnonationalist movements across the country. Therefore, the Young Turk movement can better be interpreted as a result of peripheral factors.

In the context of ethnonational movements, the promotion of Arab nationalism as a separatist movement against the Ottomans can be seen as a response against the rise of Turkish nationalism. With Turkic revivalism, the government of the CUP distanced itself from the Arabian Peninsula. The standoff between Turkey and Arabia has become mainstream since then (Kayali, 1997: 144-145). The Arab nationalism followed by a revolt against the Ottoman state was a turning point in the name of Islamic solidarity amongst Muslims, and the pan-Islamist ideas of Sultan Abdulhamid II along with Islamist intellectuals of the state. When the Ottoman Empire declared war in 1914, the expectations of the Ottoman Turks that the Arabs

would join World War I in support of the Ottoman state faded away when Arab revolts against the Ottoman state erupted in the Arabian Peninsula (Hale, 2013: 27).

It is safe to infer that nationalism promoted by the CUP government drove Muslim subjects (predominantly Arabs) more into ethnic or cultural nationalism. This soon gave rise to orchestrated national revivals across the huge span of the country in Turkish, Arab, Armenian and Greek communities. The age of nationalities in contrast with the age of religions in the post-French Revolution period resulted in the rise of nationalist movements and search for self-determination amongst the minority groups across the Ottoman Empire (Kayali, 1997: 144).

The Arabs were one of the communities that reacted against the Turkification policy of the CUP by means of an opposition party of Arab origin (Kayali, 1997: 52). When repressive Turkifying policies – in conflict with the long-lived Millet System – were imposed on the non-Muslim population of the Empire, the Young Turks’ nationalist policy came into question even within the CUP circles. The reason, to some extent, could be linked to the rising nationalism across the country. Turkism was only one of the “proto-nationalist” movements that emerged in the late Ottoman period along with “the Albanians, the Arabs, and the Kurds” (Hanioglu, 2008: 142).

The other ethnic groups of the country began to fight back against the CUP’s promotion of Turkism in their policies. According to Hanioglu (2008: 161) this “was a fundamental incompatibility between the aims of the Turkist core of the CUP and those of the non-Turkish populations of the empire”. Five consecutive years following the Revolution (1908-1913), the CUP had to deal with a string of territorial losses – including the intangible assets of Ottoman pride and identity – due to the Balkan Wars and the annexation of Libya by Italy. These losses steered the government to be more reliant on the survival project over Turkish solidarity at home and the Turkic peoples of Eurasia more widely. The CUP’s increasing inclination to ethnonational Turkishness raised concerns among non-Turkish subjects of the country, and consequently, a more intense type of nationalism was reflected in domestic and foreign policies.

Kayali (1997: 83) puts it as a “conscious policy conceived in 1908 systematically implemented, often as an integral part of a nationalist program”. This nationalist agenda conflicted with the Millet System of the state which used to create religious and ethnic tolerance to non-Turkish communities. The Turkic revival, however, was seen as a survival

project to save the Empire from disintegration. A new identity with the Turkic face was to “secure a lasting place for the empire” (Barkey, 2008: 278). The state had indeed transformed into an unstable place in which its peoples began identifying themselves by their sub-identity rather than their religion or the supranational identity of ‘Ottoman’. Above all, nationalism naturally became the most enduring determinant of Turkish politics that would produce ramifications in foreign policy subsequently.

Notwithstanding, a few of the CUP members in the government were in defiance of the mainstream of the CUP, defending the enduring stability of the Empire through Ottoman social cohesion instead of Turkic revivalism. The Minister of War of the Ottoman government, Enver Pasha, was one of them, once exclaiming that “there are no longer Bulgars, Greeks, Roumans, Jews, Mussulmans: under the same blue sky we are all equal, we glory in being Ottomans” (quoted in Miller, 1966: 476). It is difficult, though, to reach clear-cut judgements about his ideological credentials, as Enver Pasha also professed to unite the Muslims, with special emphasis on the Muslims of the CAC, and all the while promoted Turkism (Aksakal, 2008: 15-16).

Members of the CUP such as Enver Pasha were an exception who kept themselves away from chauvinistic rhetoric. Turkification thus played a significant role under the government of the Young Turks in contravention of alternative policies. Consequently, “the non-Turkish communities had to face assimilation, and also centralisation which takes place in mostly non-Turkish distant provinces of the empire” (Nielsen, 2011: 73).

The dangerous identity politics of the CUP had a cross-border dimension in terms of the repercussions derived from its domestic policies. CUP members were subscribed to an irredentist foreign policy to save Turks of the CAC from Russian domination. In the aftermath of the Balkan Wars, which ended in 1913, the CUP changed its foreign policy to focus on the CAC for its potential to take the Empire back under its power. The Young Turks’ reliance on pan-nationalism began with this interest in the CAC where the Ottoman state was previously uninterested (Zurcher, 2010: 196).

Irredentism proved itself to be a trend in the late Ottoman period among the Balkan states, mainly Greece (Woodwell, 2007: 157-162). The success of Greek irredentism against the Ottomans under the banner of the *Megali Idea* (“the Great Idea”) presented an inspiration to the CUP (Woodwell, 2007: 159). In turn, the CUP government adopted a Pan-Turkist version of irredentism as a predictable reaction to the trend of nationalist rhetoric and practice.

The transfer of the domestic policies implemented by the CUP into foreign policy was inevitable. The entry of the Ottoman state into World War I was influenced by the irredentist agenda to gain access to the Turks of the CAC, if not entirely derived from it. Aydin (2007) argues that the pan-Turkist ambitions of the CUP led the Empire into World War I but is wary of this simplistic account, also emphasising Ottoman sentiments against the West, caused by what was interpreted as the oppression of Muslims due to European imperial rule. Zurcher (2010: 196) argues that the political and ideological reaction in the face of a shrinking empire appeared in four stages: “irredentism”, “pan-Turkist escapism”, “resentment” against Christian minorities, and “discovery of Anatolia as the true Turkish fatherland”. Following this analysis, Zurcher (2010: 196) elaborates on ‘pan-Turkist escapism’ as, “The loss of real empire in the West certainly encouraged dream of virtual empire in the East”, which relied on the Turkic peoples of the CAC.

No wonder there are varying interpretations between official historiography and scholars on to what extent Turkist ideals of the CUP were influential before the Ottoman entry into World War I. What is clear that an ambition to extend the Ottoman land to the East to reach Turks of the CAC was part of the discourse of the Young Turks. This can be seen as a reflection of the impact of the Turkish nationalist agenda in domestic politics on foreign policy.

In this regard, it is to conclude that the Young Turks, following their revolutionary period, brought the end of the Ottoman rule before the declaration of the Turkish Republic in 1923 (Jung and Piccoli, 2001: 53). The policies undertaken by the CUP were akin to nation-state policies. These policies were gradually leading the country to an uncertain future, right on the eve of World War I. Until then, the Young Turks had formed an enduring economic and military alliance with Germany, which “was emerging as the most likely candidate for alliance” for World War I (Hale, 2013: 15). At first, the CUP showed signs of remaining neutral in the predicted war (Ahmad, 1966: 318).

In fact, the Young Turks attempted to ally with Britain and Russia. Both attempts fizzled out, and for Ahmad (1966: 325), the move to ally with Germany was an imperative of the circumstances of the time for the Young Turks. Hale (2013: 23), in contrast, shares a different account of the necessity of allying with Germany and concludes that “it seems that there was nothing inevitable or economic about the Ottoman-German alliance”. Landau (1995a) considers the Ottoman entry to World War I in the Central Powers camp as a result of anti-

Russian sentiment among the Young Turks for the presence of Russian dominance in the Turkic CAC.

Another factor that may be easy to overlook by scholars was the German pledge to the Ottoman government to extend the Ottoman border on the eastern front so that the Ottomans could access the Turks of the CAC. Aside from Enver Pasha's ambition on the eastern borders, the visible marker of the Ottoman entry into the war was the fictitious purchase of the German warships *Goeben* and *Breslau* for the Ottoman navy (Hale, 2013: 26), the Ottoman flag flying during their attacks of the Russian coastline in the Black Sea (Lewis, 1974: 60). Above all, Akçura's comments regarding the war indicate the perception of the nationalists on the Ottoman decision to join the war; "The policy pursued by the Ottoman state today is flawless" (quoted in Aksakal, 2008: 56).

Akçura's approach to the policy of the CUP that included access to the Turks of the CAC refines the ambition to access the CAC by an expected victory over Russia in the war. Landau (1988: 3) stresses the considerable role of Enver Pasha in Ottoman involvement in World War I. In support of this account, it is important to note that Enver Pasha fled from Istanbul to Central Asia soon after the end of World War I to take a lead in the 'Basmachi Revolt' along with Turkic peoples in Russian Turkestan against further Soviet influence and invasion in the region (Lewis, 1974: 62).

The October or Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 during World War I impacted the future of the Turks of the CAC. A beacon of hope for the Turkic people of the CAC emerged to liberate them from the rule of Tsarist Russia. The pledge of the Bolsheviks to respect the rights of self-determination and grant independence for ethnic communities in the CAC was met with Turkic support for the revolution. A period of liberation continued until the Bolsheviks consolidated their power in Russia (Hunter, Thomas and Melikishvili, 2004: 23-28). The Azerbaijanis formed an independent republic in 1918 and the Kazakhs declared autonomy in 1917. Soviet annexation of the CAC in the years following the revolution, however, proved the hope for the independence of the Turkic Muslims was a fallacy (Hunter, Thomas and Melikishvili, 2004: 23).

Around the end of World War I, Enver Pasha formed the Islamic Army of the Caucasus (Gasimov, 2001: 24). The army, comprising Ottoman army forces and Azerbaijani volunteers, was mobilised to recapture Baku from Armenian and Bolshevik forces, following the Azerbaijani declaration of Western-style statehood in May 1918 that saw brief

independence until 1920 (Valiyev, 2005: 4). The role that the Ottoman army played in liberating Baku laid the foundations of today's Azerbaijan.

Ideological and practical failures of the CUP in foreign policy became visible following the end of the war. Prominent members of the CUP fled from Istanbul, marking the end of a decade of CUP rule (Aksakal, 2008: 188). What has lasted from the Young Turks, throughout republican history, is the legacy of Turkic revivalism and an idiosyncratic nationalism.

The "Muslim millet" evolved into an ethnonational Turkic entity in the hands of the Young Turks (Cagaptay, 2006: 4). This evolution continued after World War I, and, identical to almost all other nation-building experiences, the Turkish nation-building became painful throughout late Ottoman and republican history. Foreign policy has been subject to those processes of nation-building ever since by the legacy coming from the evolution of religion-based polity towards the prevalence of ethnonationalism in the governance of the country.

Another legacy of the Young Turks Revolution is "military involvement in politics" (Ahmad, 1968: 36). The legacy of militarism has endorsed militarily-backed nationalism into the society which already subscribed to Kemalism or the official nationalism later in Turkish politics of the successor Turkish Republic, safeguarding inherited state identity of the country. Multiple military interventions took place in republican Turkey, beginning from the 1960 *coup d'état* to the military memorandum to politics on 28 February 1997.

The Young Turks laid the foundations of not only narratives of Turkic ethnonational identity but also a set of domestic and foreign policies. The division inherited from the late Ottoman politics still has an impact among the political and diplomatic factions of contemporary Turkey. Above all else, the Young Turks discovered the hinterland of the Turks of the CAC that was rediscovered by the end of the Soviet Union in 1991 and articulated into Turkish foreign policy in a non-irredentist format.

2.3 The First Republic: The Young Turks 2.0

In the five years from the end of World War I to the declaration of the Turkish Republic as a nation-state, an important turn of events unfolded. In the aftermath of the World War, the collapse of the Ottoman Empire was followed by the War of Liberation against occupying forces of the Turkish heartland of Anatolia. While saving the mainland Anatolia that comprises today's Turkey, Atatürk abolished the Sultanate in 1922, paving the way to the

establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923. The abolition of the Caliphate came after the declaration of the Republic in 1924.

In regard to the revolutionary nature of the First Republic, Turkey underwent radical changes in its political and social circumstances in this era. Radical reforms in this period were one step ahead of those of the Young Turks. The Young Turks preserved the monarchy and other fundamental institutions of the Empire. As a successor of the Young Turks, Atatürk rejected the Ottoman legacy, abolished the monarchy and exiled the dynasty to establish a secular nation-state (Ahmad: 1993: 15).

Atatürk became a follower of European-style modernisation (Cagaptay, 2006). This was a continuation of a long and complex Westernisation process that had been taking place in many areas of the state and society since the ‘Tanzimat reforms’ of the mid-nineteenth century that were the Ottoman Empire’s attempts to overhaul its provincial administration through modernisation (Mardin, 2000; Zeydanlioglu, 2008).¹²

Atatürk’s revolution was the second episode of the Young Turk Revolution (Deutsch, 1969: 50). The essence of Atatürk’s revolution was establishing a republican nation-state based on state nationalism. The period from 1923 to 1950 witnessed a series of policy efforts in secularisation, nationalisation and Turkification. The ruling political party of the time, the CHP (*Halk Fırkası*, People’s Party at the time), embarked upon a nation-building process. The endeavour of nation-building has been called creating ‘*homo turkicus*’ (Pope, 2005: 33). The ethnic emphasis in defining citizenship was at the centre of the nation-building endeavour. The ongoing imposition of identity in citizenship created a distance “between Turks-by-citizenship and Turks-by-nationality” (Cagaptay, 2006: 15). In other words, ethnically non-Turkish citizens are counted as Turks. Citizens of Kurdish origin and non-Muslims were among the groups affected by nation-building, putting their ethnic, religious and cultural identities at stake. In Article 88 of the 1924 Turkish Constitution, it was declared that everyone with Turkish citizenship is Turkish: “the people of Turkey regardless of their religion and race are Turkish in terms of citizenship” (quoted in Senturk, 2005: 126).

The identity politics of Turkey today is derivative of the identity politics of the First Republic period that was akin to that of the Young Turks. The First Republic was in favour of centralisation, ‘anti-ethnic’ and based on rigid secularism (or laicism akin to the French

¹² The Tanzimat reforms were a series of modernisation attempts that began in the Ottoman Empire in 1839 to reform political and social domains (Shaw and Shaw, 1977: 55).

interpretation, *laïcité*). An ambition to create an ethnically and religiously homogeneous society was a priority for most of the First Republic era. It is, however, mistaken to conclude that Turkish nationalism was constructed in the hands of the CHP members and Atatürk. It was an established notion already at the time of the First Republic as it derived from the Young Turk movement under the age of nationalism relying on “language, ethnicity and historic origins” (Ozdogan, 2010: 49).

The First Republic saw the creation of myths of a Turkic nation in Anatolia. As its scientific basis, the Sun-Language Theory was introduced. The theory essentially claims that roughly all languages of the world are derivatives of the Turkish language (Landau, 2004: 286). The intense emphasis on the Turkish language is seen in the Kemalist period slogan “Citizen, speak Turkish!” (Ince, 2012: 60). The nation-building efforts detached the country from the Ottoman past, denying the inherent legacy of the emphasis on the religion. The official historiography included the Mongols – in fact, a non-Turkic group – in the official history of the state for the first time, stressing common origins that would have been unthinkable in the Ottoman perception of the history.¹³ The official theories on the Turkish language and the Mongol past were for nation-building ends and away from a robust scientific basis (Berkes, 1998: 314).

The Kemalist cadre of the young Turkish Republic was drawn to “fabricating the new Turkish nation out of Hittite and Sumerians” rather than embracing the Ottoman historical and cultural legacy (Yavuz, 1998: 25). This fashion was informed by a Kemalist rejection of the East and embrace of the West, embodied by the Kemalist proclamation on allegiance to the West. The reliance on the nationality and modernism in this era, new types of nationalism constructed or laid the foundations of some future nationalisms that each had different outcomes in foreign policy terms.

In a simple categorisation by Uzer (2011: 34), different nationalisms in Turkey in relation to their foreign policy outputs can be categorised as ‘Kemalist nationalism’, ‘ethnic (based on Turkic ethnonationalism) nationalism’ and ‘conservative nationalism’. Kemalist nationalism consisted of the ‘official nationalism’ of the state in terms of its founding principles, while

¹³ The Kemalist embrace of the Mongols as Turkic cousins is noteworthy in reflecting the emphasis put on the Turkic origins of the official history of republican Turkey. Due to the new official historiography of the Republic, Turkish names like Cengiz (Genghis), Timurçin (Temujin) at a societal level, and governmental institution names with the Mongolian suffix ‘tay’, such as Yargıtay (Court of Cassation) or Danıştay (Council of State) became common for the first time. The republican historiography owned and sublimed the Mongols in a way that would have been unthinkable for the Ottoman state.

the nationalism of the Young Turks fell into ethnic nationalism which relied on irredentist and expansionist foreign policy discourses. Lastly, ‘conservative nationalism’ forged outputs in foreign policy which are sensitive to both Islamic and Turkic causes, as can be seen in contemporary Turkey (Uzer, 2011: 34). As has been indicated in Chapter 1 though, these multiple nationalisms have different functional outcomes in Turkey’s foreign policy.

Regarding the republican perception of the Turks in the CAC, Atatürk stated on the tenth anniversary of the Turkish Republic that the new republic concerned the Turks of the CAC no matter how impossible it was to reach them in diplomatic relations due to the Soviet Union with whom Turkey signed the ‘Pact of Friendship and Non-aggression’ on 17 December 1925 (Kurban, 2017: 98):

The Soviet Union today is our friend, neighbor and ally. We need this friendship. However nobody today can predict what will happen tomorrow. States can be dismembered like the Ottomans or divided like the Austro-Hungary. Nations, which are held today by strong hand, tomorrow can run away. The balance in the world can change, and Turkey needs to know what to do in this case. It is our friend who rules our brothers, with whom a common language and religion unite us, and with whom we are united in essence. We must be ready to take them under protection. Not silently waiting for this day, but to be ready for it. How are nations preparing for this eventuality, are they strengthening spiritual bridges? Our faith and history unite us like bridges. We must return to our roots, to our common history divided by events. We must return to our historical roots. (quoted in Murinson, 2009: 37)

Furthermore, Atatürk emphasised the importance of linguistic, cultural and historical approaches to the CAC and concluded that it was his ambition to engage with the Turks of the CAC through organised councils of the Turkish language, as well as history. Turks outside the Republic forged the cause in founding the ‘Turkology Institute’ (*Türkiyat Enstitüsü*) with Atatürk to research the ties with the Central Asian Turks in the 1920s (Tandogan, 2010: 98). What is more, the new school textbooks sited the beginning of Turkish history in Turkey’s Central Asian roots (Millas, 1991: 25).

Despite the overwhelming interests of the founding father of the Republic, no sign of expansionist or irredentist policy was put in place. Any interest in the Turks outside the borders of Turkey seemed out of foreign policy context for the new republican cadre. After all, the interest in outside Turks historically proved itself helpful in the endeavour of nation-building, as official nationalism was in line with the discourse developed for outside Turks. Turkic ethnonational identity in this period was only to serve the founding elite’s domestic agenda and to focus on ‘social engineering’ within the country to establish a ‘republican order’ (Ciddi, 2009: 25).

İpek (interviewed, 2018) quoted some of the words of Atatürk above and stated that “unstable governments in the post-1960 coup era were unsuccessful in preparing for the day of

independence of the Turkic states of the CAC”. According to İpek, “Turkey was caught by surprise at the time of the dissolution of the Soviet Union”. The President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev referred to the very same quote in his address to the TBMM in 2009 pointing out that the prediction came true as the Soviet Union disintegrated, and the Turkic republics gained independence (Nazarbayev, 2009).

Although the Turkic ethnogenesis played an important role in nation-building, an overwhelming emphasis was put on Europe for foreign policy. This tendency had repercussions in the influence of authoritarianism on Kemalist policies at the time of rising fascist regimes in Europe, namely Italy and Germany. İsmet İnönü, then President of Turkey from 1938 to 1950, was reconciled with the European absolutist regime of Italy. Kemalist Turkey had moved away from “Ottoman cosmopolitanism” (Findley, 2010: 4).

To sustain cordial relations with the Soviet Union, Turkey was cautious in its political tendencies. In order not to antagonise the Soviet Union, which ruled the Caucasian and Central Asian Turkic communities at the time, there came a crackdown on pan-Turkist currents in Turkey.¹⁴ On this policy, the İnönü period is famous for the 1944 pan-Turkism trials, which included trials of 23 well-known Turkist people such as Hüseyin Nihal Atsız, Zeki Velidi Togan and Alparslan Türkeş from 3 May 1944 up to 1947. The lawsuit against the Turkist defendants was named *Irçılık-Turanlık* (Racism-Turanism) as a part of an official crackdown on the Turkist factions of the political currents. On 3 May 1944, a group of Turkist nationalists organised a protest in Ankara and since then 3 May has been celebrated as the day of Turkism by a small number of nationalists in Turkey (Sefercioglu, 2009: 6-12).

Aside from detachment towards the Middle East, the CAC was off the agenda in consecutive Kemalist governments because there was no option of direct diplomatic contact with the Turkic peoples of the CAC, which were a part of the Soviet Union. The single-party period governments were naturally detached from the outside Turks and exclusively concerned with domestic stability through nation-building and Westernisation. Contrary to the active nation-building process in domestic politics, foreign policy remained mainly pro-status quo.¹⁵ By the

¹⁴ Due to the Soviet threat in this period, a crackdown on leftist parties and socialists occurred as well (Lewis, 1968: 310).

¹⁵ Summarised by the slogan “Peace at home, peace in the world”, which is attributed to Atatürk, but as Hale (2013: 41) and Mufti (1998: 33) point out, no evidence supports that it was actually expressed by Atatürk. Many other catchphrases in Turkey bear a similarly disputed origin; for example, the motto “Justice is the foundation of the state”, which can be seen in every courthouse in Turkey, is attributed to Atatürk, but this is disputed and

Kemalist foreign policy of non-involvement and neutrality, Turkey remained neutral in World War II, albeit securing an entente with the UK (Ahmad, 1993: 102).

The stance of the single-party period governments towards the Turks of the CAC appeared in the last days of World War II. In response to the parliamentary written question of Şevket Mocan MP, then Minister for Justice Rükneddin Nasuhioğlu stated that 195¹⁶ dissidents of Azerbaijani origin – who escaped the Soviet Union during World War II to Turkey – had been extradited to the Soviet Union in the Turkish-Soviet border city of Kars (TBMM Deb, 18 July 1951). The dissidents were returned to the Soviet territory over Boraltan bridge in Kars and soon after executed by a Soviet firing squad (Uyar, 2015). The incident is embedded in history as *Boraltan Faciası* (Boraltan tragedy) and was brought into public debate in 2012 (*Sabah*, 2012a).

The post-World War II period came with external challenges to Turkey. İsmet İnönü was compelled to channel the country towards a transition to democracy due to increasing pressure from Western powers (Yavuz, 2009: 28). One of the main incentives for the state to succeed in a transition to democracy from the single-party system was the alarming approach of the Soviet Union under the rule of Joseph Stalin, which constituted an imperative to align with the West in the last chapter of World War II. On 19 March 1945, the Soviet administration sent a diplomatic note to Turkey, stating that the Pact of Friendship and Non-aggression between Turkey and the Soviet Union would be revoked based on new demands that claimed the Turkish provinces of Kars and Ardahan to be part of the Soviet Union and involvement in the control of the Turkish Straits by a revision of the Montreux Convention Regarding the Regime of the Straits (Kurban, 2017: 98).

As one of the outcomes of an increasing alliance with the West and pressure from the then global powers of the time – the USA and the UK, followed by NATO after its formation in 1949 – Turkey had its first multi-party election in 1946 (Kurban, 2017: 124-125). The Democrat Party (DP) under the leadership of Adnan Menderes created the first challenge to the CHP. The CHP won the elections with a majority of the seats in the parliament. The results came out of an election designed in favour of the CHP, with the electoral system based on open-ballot, secret counting (Kosebalaban, 2011: 69). However, fair elections had to be organised in 1950 due to increasing Western pressure for democratisation. The 1950

many in Turkey attribute the phrase to Umar ibn Al-Khattāb, one of the prominent caliphs in the history of Islam.

¹⁶ The claimed number of Azerbaijani dissidents is varied by various sources. 195 is the official number pronounced in the parliamentary question paper of 1951 (TBMM Deb, 18 July 1951).

election resulted in the victory of the DP, winning 408 of 487 seats (Tuncer, 2003: 82). Adnan Menderes assumed office as the next prime minister in 1950 up until the military coup of 1960 that resulted in his political conviction leading to his execution on 17 September 1961. Adnan Menderes is seen as the first predecessor of Erdoğan in terms of political tradition (Pope, 2012: 43). In the realms of domestic politics and foreign policy, deviation by Menderes from the Kemalist tradition during a decade-long premiership created a legacy in Turkish domestic and foreign policy that extended to the recent period of Turkish politics.

2.3.1 The DP Period: Disengagement from the Young Turks Legacy

Turkey under the DP for a decade attempted to slightly diverge from Kemalist principles. Since the establishment of the Republic, the principles of Kemalism promoting ‘official nationalism’ were consolidated in every sector of the state. In opposition to the Kemalist principles, Menderes attempted to reverse or soften Kemalist reforms that were perceived as undemocratic such as returning the Adhan (Islamic call to pray) to its original Arabic from Turkish. This revisionist approach was unsurprisingly not welcomed by the CHP. Although the founders of the DP were previous members of the CHP, a divide emerged in the political choices of the two parties. The DP identified that both CHP and Kemalism were parts of an anachronism, which requires reformism (Ahmad, 1993: 109). The DP’s victory and the following more liberal reforms, which were profoundly against the Kemalist stabilisation were called the ‘White Revolution’ (Birand, Dundar and Capli, 1995: 57). Where the DP had succeeded was in the rectification of religious rights, extending spaces of democratic mobilisation and broadening freedom of speech, though many critics of the party accused it of narrowing political and social liberties.

The DP was generally as pro-Western as the CHP in foreign policy. In the meantime, Turkey began developing an interest in the regions outside Europe such as the Middle East and North Africa. Overall, Menderes attempted to overturn long-standing alienation of the Middle Eastern nations in Turkish foreign policy. Moreover, Turkey acquired a more internationalist outlook on world politics. Turkish accession to NATO, joining the military coalition in Korea in the early 1950s, as well as military back-up to the Algerian independence movement against France, marked breakaway points from the inward-looking policy of Turkey (Mufti, 1998: 30, 43, 44; Kosebalaban, 2011: 81).

The DP took revisionist steps in foreign policy that would have been unexpected from the Kemalist republic. Forming a Balkan alliance under the Turkish initiative was another

breakthrough change for the political landscape of Turkey of the 1950s (Ahmad, 1993: 119). In 1953, the DP government signed the 'Free Migration Agreement' with Yugoslavia. The agreement assumed free migration of Yugoslavian nationals who were religiously Muslim, and through this agreement, many Yugoslavian Muslims migrated to Turkey (Erken, 2018: 942-945).

Granting citizenship based on ethnicity and culture was similar to the German form of citizenship practice. However, the migrants who were emigrating from the Balkan states to Turkey were presumably not all of the Turkish descent. The distinction was religion, and Muslim migrants flowed into Turkey in massive numbers. The population exchange between Turkey and Greece following the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923, for instance, was more based on religion than ethnicity. The Ottoman Caliphate was then not yet abolished, and Turkey was an unsecular country. At the time of the exchange, religions also mattered in tandem with ethnonational identities in Greece and Turkey (Clark, 2006: XV). The exchange was implemented as many Christians of Turkish descent migrated to Turkey from Greece while many Hellenic Muslims had to move to Turkey (Akturk, 2013: 245). Similarly, religion was more of a criterion than ethnonational identity for those who migrated during the DP period. The flow of migration marks the first visible interest in Turkish foreign policy for Turks beyond the borders of Turkey.

The relatively proactive foreign policy of the DP sustained itself even after the post-DP period. After all, the *modus operandi* of the Young Turks in domestic and international politics was an incrementally diminishing force on the contemporary Turkish political spectrum. During the DP period in Turkish politics, relatively democratic governance and foreign policy activism began to take shape, and this marked the beginning of the deviation from the Kemalist establishment. The negative reaction of the DP government to the anti-Western military coup in neighbouring Iraq in 1958, even contemplating military intervention with the support of the USA was an indication of a divergence from the Kemalist principle of non-involvement in foreign states (Bozdaglioglu, 2003: 119-120; Hale, 2013: 93).

The non-isolationist stance of the DP period of Turkish foreign policy, in turn, revealed an interest in forming alliances and undertaking diplomatic initiatives. The Central Treaty Organisation (CENTO, formerly known as the Baghdad Pact), for instance, was formed between Turkey, Iran, Iraq, the UK and Pakistan in an effort to deter a probable Soviet influence in the Middle East (Ahmad, 1993: 119; Olson, Ince and Ince: 1977: 237).

Above all, the CAC was out of the Turkish foreign policy agenda under the conditions of the ongoing Cold War. What attracted the interest of the Turkish government in this period were Turks and Muslims in the Balkans. The DP period in Turkish politics witnessed policies concerning Turks of the Balkans until the DP government was ousted in 1960. The coup toppling the DP in 1960 and events in the political system that followed heralded the Second Republic.

2.4 The Period of the Second Republic

Although a political shift was initiated by the DP, the transition was interrupted by the *coup d'état* on 27 May 1960. The putschist National Unity Committee (NUC) took over the government based on claims to reverse Turkish political direction diverting from the Kemalist principles (Alaranta, 2014: 120). The junta government was meant to bring back the principles to reinstate the Kemalist state. The 1960 putsch hindered an ongoing political transition that had the potential to transform Turkish democracy and foreign policy forever. İsmet İnönü, the prominent Kemalist leader after Atatürk, oversaw the country as prime minister between 1961 and 1965, forming three governments in coalition (Heper, 1998: 19).

Following the military coup, the military junta had to return the political power to the public after a series of “corrective measures” (Findley, 2010: 310). The differentiation from the Kemalist state principles during the DP period needed to be rectified by the Kemalist bureaucratic-military elite of the 1960s. Although a *coup d'état* is undemocratic per se, the NUC condemned the DP for eroding democratic values of the country by exerting pressure on the media and universities and lacking respect to these institutions including the army (Alaranta, 2014: 120-121).

The NUC undertook a constitutional change to reassure human rights and freedoms in 1961. According to Kalaycioglu (2005: 93, 94), the 1961 constitution was relatively firm in guaranteeing political liberties and separation of powers in the state apparatus. Oymen (2007) considers the 1961 constitution as “the most democratic and modern of republican Turkey” which consists of the general perception on the constitution along with the Constitution of 1924. On the contrary, then Prime Minister Erdoğan expressed his disapproval of the 1961 constitution, citing its ambition to narrow political space and consolidating tutelage over political rights (Sabah, 2012b). The 1961 constitution brought the brand-new National Security Council (*Milli Güvenlik Kurulu*), made up mostly of soldier members, which had a

major role in Turkey's foreign policymaking based on military scrutiny (Karaosmanoglu, 2000).

The 1960 putsch was outside of military hierarchy as the NUC consisted of fourteen colonels, disregarding the army's superior generals. Alparslan Türkeş (1917-1997) – one of the putschists - became a leading figure as a touchstone for the 'ultranationalist' side of Turkish politics for more than half a century (Findley, 2010: 311). Among the MHP circles, Türkeş is still an indisputable role model who is also acknowledged by some of the AKP members. The praise of Türkeş by both the MHP and AKP arises from his emphasis on outside Turks and moral values for Turkish youth called *Dokuz Işık* (Nine Lights). The MHP was formed by Türkeş in February 1969 and became one of the poles of the Turkish political spectrum. Since then, the MHP has been the main promoter of Turkism. The Turkism promoted by the MHP also includes Islamic conservatism but there are also secular factions that focus only the ethnonational glorification of the Turks. In general, Islam remains as a sub-identity component under Turkic ethnonational identity.

The army has been one of Turkey's institutions that its *raison d'etre* usually went beyond the purpose of national defence against foreign states and other threats. This may come from the soldier background of the founding father of the republic and the army's support for Kemalism (Hale, 1994: 312), and social perceptions in the society as *asker millet* (soldier nation), attributing importance to the institution of the army (Pope, 2005: 23). However, the damage to Turkish democracy had already been done no matter how acceptable the putsch was in Turkish society of the time. The 1960 coup restored the Kemalist position of the state at the hands of the soldiers and the Preamble of the 1961 Constitution drafted by the putschist government read "the Turkish Nation, prompted and inspired by the spirit of Turkish nationalism" (Law No. 334, Preamble). It was visible from the Constitution that the army equated itself with the official nationalism of the state that was based on the founding principles of the republic.

On 12 March 1971, another military intervention in politics occurred, though not by military force. The army issued a memorandum concerning escalating violence among the Turkish youth between the political spectrum of the right and left in the ideological poles of the Cold War. The years following the 1971 intervention passed with turmoil between politically rival youth that is known as the generation of 1968, and the 1980 coup saw the beginning of a new era marking the Third Republic. The right-wing youth was mostly made up of the MHP

grassroots called *ülküciü* (idealist)¹⁷ who were sensitive to the Turkic peoples of the Soviet Union. This ideological inclination naturally required becoming extra anti-communist which created the internal conflicts against leftists in the second half of the 1970s, leading the way to the coup of 1980. The left-wing groups of 1970s Turkey, who were predominantly university students, were pro-Soviet Union and were against the ethnonational politics of the right-wing, having become attached to the idea of internationalist socialism or communism.

Turkish foreign policy had been in turbulent times in the period of the Second Republic. Cyprus emerged as a danger to Turkey's pro-Western stance after World War II (Findley, 2010: 322). Citing conditions of the Turkish Cypriot population, Turkey asserted itself as a guarantor in the Cyprus issue. The guarantor role of Turkey in the issue was revoked by its own military action in Cyprus in 1974, forming a para-state later in 1983. The intervention attracted outrage from the West, leading to an American arms embargo between the years 1975 and 1978 (Hale, 2013: 116-117). The intervention in Cyprus, however, proved to be a cornerstone that marked the outward-looking foreign policy of Turkey.

Even though the Turkish Cypriots were a matter of concern for Turkey, the Turks of the CAC kept falling off the Turkish foreign policy agenda, owing to the ongoing Soviet dominance. Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan, along with the other Turkic states, were Soviet socialist republics that transferred their diplomatic power to Moscow. In the Cold War circumstances, Turkey was rather defensive against the Soviet Union to avoid a potential communist political or military aggression. The knock-on effect of the fear of the Soviet threat was informed by a continuation of pro-Western political attitudes in Turkey (Kurban, 2017: 123-126).

2.5 The Third Republic Period until 2002

The Third Republic covers the period from the 1980 *coup d'état* to present-day Turkey. The 1980 coup is regarded as a milestone in Turkish political history. By a new constitution ratified under the shadow of the putschists in 1982, the Third Republic was born from a political trauma inflicted by the military junta. The coup is known to be a huge setback for the leftist currents in Turkey and less damage to the pan-Turkist right-wing political currents (Landau, 1995a: 195). The post-coup period saw policies against civil liberties and the welfare of the minorities in line with the policy of consolidation of the founding state identity. One of the consequences of the coup was pressure on the Kurdish identity, leading

¹⁷ The *ülküciü* groups are attached to an *ülkü* or ideal and this ideal is the aim of gaining access to the Turkic people and can be seen a natural part of conservative Turkism, but not as much attached as to pro-Islamic politics.

to Kurdish nationalism and emergence of the PKK (*Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê*, The Kurdistan Workers' Party) (Yavuz, 2001: 10). Article 2 of the 1982 Constitution guaranteed that the republic was “loyal to the nationalism of Atatürk” (Law No. 2709, Art. 2). The nationalism of Atatürk equated itself to the official state nationalism. Even the preamble of the 1982 Constitution was clear in making a specific nationalism visible in the constitution at the outset in stating that “[h]istorical and moral values of Turkishness” (Law No. 2709, Preamble).

The robust emphasis on the nationalism of Atatürk, and restrictions on the use of the Kurdish language such as the Law on Publications in Languages Other Than Turkish (*Türkçeden Başka Dillerle Yapılacak Yayınlar Hakkında Kanun*, Law No. 2932), restricted the cultural rights of the Kurdish minority. The army as a rectifying force in the case of diversion from the principles of Kemalism, which includes the ‘nationalism of Atatürk’, intervened to prevent the country from being derailed from the founding principles.

The first general election in 1983 indicated the return of the army back into barracks. The democratic system resumed, bringing Turgut Özal’s Motherland Party (*Anavatan Partisi*, ANAP) into power by a landslide victory, taking up more than 45% of the votes (Tuncer, 2003: 113). Özal stayed in power as prime minister (1983-1989) and then president (1989-1993). The rise of Özal to power came at the beginning of neo-liberal wave following Margaret Thatcher being sworn in as Prime Minister of the UK in 1979 and Ronald Reagan taking office in 1981 in the USA. The policies and political stances of the three political figures are seen as being in the same political and social line. Thatcher stated in her welcome speech for Özal at Downing Street in 1986 that, “Indeed one British newspaper tells me that my policies are not Thatcherite, they are Özalite” (Thatcher, 1986).

Özal was one of the prominent figures of conservative nationalism along with Menderes, Türkeş and Süleyman Demirel, who served as prime minister (1991-1993) and president (1993-2000) (Uzer, 2016: 218). His conservative nationalism was a counterpart to that of Thatcherite conservatism, that is the nationalism of the UK. Özal’s pro-Western stance constituted his main foreign policy (Aral, 2001: 76). Yet Özal tended to follow multi-faceted foreign policy, resulted in improving relations with the Middle East, the Muslim world, and – following the break-up of the Soviet Union – the Turkic republics of the CAC.

The former Prime Minister Demirel, regarded as one of the figures affiliated with conservative nationalism above, is one of the prominent politicians for his role in pioneering

relations with the Turkic peoples of the CAC. When Turco-American relations soured over the Turkish involvement in the emerging Cyprus issue in the late 1960s, the Turkish government during the premiership of Demirel made friendly overtures to the Soviet Union as a balancing act. As early as 1967, Demirel had made an official trip to Moscow in response to an invitation by the Soviet government (Kurban, 2017: 153).

During his visit to Moscow, he also visited today's Uzbekistan and Azerbaijani capital Baku where he was hailed by the locals. Demirel is regarded as the first Turkish prime minister who visited the Turkic socialist republics of the Soviet Union (Turgut, 2001: 19-29). However, most of the attention paid to the Turkic community and states by Demirel came after the collapse of the Soviet Union. In the later period of Turkish foreign policy, Demirel, as the president, was even quick to extend his reach, in 1994, to the Gagauzia region of Moldova where Gagauz Turks of Eastern Orthodox Christian faith reside (King, 1997). Demirel brought with him financial aid to be spent in Gagauzia and emphasised that Gagauzia is a "solid bridge of friendship between Turkey and Moldova" (quoted in King, 1997: 748). The tensions between the central government in Chisinau and Gagauzia were mediated by Demirel himself, resulting in the advent of the autonomy of the Gagauzian region (Senyuva, 2012: 208). It is worth mentioning that Demirel formed a personal friendship with leaders of the Turkic republics following their independence and most notably with Azerbaijan's Heydar Aliyev and Kazakhstan's Nursultan Nazarbayev.

The ruling period of Özal both as prime minister and as president saw a turn of events that reflected an ambition to take Turkey back onto the world stage as a regional power. This ambition required Özal to follow a multi-tracked foreign policy that resulted in the rejection of a single dominant ideology. The Turkish involvement in the Gulf War on the American side, re-opening to the Balkans, and engagement with the Turkic republics in the post-Soviet era indicated an outward perspective in Turkish foreign policy. During this period, a rejection of a single ideology paved the way to use various discourses for different regions and countries.

The Özal era reflected efforts for social cohesion in politics to reconcile ethnic minorities at home, primarily with Kurds. The traumatic repercussions of the coup of 1980 on these minorities were alleviated by a series of new laws and policies (Ataman, 2002). This reconciliation at home was extended to the outside of the borders of Turkey. A more constructive approach for Turkey's neighbours was adopted towards Greece. Özal's foreign

policy approach was summarised by one of his advisors during his presidency, Dimitri Kitsikis. Kitsikis, a Greek professor, was the man behind the ‘Intermediate Region’ theory which essentially refers to Turkey’s pivotal role as a successor of the Byzantine and Ottoman empires to spread its influence in the Balkans, the CAC and the majority of Muslim countries (Bertrand, 2013: 70). The Özalpian Turkey saw action taken in a series of international institutions at the initiative of Turkey to materialise Turkish influence in those regions such as the Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) in 1992 and the International Organization of Turkic Culture (Uluslararası Türk Kültürü Teşkilatı, TÜRKSOY) in 1992, consisted of Turkic republics (Feneis, 1992: 53; Amreyev, 2011: 36).

2.5.1 Re-discovery of the Turks of the CAC

Turkish nationalism outgrew itself in the post-Cold War era with the newly independent Turkic republics emerging in the CAC. The rising popularity of ethnonational belonging amongst Turkish society was in line with expanding nationalisms across the world (Bora, 2003: 434). The trend of nationalism popularising also in the CAC seemed to be entwined with nationalism in Turkey. The break-up of the Soviet Union set up new conflicts, notably in the Caucasus, such as the Armeno-Azerbaijani War.

In that political environment, fundamental political changes were forthcoming. The five newly independent Turkophone republics were at the epicentre of the Turkish foreign policy agenda by the turn of the post-Cold War period, with the balance of power in flux. Fifteen former Soviet republics became independent soon after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, but the Turkic republics were of primary importance for Turkey. On this policy, Samuel Huntington would observe in 1993 that “Turkey that turned its back to Mecca and was turned down by Brussels, now turned its face to Tashkent” (quoted in Ametbek, 2018: 11).

After their independence, the five Turkic states of the CAC were subject to extensive external intervention due to their falling into the periphery of two great powers, Russia and China. In the Bolshevik period, the overwhelmingly Muslim population of Central Asian Turkic communities lived behind the so-called ‘Iron Curtain’, adopting Vladimir Ilyich Lenin’s account of nationalism¹⁸ as the key viewpoint to the different nationalities of the Union,

¹⁸ Lenin saw nationalism as a reaction of people against capitalist exploitation and contended a proletarian internationalism against bourgeoisie-inflicted nationalism (see Lenin, 2004; Lenin, 2010).

attempting to wed self-determination and the Bolshevik interpretation of socialism in one landmass and absorbing multiple ethnicities (Hiro, 2009; Kostagiannis, 2013: 839).

This led to an “ideological, political and power vacuum” unfolding from the transition from communist ideology for the countries of the CAC by the end of the Soviet period (Hunter, 2001: 3). The Turkic states were no exception. The national identity creation in the nation-building process of the newly independent Turkic states came to light in the early 1990s. This process of national self-discovery put Turkey in the spotlight as a superior model for the Turkic states, or at least *primus inter pares* (Bal, 1998).

The period of independence of the Turkic republics coincided with the presidency of Özal. It was also a period of soaring national sentiment in Turkey. Public opinion was in favour of engagement with the newly-freed Turkic republics. The political atmosphere, too, favoured the rediscovery of a new diplomatic space where Turkey could cherish privileged relations (Uslu, 2003: 164). The CAC is a part of Kitsikis’ intermediate region and Turkey was the first country to recognise the independence of Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan as well as the rest of the Turkic countries, establishing its diplomatic missions in central areas of their capital cities (Liu, 2016).

The Turkish public broadcaster Turkish Radio Television (TRT) launched their Avrasya channel in May of 1992 in the Turkic republics as one of the first moves of Turkey in asserting soft power (as a foundation of the present TV channel of TRT AVAZ which was inaugurated in 2009 to broadcast across the Turkic republics and communities in the CAC and the Balkans) (Oran, 1995: 276). The emergence of the Turkic states created excitement in Turkish political and public circles around the hope that Turkey had a new sphere of influence and friend states after the geostrategic importance of Turkey had declined following the collapse of the Soviet Union. This led observers in Turkey to wonder whether Turkey would reorient its usual West-centred policymaking and tilt toward Eurasia (Uslu, 2003: 165).

In this period, an ambitious discourse emerged suggesting that the twentieth century would be a “Turkic century” and Özal shared this ambition (Bolukbasi, 1997: 87). To be an influential regional power and the epicentre of the regions in Turkish reach – the Balkans, the Middle East and the CAC – Turkey placed emphasis on bilateral relations with the Turkic republics. Turkey provided bank loans for the Turkic republics by Turkish Eximbank (Export-import Bank of Turkey) and helped set up the banking system and communication infrastructure in

the Turkic republics, and these projects amounted to billions of dollars (Kramer, 2000: 111; Frappi, 2013: 4). Economic relations between Turkey and the newly independent Turkic republics were of primary concern for Turkish foreign policy in the early years of the 1990s. Özal's enthusiasm to economically engage with the Turkic republics was seen in his new presidential practice of taking Turkish businesspeople and journalists on his trips to the Turkic republics (Dundar, 2016: 17).

In the cultural sphere, Turkey also followed an active policy and encouraged the republics to change from Cyrillic script to the Latin, which is also used in Turkey. To this end, an international symposium was organised by the Turkology Institute of Marmara University in Istanbul in 1991 and a body of experts in linguistics from the Turkic republics concluded a proposal to adopt a 34-letter common alphabet for the Turkic republics (Oner, 1998: 2). This proposal did not materialise, but Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan adopted the Latin alphabet. Before their independence, the Turkic peoples of the CAC had different alphabets varying from Latin to Arabic and Cyrillic alphabets. This stemmed from foreign interventions to the Turkic peoples of the CAC and at one time the Arabic script was common among them. Much as Atatürk switched to Latin alphabet from the Arabic script as a distinction from the Islamic past and to create a new national consciousness, the Soviet Rule imposed first the Latin alphabet and then Cyrillic to the Turkic peoples of the CAC by an endeavour of Russification in the 1930s (Anderson, 2006: 45-46).

MPs İpek and Atila Kaya (also a member of the TURKPA Turkey group) in their interviews both elaborated the alphabet policies in the Turkic republics and shared similar narratives on this topic which indicate the political perceptions in Turkey on the Turkic peoples of the CAC. İpek (interviewed, 2018) commented upon the efforts of Turkey to have a common script with that of Turks in the CAC and the efforts of the Russian/Soviet authorities, on the other hand, to ensure that Turkey and the Turks of the CAC never adopt the same script. In his own words regarding the changes in scripts:

With an exception of the Soviet period, we used the same Arabic script with the Turks of Central Asia for roughly a millennium. Ismail Gaspirali [or Ismail Gasprinski] - who lived in Crimea in the nineteenth century - says that all people of the Turkic-Islamic world in Turkey and Central Asia should be in "unity in language, thought and action" to be more influential and powerful in the world. To achieve this, Gaspirali also adds that it is a must to use the same script to create a *lingua franca* of the Turks, adoption of the Istanbul Turkish would be more convenient. [...] As a matter of fact, two years before Turkey adopted the Latin script, Azerbaijan had already begun using the Latin script. Kazakhstan and the other Turkic states had also adopted the Latin script at the time. However, Turkey's adoption of the Latin script had backlash from Moscow and the Soviet regime forced the Turkic states to adopt Cyrillic script. [...] Today, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan succeeded Latinisation of their languages, Kazakhstan announced its intention in the adoption of the Latin script short while ago.

Kaya (interviewed, 2018) shares the same account of history with İpek on the grounds of the alphabet synchronisation between Turkey and the Turkic republics:

The Soviet policy in assuring that Turkey and the Turkic republics never use the same alphabet is intentionally-crafted to broaden the divisions between the two parties. For instance, Azerbaijan used the Latin script during the 1920s. Whenever Turkey also adopted the Latin alphabet in 1928, Azerbaijan switched its alphabet to Cyrillic script. This stems from the purpose of impeding Turkey and Azerbaijan to have the same script the while [by the Soviet authorities]. It is noteworthy to remind Alparslan Türkeş and his effort on this point by organising the congresses of Turkish-speaking States and Communities Friendship, brotherhood and Cooperation Foundation (TÜDEV) in the early 1990s. These congresses hosted high-level political figures; presidents and prime ministers from Turkey and the Turkic republics.

Continuing the development of Turkish soft power in the region, Turkish newspapers and media outlets began to operate there, and there was an influx of international students from the republics. Proposed by Türkeş, the TÜDEV was founded in 1993 and organised congresses gathering political figures of the wider Turkic world, including President Özal (Kramer, 2000: 114). What is more, Turkish official and civil religious organisations, both the Directorate of Religious Affairs of Turkey (*Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı*, aka *Diyanet*), religious orders (*tarikatlar*) of Turkey and the then so-called Gülen movement (which will be elaborated in section 3.7.1) filled the religious sphere in the region after the long reign of state atheism under the Soviet rule (Balci, 2014a). To fill the power vacuum in the CAC after the fall of the Soviet Union, Turkey had American support to politically and economically support the Turkic republics to avoid the potential spread of radical religious fundamentalism from Iran and the Turkish-Islamic synthesis of Özalian Turkey was more of a preference than an Iranian religious infiltration into the CAC (Aydin, 1996: 162; Kramer, 2000: 104; Rumer, Trenin and Zhao, 2007: 28).

At the beginning of the post-Soviet era, Turkey made efforts for a closer engagement with the Turkic republics in political, economic and cultural spheres. To a substantial extent, as a co-ethnic country with the Turkic republics, more economic and political advantages are bestowed upon Turkey than any other state in the region with the exception of Russia. The CAC has remained in a Russian or Soviet sphere of influence for two centuries. Unsurprisingly, Russian influence in the CAC has remained. The Turkish presence in the region occasionally caused trouble in the governing circles of Moscow for to the fear that the integrationist policies of Turkey with the republics could diminish Russian influence in the two traditionally bound regions of Russia (Aras, 2000). Yet despite all Turkey's advantages in linguistic, ethnonational and cultural bonds, Turkish political and economic stamina proved short in meeting the expectations of the Turkic republics to be influential in the CAC. The shared Turkic background between Turkey and the Turkic republics did not produce the

expected outcomes in political and economic relations. The existence of the ties between the two parties remained at the rhetorical level rather than fostering a special relationship such as the one that exists between Spain and the Spanish-speaking South American countries (Kramer, 1996: 5).

The ethnic and cultural drives towards the Turkic republics plummeted in a period of political Islam under the Welfare Party (*Refah Partisi*, RP) of Necmettin Erbakan in his short-lived government between 1996 and 1997. Prime Minister Erbakan resorted to the leadership of a coalition government with the True Path Party (*Doğru Yol Partisi*, DYP) and focused more on the Muslim world in foreign policy to foster relations with Muslim states. Endorsing a discourse in “spearheading a new Islamic NATO or Common Market”, Erbakan was largely drawn to cooperation with the Muslim world (Torbakov, 2005: 126).

For example, the D-8 Organisation for Economic Cooperation (Developing-8, D-8)¹⁹ was established at the initiative of Erbakan in 1997. The D-8 had no Turkic member country aside from Turkey, stressing Islamic commonality rather than Turkic civilizational links (Aral, 2005: 89). The D-8 was planned as an Islamic counterpart of the Group of Eight (G8) and the members of the D-8 were chosen by the size of their population and economies amongst Muslim majority states. The newly independent Turkic republics of the CAC and Turkic identity seemed only to be a sub-identity for Erbakan.²⁰ Superior to this subaltern identity, Islamic internationalism seemed the driving cause in forming an international organisation whose members comprised seven of the non-Turkic Muslim countries. Each of the international organisations established or promoted at the initiative of Özal such the TÜRKSOY or the Tehran-based Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO)²¹, on the other hand, comprised all or most of the Turkic states.

A military memorandum on 28 February 1997 came as a blow to the Erbakan-led government, leading the fall of the government by the resignation of Erbakan on 18 June 1997. The army once again cited deviation from the founding principles of the Republic, predominantly the principle of laicism. The concerns of the army over the secular attribute of

¹⁹ The members of the D-8 were Turkey, Pakistan, Libya, Indonesia, Egypt, Malaysia and Iran. (Aral, 2005: 89).

²⁰ The Islamic understanding of ethnonational differences is clear in the 13th verse of Al-Hujurat Surah of Qur'an; delineating that it is true that the God created the humankind from multiple ethnicities, but the ethnonational identities are not important but the level of piety (Qur'an 49: 13)

²¹ Whose Turkic members Kyrgyzstan, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan gained membership by the support of Turkey (Fidan, 2010: 114).

the state brought Turkish democracy into stagnation before the beginning of the new millennium (28 February Memorandum, 1997).

2.5.2 Rise of Eurasia in Turkish Foreign Policy (1997-2002)

Following the ousted Erbakan government in 1997, a new ANAP-led coalition before the successor minority government was formed with *Demokratik Sol Parti* (Democratic Left Party, DSP) as the minority partner. What was noteworthy with this government (1997-1999) and the successor coalition government of another hung parliament (1999-2002) in cooperation with the DSP, was that the MHP and the ANAP had the same minister of foreign affairs throughout: İsmail Cem. Five years of Turkish foreign policymaking under Cem went against the notion of Turkey operating on a solely Western or Eastern foreign policy orientation.

Rather he was in favour of a multi-tracked approach, proclaiming that Turkey had already been a European nation for centuries, but also an Asian one (*The Economist*, 2000). Cem's 'historical geography' (*tarihi coğrafya*) approach accords with former Foreign Minister Davutoğlu's (2009-2014) 'heart geography' (*gönül coğrafyası*)²² in casting Turkey as an influential player in the former Ottoman territories and the CAC (Ormeçi, 2011: 236). According to Cem, the post-Cold War era presented a host of opportunities to Turkish foreign policy in the CAC, given Turkey's cultural commonalities with its co-ethnic countries (Cem, 2001). By this approach, Eurasia took a cardinal place in Cem's foreign policy agenda.

The successor states of the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans and the Caucasus, as well as the Turkic republics, appeared to be in the spotlight of the five years of foreign affairs conducted by Cem. Rather than seeing the Europe/Eurasia question as a dilemma, Cem was in favour of reaping the benefits of Turkey's common historical, cultural and ethnic attributes along with those of states in the Balkans, the Caucasus and Central Asia. After an acknowledgement of the importance of Europe for Turkey first, Cem (2002: 4) then designated importance to Eurasia in Turkish foreign policy by emphasising that an "equally important goal, is to transform Turkey into a pivotal and prosperous country at the center of the vast geography we call Eurasia". Because of the ties that Turkey shares with Eurasian states, Cem (2002: 4-5) elaborated the Eurasian direction of Turkish foreign policy as follows:

²² *Gönül coğrafyası* denotes the geographical areas with which Turkey has historical, cultural, religious links. Used by Ahmet Davutoğlu to indicate Turkey's bonds with the Balkans, the Middle East, North Africa and the CAC. "Heart geography" is the direct translation of the phrase from Turkish and might not suffice to define what is meant by it (Arkan and Kinacıoğlu, 2016: 392).

The post-Cold War political framework witnessed the re-appearance or re-confirmation of many new independent states. Almost all these ‘new’ states – in the Balkans, in the Caucasus or in Central Asia – are those with whom Turkey shares a mutual history, religion or language. This provides Turkey with a new international environment of historic and cultural dimensions. [...] This strategic change corresponds with a new consciousness in Turkey. The role of a shared history and of parallel cultural characteristics is highlighted and put into practice in all spheres of our foreign policy. It is worth noting that there are twenty-six countries with which we have shared a common history, a common state and a common fate for centuries. This background provides for strong economic relationships and a unique platform for political cooperation.

The Turkic republics in the post-Cold War era were within Cem’s focus thanks to Turkey’s ethnic, cultural and historical proximity to these states. The optimistic futurism that Cem had upheld regarding Turkey, concentrated on Turkey’s relations with the Turkic republics of the CAC. The Turkish foreign policy outlook that used to be formed with the West at its centre, discovered a chance to diversify its horizons up to the border with China, and the eastern border of Kazakhstan by the Turkic republics. This perception of Cem coincided with explicit support from the USA. A speech by the then American President Bill Clinton to the TBMM assembly in 1999 attributed importance to Turkey:

To the east, 12 independent nations have emerged from the ruins of the Soviet Empire. There is no more important challenge today than helping them to develop stable, independent, democratic societies. Turkey here also has been a leader, reaching out in particular to nations that share ties of language, culture and history (Clinton, 1999).

The strategic allies of Turkey in the West such as the USA encouraged Turkish foreign policy activism to fill the power vacuum in the Turkic CAC and thus a new geographical domain in the CAC entered into the operational focus of Turkish foreign policy. The presumed candidacy of Turkey for this role was a result of its shared Turkic identity with the region.

2.6 Identity Politics of Turkey Until 2015

In the early 2000s, Turkey underwent the worst financial crisis of its history, with a profound impact on the country’s political landscape. In this inauspicious economic context, public opinion quickly turned against the previously dominant political parties in the coalition cabinet: the DSP, the MHP and the ANAP. Indeed, these three political parties were unsuccessful in the subsequent 15th general election held on 3 November 2002, remaining below the 10% electoral threshold. In contrast, the AKP, though only founded in August 2001, won nearly two-thirds of the total 550 seats in the TBMM. This landslide victory was generally regarded as a reaction to the damage caused by the economic crisis to the reputations of the political parties of the predecessor government.

What surprisingly brought the newly established AKP into power was widely believed to be the rising economic power of Anatolian ‘*nouveau riche*’, who provided competition to the

established elite of the Western cities of Istanbul and Ankara (Meral and Paris, 2010: 76). The burgeoning Anatolian business class, namely the ‘Anatolian Tigers’ (*Anadolu Kaplanları*), are relatively conservative and religious compared to the Istanbul-based privileged elite.

In this context, the AKP assumed power just before its second birthday by appealing to the majority of long-neglected conservative and religious voters. The domestic source of Erdoğan’s power has since remained traditionally conservative and pious, deriving from his political background in the RP. Indeed, a survey conducted by the Pew Research Center in 2013 has suggested that the main area of political support for the AKP came from religious segments of Turkish society and that Erdoğan was most popular amongst conservative Turks compared to the rest of the society (Poushter, 2013: 2).

However, the widespread interpretation of the AKP under Erdoğan’s political leadership being ‘Islamist’ may be misleading due to the AKP’s outspoken dedication to upholding secularism. This principle was even taken across international borders in the aftermath of the Egyptian Revolution of 2011 when Erdoğan recommended that the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt establish a secular order (Hundley, 2011). The pro-Islamic or religious-leaning politics of the AKP, as a ‘post-Islamist’ political party (Robins, 2007), was seen as sustaining the domestic source of political power by reflecting the values of the conservative electorate.

Otherwise, it was difficult to detect intense enthusiasm for a Sharia law-based (and hence profoundly unsecular) government among both the public and the government itself. This was because Islamism in Turkish politics implies conservatism. Uzer (2016: 164), for example, identifies Islamism in Turkey as a “secular form of ideology, allocating larger role for religion”. Certainly, according to a study conducted by the Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation (TESEV), support for Sharia law in Turkey dropped from 21% in 1999 to 8.9% in 2006 (Carkoglu and Toprak, 2006: 30). Regardless of the origins of this resistance to unsecular law and governance, the AKP seemed to consistently act in line with the views of the public. Beyond the domestic outcomes of power, another study conducted by the Pew Research Center (2011) has indicated that Erdoğan was most popular internationally in Muslim-majority countries, most of which are located in the Middle East. (Pew Research Center, 2011: 3).

Consequently, religious outlook represented an important factor in Turkish politics. The source of power in domestic politics, as well as international favourability, relied upon pro-

Islamic alignment, despite support for secularism in a Muslim-majority country. At this time, public support for secularism justified the triumph of the secular in albeit pro-Islamic Turkey. In this regard, the foreign policy represented a direct subject to harness the advantages of Islamic existentialism. Needless to say, Islam was not the only element of Turkish national identity that can have reflections on Turkey's foreign policy.

The hybrid attributes of contemporary Turkey exemplified the eclectic utilisation of rationality in contrast to the strict adoption of ideologies such as Islamism, Westernism or nationalism. Islam played a significant role in its relations with Muslim states, while its Turkic roots were significant in its engagement with Turkic republics. In this multidimensional foreign policy, various facets of Turkish national identity (Turkish/Turkic, Islamic, Western, post-Ottoman) were at play in accordance with the countries with which Turkey has a relationship, and more importantly, defining Turkey's interests by these identities.

What made Turkish foreign policy adjustable to different regions was the multifaceted nature of Turkish national identity, revolving around 'Turkic', 'Islamic' and 'Western', and 'post-Ottoman' components. Indeed, the idiosyncratic historical, cultural and geographic attributes of Turkey allowed Turkish foreign policymakers to follow a multi-track foreign policy. The Turkic facet of Turkey can be regarded as instrumental for Turkey's relations with the Turkic states of the CAC. However, the domestic political discourse of Turkey after 2002 showed signs of refusal to ethnonational politics.

Erdoğan has reiterated his disregard for ethnic nationalism of any kind by stating that "[w]e have trampled on all nationalisms" and has alternatively proposed patriotism as a force that can unite citizens with different ethnic belongings, whether Turkish, Kurdish, Arab or otherwise (Senyuz, 2013). Concerning the Islamic roots of objecting to ethnonationalism, which is seen as a divisive force in Muslim solidarity at both the domestic and the international scale, nationalism has become manifested in civic form. Contrary to the AKP's stance on ethnic nationalism, Erdoğan's famous motto "One nation, one flag, one homeland and one state" has raised questions concerning the opposition to divisive nationalism (*Hürriyet Daily News*, 2017), because similar words were reiterated by the Kemalist core of the state as "One country, one language and one nation" (quoted in Ataman, 2002: 125).

Ultimately, the discourse on nationalism presented the very subjects of these quotations to promote a unitary state order as well as to ensure social cohesion through national

consciousness embodied by notions of ‘flag’, ‘homeland’ and ‘nation’. Given the multi-ethnic fabric of Turkish society, Erdoğan has “frequently cited ethnic, religious and regional nationalisms as the three red lines of the party” (Hale and Ozbudun, 2010: 76). By taking the prolonged Kurdish separatism issue into account, one may deem these conflicting discourses on nationalism reasonable, even if Erdoğan fundamentally refused to engage with Kemalist values and their associated history of minority rights issues, especially for the Kurds in the country (Yavuz, 2001: 2). In a remedial response, the recent leadership of Turkey perceived “cultural differences in the southeast as ‘richness’, and considers cultural activities in languages other than Turkish as a factor that would strengthen the unity of the country” (Hale and Ozbudun, 2010: 76). Erdoğan himself has emphasised the importance of sole loyalty to ‘constitutional citizenship’ and to avoiding ethnic identifications (*Milliyet*, 2005).

Article 66 of the *de facto* 1982 Turkish Constitution states that “[e]veryone bound to the Turkish state through the bond of citizenship is a Turk” (Law No. 2709, Art. 66). This has led contemporary scholars in Turkey to interpret the identity *Türk* as a non-ethnic supranational identity (such as ‘American’, ‘British’ or ‘Canadian’) that subordinates other ethnic and religious groups as sub-identities in the country. The problem with this ambition lied in the difference between names of geographic origin such as ‘America’ and ‘Britain’ and names like ‘*Türk*’ that emerge from ethnicity. The late Turkish President Özal was quoted as questioning what would change within identity- and nation-building processes in Turkey if the name of the country were to become *Anadolu Cumhuriyeti* (Republic of Anatolia) rather than *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti* (Republic of Turkey) (quoted in Ataman, 2002).²³ The same string of efforts to avoid ethnonational identification was widespread among the AKP’s inner circle, including Erdoğan, who occasionally emphasises his Georgian family roots and has argued that the official identity of citizens might transform into *Türkiyeli* (merely denoting a citizen of Turkey, without ethnic connotations) rather than that of *Türk* (Turkish with an ethnic impression), as well as stating that “[n]either ethnic nor religious ideologies are here to stay” (*Milliyet*, 2005).

The ethnic, civic and multicultural manifestations of domestic politics had their reflections in the foreign policy of the new millennium. Besides, an overwhelming emphasis put on Turkish foreign policy in relation to neo-Ottomanism, a term which began to appear in the first half of the 1970s following the military intervention of Turkey in Cyprus in 1974

²³ *Anadolu* (Anatolia) is semantically what Asia Minor is called and categorically holds a non-ethnic and civic/territorial meaning.

(Karpat, 2004: 641). References to pro-Islamic attachments or the discussions of the long-held pro-Western stance of the country were also at the forefront of the Turkish policy discussions. Among the multiple state identities of Turkey, however, Turkic identity and its reflections in Turkish foreign policy were overlooked.

The Turkic identity of Turkey stood out as one of the tools of Turkish foreign policy to strengthen Turkey's diplomatic outreach in pursuit of its national interests in the international dimension. This came against the revolving civic nationalism discourse at home. The instrumentality of Turkic identity, contrary to its potential impact in domestic politics, facilitated relations with the Turkic world in general, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan in particular. As the constructivist school has arguments in the same vein, the state identity of Turkey with a Turkic component encouraged the perception that Turkey's relations with the Turkic republics constituted Turkish interests. An institutionalisation of ties between Turkey and the Turkic states has been seen since the early 1990s, but most notably since 2002. These supranational initiatives of Turkey in cooperation with the Turkic republics can be regarded as an outcome of the Turkic facet of Turkish state/national identity. Although this has lacked substantial media and academic attention, the importance attached to the Turkic republics became evident in this period.

2.7 Institutionalisation of Turkic Cooperation and Symbolism in Turkish Foreign Policy

The Turkic facet of Turkish national identity has opened up an area of diplomatic activity for Turkey, especially in the CAC. The common Turkic identity for the states of the Turkic world provides the pivot of relations between Turkey and the Turkic republics. The capitalisation of the Turkic identity of Turkey by Turkish policymakers has produced a series of supranational organisations that have extended Turkey's diplomatic space, especially in the post-Soviet areas of Eurasia.

The phrase '*Dış Türkler*' or 'Outside Turks' was first used by Turkish ultra-nationalists in the early 1990s (Landau, 1995a: 7). 'Outside Turks' was then adopted during the second term of the AKP as part of a brand-new governmental organisation known as 'the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities' (*Yurtdışı Türkler ve Akraba Topluluklar Başkanlığı*, YTB), established in 2010. The YTB was founded with the ambition to foster ties with Turkish citizens and "kin communities" abroad (Yurtnac, 2012: 3). The YTB complies with Article 62 of the Constitution of Turkey, which declares that "[t]he State shall take the

necessary measures to [...] safeguard their [Turkish citizens] ties with the home country and to help them on their return home” (Law No. 2709, Art. 62). This article provides clear evidence of the Turkic facet of the state and its reflection in the studied period of Turkey’s foreign policy.

Beyond the statement in the Constitution is the fact that the YTB extends its outreach to non-citizen Turkic communities across the Balkans, Central Asia and the Caucasus. One of the former chairmen of the YTB, Kemal Yurtnaç, has claimed that the need for a governmental institution like the YTB to engage with the Turkic people of the newly established Turkic republics and communities emerged after the demise of the Soviet Union (Yurtnac, 2012: 3). The mission undertaken by Turkey since the launch of the ‘Great Student Exchange Project’ in 1992 by Özal to bring and fund students from the Turkic republics was transferred to the YTB, offering an international student scholarship programme called *Türkiye Bursları* (Türkiye Scholarships) (Akcali and Engin-Demir, 2012: 12). Nevertheless, the programme is no longer limited to Turkic candidates: being a non-Turkish national is now one of the eligibility criteria.

Cultural diplomacy and the empowerment of the Turkish/Turkic diaspora constitute the linchpins of the YTB. Along with the YTB, the Yunus Emre Institute, which was founded in 2007 and represents the equivalent of the British Council of the United Kingdom, the Cervantes Institute of Spain or the Goethe Institute of Germany, is one of the flagship governmental bodies of Turkey to “promote mutual understanding through intensive cultural interactions” and to “build bridges to the Turkish [read also Turkic] diasporic formations in the host countries” (Unver, 2013: 187). As a reflection of Turkish policy priorities in the CAC, among the independent Turkic states of the CAC only Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan host the centres of the Yunus Emre Institute. Similarly to the Cervantes and Goethe institutes, the Yunus Emre Institute is named after the mystic Turkish poet Yunus Emre (1238–1320).

The continuation of the institutionalisation of the Turkic world in Turkish foreign policy has spread to the supranational level through the establishment of the CCTS (Cooperation Council of Turkic-Speaking States) by the ‘Nakhchivan Agreement’ signed in 2009. Also known as the Turkic Council, the CCTS declared its principle in its founding document as “further deepening the comprehensive cooperation” and “search for common positions on foreign policy issues of mutual interest” (*Nakhchivan Agreement*, 2009). Turkey, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan (joined in September 2019, not a founding member)

are all members of the Council, whereas Turkmenistan is excluded due to its non-aligned stance in the international political system despite expressing willingness to become an observer state lately. The CCTS secretariat consists of the Council of Presidents, the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs and the Council of the Elders or *Aksakallar Konseyi* and is headquartered in Istanbul, symbolising the central role of Turkey in the organisation (MFA, 2018). The CCTS is akin to intergovernmental organisations like the League of Arab States, the International Organisation of La Francophonie (*Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie*, OIF) and the Commonwealth of Nations.

As regards the economic dimension, the CCTS promotes a ‘Turkic Business’ portal to facilitate the business interactions of the Turkic-speaking states and is affiliated with the Turkic Business Council (established in 2011), which operates under the CCTS. The CCTS is also currently contemplating the establishment of “a bank and an insurance company to support the Business Council” (Balcer, 2012: 155).

In the cultural sphere, the creation of an ‘International Turkic News’ channel was agreed in a meeting of officials from the CCTS in Astana, Kazakhstan in 2015 (Putz, 2015). Referring to the coverage of international media outlets towards the Turkic republics, Ali Hasanov, Assistant of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, commented that “a paucity of alternative media resources limits our opportunities to make counter-theses”, before adding that this situation exists for other Turkic republics as well (quoted in Putz, 2015). The solidaristic approach of the CCTS to create a common soft power apparatus through its news channel can be seen as part of the comradeship that exists among the Turkic states. Such fellowship is a derivative of the cross-border sense of belonging shared by all the Turkic states and non-state Turkic communities.

This shared objective in the media was manifested again through the introduction of the Turkic World Documentary Film Festival in 2016 to draw the Turkic states together every year for documentary film screenings from professional and amateur producers of the Turkic republics. The festival is sponsored by an array of Turkish public institutions, including TİKA (*Daily Sabah*, 2017). Given the various media formats of nations in the conceptualisation of Anderson (2006) in connection with an imagined community such as the print technology, which leads to the national consciousness, is manifested by a shared news channel through the prism of the shared Turkic identity. In this case, the development of

media and the media perceptions of the Turkic republics were seen as a matter to the Turkic nationhood as a whole.

As a sub-branch of the CCTS, as part of the Treaty of Nakhichevan, the Turkic World Educational and Scientific Cooperation Organisation (TWESCO) was established in 2010 under the patronage of the Turkish and Kazakh presidents Abdullah Gül and Nursultan Nazarbayev, respectively (TWESCO, 2018). The mission of the organisation lies in leading academic and scientific cooperation in the Turkic world. In coordination with the TWESCO, the Turkic Cultural Heritage Fund was created to enhance cultural and scientific cooperation among the Turkic republics and communities (MFA, 2018). The Council of Elders of the CCTS was designated to serve as an advisory board to the TWESCO. The Academy sits in Astana, Kazakhstan, highlighting the importance that this country attaches to cooperation among the Turkic states.

Acts of cooperation were also seen between the parliaments of the Turkic-speaking countries in 2008. The Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic-Speaking Countries (TURKPA) was established by the signature of the ‘Istanbul Agreement’ in 2008 and seeks to promote parliamentary engagement between the member states Turkey, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. The Baku-headquartered TURKPA is associated with the inter-parliamentary activities of the Friendship Groups of the TBMM with the Turkic republics and prides itself as a complementary organisation that contributes to the effectiveness of the CCTS (Durdular, 2017: 131) and, according to the Agreement, develops “values of history, art, literature and other areas which are of importance for Turkic countries” (*The Istanbul Agreement on TURKPA*, 2008)

In accordance with these initiatives during the AKP period, Özalian Turkey laid the groundwork for political, economic and cultural outreach to the wider Turkic world. In the early period of the post-Soviet era in 1992, TİKA was founded as “the outcome of Turkey’s rapid reaction to developments in the surrounding regions in the post-Soviet era” (Ogutcu, 2017). Besides, the TÜRKSOY was another supranational organisation established during the presidency of Özal in 1993. Headquartered in Ankara and operating as the Turkic world’s equivalent of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the TÜRKSOY aimed to deepen cultural, scientific and educational ties among the six Turkic-speaking states (Frappi, 2013: 4; Purtaş, 2017).

The TÜRKSOY was revitalised in the 2000s and is famous for its indigenous song contest. Indeed, it began organising a song contest among Turkic-speaking communities called the Turkvision Song Contest (*Türkvizyon Şarkı Yarışması*) in 2013. The decision to organise this event appeared to coincide with Turkey's decision to withdraw from the Eurovision Song Contest in 2012 after citing favouritism involved in the voting (*Milli Gazete*, 2012). Regardless of the precise reason for its establishment, it is typical of Turkey to embark upon initiatives with the Turkic peoples in times of souring or stagnant relations with the EU. Moreover, identical to the EU's annual nomination of a European Capital of Culture, the TÜRKSOY has introduced the Cultural Capital of the Turkic World in 2012, designating a city from the Turkic republics every year since (Taskin, 2012).

In the scope of international organisations aggregated, the ECO – a supranational body of economic cooperation founded in 1985 in Tehran with the members Turkey, Iran and Pakistan – is of significance. With Turkey's diplomatic support, all of the Turkic republics²⁴ subsequently acquired membership following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1992 (Pomfret, 1997: 658; Fidan, 2010:114), increasing the organisation's Turkic connotations. As a sub-body of the ECO, the ECO Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ECO-CCI) was established on Turkey's initiative in 1990 and now includes the Turkic members Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan to foster trade, industry and economic cooperation between the Turkic republics and Turkey (Caman and Akyurt, 2011: 49).

Aside from what has been undertaken for the institutionalisation of ties with the Turkic republics in Turkish political and diplomatic discourse, Erdoğan has offered hints that he will pursue further cooperation with the Turkic states by proposing to establish a university of the Turkic world in cooperation with Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan on his way back to Turkey from a visit to Astana in 2017 (Sacaralp, 2017). Also, the formation of a new Turkic joint army comprising Turkey, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia and Azerbaijan has been put on the agenda, to enter into service in 2018 and to serve the same function as the UN Peacekeeping Forces (Yilmaz, 2017b).

Such cooperation over the bonds of Turkic identity reflects a new version of the sense of belonging for Turkish foreign policymakers that one would not have expected during the Cold War. Contrary to its irredentist history, the new version of Turkic nationalism is

²⁴ At the outset, Kazakhstan preferred to opt for observer status only (Olcott, 1995: 285). Fidan (2010: 114) states that Kazakhstan was an exception in the accession cohort of the other Turkic republics in 1992.

concerned by political and material interests in cooperation. The AKP period of Turkish foreign policy is akin to that of Özal in terms of its efforts to position the Turkic republics at Turkey's periphery, manifesting a collaborative relationship over their shared Turkic identity. It is, therefore, the Turkic facet of Turkish national identity that is deeply depoliticised and that needs to be separated from basic historic arguments of pan-Turkism.

Societal reconciliation with the Ottoman past and Islamic references began with Özal and has continued with Erdoğan. Besides, considerable emphasis was placed on embracing Central Asian Turkic origins in Turkish political discourse through the advent of the Young Turks in the late Ottoman period and later Kemalism in the republican era. This explains how Turkish nationalism evolved from its aggressive form by irredentism during the Young Turk period before the republican period to cooperation in contemporary Turkish foreign policy. The “synthesis between Turkish nationalism and Sunni Islam” by the AKP was knowingly or unknowingly aimed at forming political, economic and cultural cooperation (Alaranta, 2014: 96).

In order to achieve cooperation at the supranational level, Kaplan, Yuvaci and Amanov (2015: 130) have examined such increasingly close relations in terms of the voting behaviour of the members of the CCTS in comparison with the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) and conclude that “increasing communication and interactions, common values and cultural links might influence voting likeness between nations” by their assumption that “the Turkic countries, compared to the UN average, may display higher levels of voting agreement on UNGA resolutions”. This suggests that due to its close relations with the Turkic republics, Turkey's diplomatic sphere of influence is by no means limited to the CAC. Figure 2 demonstrates the average level of cohesion of the Turkic states of the CCTS in terms of their voting behaviour in the UNGA between 1993 and 2011. Kaplan, Yuvaci and Amanov (2015: 136) claim that since 1993, the voting behaviour of the members of the CCTS has become progressively more similar while “voting cohesion has been higher than that of the UN body since 2007”. It is likely that the rise in voting cohesion after 2007 additionally stems from Turkey's foreign policy preferences for more Eurasian intonation and thus diversity.

This figure has been intentionally removed for copyright reasons.

Figure 2: Voting cohesion on average between UNGA and Turkic Council members (Kaplan, Yuvaci and Amanov: 2015: 135).

Moreover, the employment of Turkic symbolism and the revival of Turkic identity has appeared at the governmental level. The replacement of red carpets with Turkic turquoise in governmental buildings as well as in diplomatic engagements indicates that the AKP period of Turkish politics attaches importance to Turkic identity more than one might expect for a political party with pro-Islamic credentials (*Hürriyet Daily News*, 2015).

More significant than the governmental installation of turquoise carpets was the introduction of a depiction of 16 warriors,²⁵ each representing one great historic Turkic empire – from the Central Asian Hunnic Empire founded in the third century BCE, through the Golden Horde formed in the thirteenth century CE, all the way to the Ottoman Empire’s end in 1922 – in the presidential palace when Erdoğan was sworn in as President on 28 August 2014 (Golden, 1992). Figure 3 demonstrates Erdoğan’s welcome to Ilham Aliyev, the President of Azerbaijan, in courtesy of the turquoise carpet and the 16 warriors.²⁶

²⁵ The Presidential Seal of Turkey consists of a sun at the centre representing the Republic of Turkey and 16 stars in the periphery that represent the 16 great Turkic empires in history (see TCCB, 2018).

²⁶ Later years saw the decision to change the yellow taxis of Istanbul to turquoise.

This image has been intentionally removed for copyright reasons.

Figure 3: The 16 warriors and turquoise carpet in a welcoming ceremony
Source: Anadolu Images – Photo credit (Ozer, 2015)

Whether the revamps above reflected a version of banal nationalism or ethno-symbolism, the revival of Turkic memories by the government may be interpreted as a re-articulation of Turkic identity in building national self-confidence. Eight of the 16 Turkic empires in history represented in the presidential ceremonies were pre-Islamic Turkic states (Kafesoglu, 1997). This suggests that the reliance on Turkic history in the recent period of Turkish policy is rooted in creating a Turkic sense of belonging on primordial kinship grounds rather than merely making Islamic references. It was visible that Turkicness was still embedded in the state identity of Turkey in the studied period.

As a political campaign song that easily attracted public popularity, the remake of *Dombra* by the AKP before the local elections of 30 March 2014 was another indicator of loyalty to Turkic identity. Besides being a type of song that originated with the Nogai Turks living in the North Caucasus, the ‘dombra’ is also the name of a traditional musical instrument from Kazakhstan (*Milliyet*, 2014).

The revival of the Turkic past in the costumes of ceremonial Turkic warriors and the use of turquoise carpets and olden Turkic songs for political campaigns manifest alignment in terms of Turkic identity and an imagined community that transcends Turkey’s borders, stretching into the CAC. Contrary to the association of the AKP with pro-Islamic politics, the search for a reference for Turkic roots, whether pre-Islamic or post-Islamic, requires a re-examination of intellectual references of contemporary Turkish foreign policymaking.

As a result, the adoption of Turkic references in the national branding of Turkey offers a glimpse of where the Turkic republics are positioned in Turkish foreign policy. For the AKP period of Turkish foreign policymaking, the prominence of the CAC has become evident. As part of efforts to enhance political and economic ties with the Turkic republics of the CAC, Turkic identity occupies a predominant place in shaping Turkey's foreign policy choices. Turkic identity can be seen as a driving force in bonding Turkey and the Turkic republics. Indeed, Turkic identity in cooperation with the Turkic republics appears to represent one of the diplomatic assets available to Turkish foreign policymakers. Therefore, beyond the ideology of nationalism itself, the state identity of Turkey with the Turkic element, constituted the Turkish interests at the regional, as well as international levels.

2.8 Conclusion

Turkey, as a nation-state with an imperial past, was founded based on secularism and Turkic identity. The reference to the Central Asian Turkic roots of the nation by the founding elite drew the main lines of the national characteristics of the country. Turkification alongside other policies with an ambition to construct an identity for a multi-ethnic/multi-faith empire forged the principal traits of the Republic. In reference to these origins of the nation and the Turkic descendants from Central Asia, the new Turkish Republic succeeded in establishing a nation based on a distinct Turkish identity in denial of its markedly Islamic-oriented past. The rejection of the Ottoman past and its institutionalised Islamic identity required the substitution of the Turkic ethnonational identity. The Young Turks, to a great extent, laid the foundations of Kemalist style nation-building. The emphasis on the Turks of the CAC and a focus on a nation-building process based on Turkicness were inherited by the First Republic.

Turkey was wary of the Soviet threat and followed a realist foreign policy toward the Turkic peoples of the CAC during the Cold War. By the end of the Cold War, the importance of identities and cultures came to the fore and previously constructed Turkic identity emerged to formulate and project Turkey's interests in the CAC. Turkic identity continued to be influential in the 1990s and the new millennium, and the nature of relations between Turkey and the Turkic republics had a liberal turn by an institutionalism of Turkic organisations. However, the constructed Turkic facet of Turkey's state identity remained the backbone of Turkish foreign policy behaviour in the CAC. The Turkic facet of state/nation-state identity had a close relationship with Turkish foreign policy. As will be argued in the following chapters, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan were the two most welcoming states of this relationship.

CHAPTER 3
AZERBAIJAN IN TURKISH FOREIGN
POLICY (2002–2015)

3.1 Introduction

Azerbaijan is by far the most geostrategic country in the Caucasus by dint of its connective role to Central Asia based on the Central Asian oil and natural gas transportation to Europe. Brzezinski (1997: 129) summarises the geostrategically idiosyncratic importance of Azerbaijan with an analogy by calling it the “vitally important ‘cork’ controlling access to the ‘bottle’ that contains riches of the Caspian Sea basin and Central Asia”. Despite its landlocked location, Azerbaijan, as a crucial state located in Transcaucasia, attracts the attention of many states. The country is sandwiched by two bordering historically dominant powers: Russia in its north and Iran in its south. The Caucasus, where Azerbaijan is located, is volatile with a long history of political dominance and conflict. The USA and the EU from the Western bloc are the only two parties that need Azerbaijan to alleviate its dependence on the oil and natural gas resourced from Russia. The ‘Ganja Gap’, which is a 60-mile-long artery in Azerbaijan through Georgia, has lately been seen as the only getaway to bypass the Russian routes in oil and gas imports to Europe (Coffey and Nifti, 2018).

The geostrategic importance of Azerbaijan also attracts the attention of Turkish policymakers. The recent energy-transportation projects of Azerbaijan and Turkey completed in partnership, as well as the increasing political and economic cooperation between the two states, require a closer examination of the relations between the two states. The relations between the two states are influenced by their shared Turkicness embedded in their state and national identities (Aslanli, 2018: 16). These common ties occupy a significant place in building relations between the two. From this perspective, this chapter will examine how Turkic ethnonational identity was involved in the relations between the years 2002 and 2015. Before examining the relations in this period of time closely, the formation of the Azerbaijani state and identity and the course of relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan will be presented to inform readers about how the relations were shaped over the shared Turkic identity. The first subsection will provide a basis for the topic in order to investigate the later subsections that will concern the three subsequent Turkish governments and their changing policy trends towards Eurasia in general and Azerbaijan in particular.

3.2 The Making of Azerbaijani State and Identity

Where today’s Azerbaijan is located has a long history of Turkic immigration before the Common Era, leading the way to Turkification of the land. During the sixteenth century, the Shiite Safavid dynasty ruled the region, and because of sectarian differences with the

Ottoman Empire's Sunni characteristic, a rivalry existed between the Ottomans and the Turkic inhabitants of the region (Suvari and Kanca, 2012: 249). In this period, wars broke out between the Ottomans and the Safavids due to the sectarian differences because religions ruled over the 'self' and 'other' perceptions of the time. After a long period of different Turkic khanates ruling over the territory such as the Timurid Empire (Bolukbasi, 2011: 20), North Azerbaijan (the Republic of Azerbaijan) and South Azerbaijan (Iranian Azerbaijan) were taken over by Russia and Iran, respectively, in 1828 following a treaty between the two countries (Mikail and Tazegul, 2012: 21–22).

In 1918, North Azerbaijan gained independence from Russia with the help of the Caucasian Islamic Army during World War I. Subsequent to this, a state called the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (ADR) appeared for the first time at international level. The ADR resorted to the international stage as the first parliamentary state within the Muslim world as a secular and modernist society (Valiyev, 2005: 4). The ADR declared in its founding document that the republic was "a democratic, parliamentary republic" (quoted in Cornell, Karaveli and Ajeganov, 2016: 37). The ADR was established by the nationalist Musavat Party of Mehmet Emin Resulzade who placed emphasis on the Azerbaijanis' Turkic identity (Uzer, 2011: 167). This was a reflection of the decreasing emphasis on the religion and the impact of the secular characteristic that attaches more importance to the ethnonational identity of the Azerbaijanis in the 1910s.

The ADR survived only 23 months before the Soviet Army invaded the young state, which paved the way to a seven-decade-long Soviet period as the 'Soviet Socialist Republic of Azerbaijan' in the time following 1936 (Mikail and Tazegul, 2012: 23). The brief history of the ADR is significant because a state named 'Azerbaijan' first appeared in 1918 despite an identity known as 'Azerbaijani' having already emerged in the late nineteenth century (Cornell, Karaveli and Ajeganov, 2016: 31). The official identification of the Azerbaijani people as 'Azerbaijani Turks' dates back to 1891 in a newspaper called *Keshkul* (name of a Turkish dessert) (Cornell, Karaveli and Ajeganov, 2016: 34, emphasis in original). The ADR was the first 'Democratic Republic' amongst the Muslim nations and the first Turkic state to adopt the Latin alphabet (Mikail and Tazegul, 2012: 23). The self-identification 'Azerbaijani', though, carries a territorial meaning (Azerbaijan: Land of Fire) and actually never had an ethnic connotation but rather a civic emphasis.

During the Soviet era, nationalist sentiments were tolerated in Azerbaijan in the early 1920s but then came a repressive wave against the so-called enemies of the Bolshevik Revolution with nationalistic ideas in late 1920 and the 1930s during the rule of Joseph Stalin of the Soviet Union (1922-1953). It was, though, in this period of the Soviet Union under Stalin that primordialist interpretation of ethnicity prevailed with official support (Cornell, Karaveli and Ajeganov, 2016: 40). Following the Stalinist era, the Nikita Khrushchev era²⁷ of the former Soviet Union saw a relaxation of the cultural rights of the Azerbaijanis, and even recognition of the Azerbaijani language as one of the official languages of the Soviet Union. Although the internationalist communist ideology was sovereign in the Socialist Republic of Azerbaijan, a shared national identity was formed by developing an urban life, standardised education and printed media (Bolukbasi, 2001: 39–40). However, this did not prevent the creation of different narratives on the origins of the Azerbaijani nationhood.

There have been two major accounts of the origins of the Azerbaijani people. The first predicated that the Azerbaijani people are an extension of the Turkic tribes that migrated to the region before the Common Era. The second is that the Azerbaijanis are Turkified Albanians of the Caucasus and thus no link could exist between Azerbaijan and the other Turkic peoples.²⁸

The late period of the Soviet Union before its dissolution saw independence movements by the Azerbaijanis that were forcefully suppressed by the Soviet regime until 30 September 1991 when the Republic of Azerbaijan emerged as a fully-fledged independent state. The pro-Moscow Ayaz Muttalibov became the first President of Azerbaijan in 1991 but left office in 1992, though in the same year he took back the position with a military coup. Muttalibov was a Moscow-centred president who made decisions in Russian interests both before and after independence (Mehmetov, 2009: 707).

The first comparatively democratic presidential elections under the shadow of an ongoing war with Armenia occurred on 7 June 1992 and resulted in a victory for Turkic nationalist Abulfaz Elchibey's Azerbaijan Popular Front (APF). Elchibey's approach to politics and foreign policy emerged as overtly anti-Iranian and anti-Russian while forging a close relationship with Turkey, thereby emphasising the Turkic roots of the Azerbaijanis. As a result, the foreign policy of the Elchibey period attracted animosity from Russia and Iran against Azerbaijan and antagonised ethnic minorities in the country (Mehdiyeva, 2011:

²⁷ This era encompasses the years between 1954 and 1964 (Dave, 2007: 85).

²⁸ Though Elchibey claimed that the Albanians are also of Turkic stock (Bolukbasi, 2001: 46).

53–66, 168). The country, nonetheless, underwent a radical reform programme domestically, including the reintroduction of the Latin alphabet to switch from the Cyrillic, a national currency and greater importance attached to the Azerbaijani language instead of Russian (Mikail and Tazegul, 2012: 24–25). Elchibey relied on pan-Azerbaijani/Turkic rhetoric and only had a visible dialogue with President Özal of Turkey and President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan. Due to rising national sentiments in the society that stemmed from the territorial losses to Armenia at the time, Elchibey was in line with the political and social trends (Mehmetov, 2009: 708, 709).

Due to internal separatist movements and external conflicts with Armenia, the presidential tenure of Elchibey, however, lasted only a little more than a year. A Moscow-inflicted coup was plotted against Elchibey and he was forced to hand over power to then President of the Supreme Assembly of Nakhchivan Heydar Aliyev, who began his five-year tenure as president after the elections of 3 October 1993. In contrast to Elchibey, Aliyev was a pragmatic leader who was able to appease Iran and Russia and attract support for the ongoing conflict with Armenia, as well as creating political and diplomatic space for Azerbaijan nation/state-building. Azerbaijani membership of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and visits to Iran by Aliyev alleviated Russian and Iranian fears about Azerbaijan and attracted some external support for the country (Mikail and Tazegul, 2012: 25). Heydar Aliyev continued his tenure as president after winning the presidential election of 1998 and remained in charge of the country until 2003, the year of his death (Idan and Shaffer, 2011: 254).

In contrast to Elchibey's explicit and provocative Turkism, 'Azerbaijanism' was promoted by Aliyev with a view to achieving domestic cohesion in Azerbaijan despite the fact that Aliyev's foreign policy was also inclined to sustain closer relations with Turkey. In terms of the ethnic minorities of Azerbaijan – mainly ethnically and culturally distinct Farsi-speaking Talysh people in the south and Lezgins in the north – Azerbaijanism stood out as a supranational concept aimed at the prevention of ethnic conflicts in the country (Tokluoglu, 2005: 728).²⁹

There have been mainly two different accounts of the governance of Azerbaijan since its independence. The first is the ethnic nationalist stance of Turkism with its resemblance to ethnic nationalism and the second is Azerbaijanism, propagated by Aliyev, which forges

²⁹ Azerbaijan also consists of relatively smaller minorities of Armenian, Kurdish and Russian origin (see Tokluoglu, 2005: 739).

civic/territorial nationalism. Azerbaijani national identity, however, is more eclectic and the tricolour flag of the country can be regarded as a derivative of this eclecticism. The blue colour on the flag represents the Turkic origins of the nation, the red represents the prospects of the country regarding modernisation and the green is the symbol of the Islamic facet of the Azerbaijani nationhood (Tokluoglu, 2005: 734). Similar to Turkey, multiple identities evolving around the governance of the country and these are in line with the varieties of nationalism elaborated in Chapter 1 such as ethnic, civic and multicultural nationalisms.

The Azerbaijanism policy of Azerbaijan turned into the promotion of a multiculturalist policy that propagates pluralism in the country. The governing circle of the country perceives multiculturalism as an essential part of the governance of Azerbaijan as could be seen from the launching of the “Baku Process for Intercultural Dialogue” with a declaration of Baku as the centre of multiculturalism (Purtas, 2017: 103), and the celebration of the year of 2016 as the year of multiculturalism in Azerbaijan (Karimova, 2016).

In the foreign policy sphere of Azerbaijan, however, the ethnonational Turkic emphasis carries most weight in the relations of the country with Turkey and the other Turkic republics. The commonalities between Turkey and Azerbaijan are of significant importance in building relations – so much so that in the short epoch of independence in the country from 1991 to 2018, Azerbaijan signed more than 200 treaties, protocols or similar agreements with Turkey (Aslanli, 2018: 16).

3.3 Turkic Identity and the Course of Relations Until 2002

Since achieving its second independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, Azerbaijan, like other Turkic states, has been a priority on the agenda of Turkish foreign policymakers compared to the other Turkic republics. Taking the volume of early trade of Turkey with the Turkic states, for instance, Azerbaijan conducted 50 per cent of all trade transactions with all the newly emerged Turkic republics (Veliyev, 2017: 139).

Turkey, in response to the widely repeated adage “one nation, two states” – first expressed by former Azerbaijani President Heydar Aliyev in his speech at the presidential palace of Turkey in Ankara in 1997 – has been designating special status to Azerbaijan (Veliyev, 2017: 114). Aliyev’s maxim has often been cited in almost every speech given by Turkish and Azerbaijani statesmen on official or unofficial occasions. The importance given to Azerbaijan by Turkey dates back to Atatürk as he reportedly affirmed that “Azerbaijan’s happiness is our happiness and its sorrow is our sorrow” (quoted in German, 2012: 117).

As a relatively small state in terms of area, the Azerbaijani sense of community extends beyond the borders of Azerbaijan. Anderson (2006: 6) believes that:

[T]he members of the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.

More than knowing their fellow Azerbaijanis in Azerbaijan, the Azerbaijani society is inclined to imagine their 'communion' stretching to the Turkish in Turkey, though they are not in the know of the members of Turkish society. Through the prism of this communal state of perceptions, the relations grounded deep in history are shaped both politically and economically, as well as societally. In comparison with the other former Soviet Turkic republics, Azerbaijani people are the only Turkic people that identify themselves as just 'Turks' as well as 'Azerbaijani Turks' (Uzer, 2011: 153).

The Ottoman Empire was the first to recognise the independence of the ADR on 4 June 1918. The Republic of Turkey managed to sustain a consulate until 1937 (Veliyev, 2017: 97). The Turkish Republic followed suit in that tradition by becoming the first state to recognise the independence of the post-Soviet Azerbaijani Republic, although it was unusual to recognise a Soviet republic prior to the dissolution of the Soviet Union and without the agreement of the other NATO members (Veliyev, 2017: 99–100). Turkey's recognition cleared the way for other states to recognise Azerbaijan as a sovereign state. Since the recognition of Azerbaijan by Turkey, Turkish foreign policy in the Caucasus has been profoundly Azerbaijan oriented. Beyond the Caucasus, Turkey's policy towards Central Asia has also been Baku-oriented due to the strategic location of Azerbaijan for accessing Central Asia (Bolukbasi, 1997). The fact that Turkey was the first country to recognise Azerbaijani independence is commonly repeated in almost every Turkish-Azerbaijani official or non-official engagement.

The basis of the relations between the two was established in the context of the Turkic facet of the state identities of the two countries. Therefore, the projection of defining Turkish interests in the Caucasus after the Cold War naturally dictated that Azerbaijan was the main ally in the region. Azerbaijan was also receptive of this policy because it ranks among the Turkic republics as the most important country for Turkey. The importance assigned to Azerbaijan not only stems from its geographical immediacy but also its linguistic and cultural proximity to Turkey. In contrast to the other Central Asian states, Turkey hosts a significant Azerbaijani community. Baku was the first Turkic capital amongst the capitals of the Turkic republics where a Turkish embassy was opened, on 13 January 1992 (Robins, 1993: 603). In

various capitals of the world, Turkish embassies spared offices for the Azerbaijani diplomatic missions in the early period of Azerbaijani independence (Yinanc, 2014). Because of the importance attached to Azerbaijan, Turkish foreign policy towards the Caucasus was strategised by placing Baku at the centre of policymaking (Bolukbasi, 1997). With this move by Turkey, the indispensable position of Azerbaijan shaped Turkish foreign policy in the Caucasus.

In terms of Turkish foreign policymaking, a large number of linguistic and ethnonational commonalities between Turkey and Azerbaijan led to the creation of a special relationship. Many Azerbaijanis perceive Turkey as part of the same nationhood in the context of Turkic ethnonational belonging. Many in Azerbaijan know Istanbul Turkish, watch Turkish TV channels and support popular Turkish football teams such as Galatasaray and Fenerbahçe. It was the case that the Azerbaijanis were a natural voter for Turkish contestants in the Eurovision Song Contest in the past. With regard to the Azerbaijani inclination toward Turkey, Fazıl Mustafa (interviewed, 2018), an MP in Azerbaijan and former deputy of Abulfaz Elchibey, said that:

Azerbaijan is more enthusiastic than Turkey in placing the notion of Turkic solidarity on the diplomatic and economic agenda. The calls on the Turkic solidarity, however, are unrealistic and they overlook two overriding conditions yet to materialise: the existing influence of Russia and Iran in the Caucasus must be alleviated; Turkey must prove to be an influential regional power; and the anticipated regional powerhouse character of Turkey must be recognised by all global and regional powers.

In comparison with the other Turkic republics, the national consciousness of Azerbaijan is the most intense. This comes from the Soviet period of the country that dates back to a “literary revival” of the Azerbaijani language and tolerance of ethnocultural rights after the Stalin era of the Soviet Union, especially during the Gorbachev period (Bolukbasi, 2001: 56–57). The animosity between Azerbaijan and Armenia over the Nagorno-Karabakh and seven other adjunct territories is an additional factor in the high national consciousness of the country.

Even without a special relationship between the two states, geopolitics dictates that it is beneficial for Turkey to foster cooperation with Azerbaijan given the strategic location of this country. It was, however, hard to make realist assumptions of self-interest on Turkish policy towards Azerbaijan. The “secular nature of Azerbaijani nationalism” and “the dominance of language” in its nation-building process led Azerbaijan to “a feeling of kinship with Turkey that most strongly engaged Azerbaijani intellectuals and government officials” (Cornell, 2011: 359). The help of a myriad of these facilitative elements encouraging closer relations between the two turned ‘a special relationship’ into ‘the special relationship’ – forging a

robust tradition of cooperation. The nature of relations between the two encouraged by the shared identity and then this very identity consisted the perceptions in viewing common interests bilaterally and multilaterally.

The early excitement of the Turkish public and policymakers and their desire to diplomatically and socially engage with their long-lost brethren in the Caucasus was interpreted as a ‘euphoric’ period of Turkish-Azerbaijani relations and this period refers to the tenure of Elchibey (1992–1993) (Mehdiyeva, 2011: 156–172). Elchibey period of Azerbaijan showed all the signs needed to determine that the age of nationalities arrived in the country. This was because of the explicit Turkism adopted by Elchibey and the APF. In January 1990 during the war between Azerbaijan and Armenia, the then President Özal gaffed by surfacing a sectarian difference, saying that “the Azerbaijanis are closer to Iran than the Anatolian Turks because they are Shiite, and we are Sunni” (quoted in TÜRKSAM, 2020). In response to this by a note sent to the newspaper *Hürriyet*, Elchibey appealed for help from Turkey against the Armenians and said that “[w]e are Shiite but Turk first”, stressing also that “we are a secular nation”, “religion and nationality are different concepts” (quoted in TÜRKSAM, 2020). It was obvious from the ethnonational Turkic identity played a more important role in projecting the characteristics of the Azerbaijani nationhood before the declaration of Azerbaijani independence.

The Heydar Aliyev period (1993–2003) is usually seen as the time when relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan became more ‘down to earth’. Aliyev also had strong Turkic allegiances and attached significant importance to relations with Turkey. However, Aliyev was more cautious and wary of building relations with Turkey without antagonizing Russia and Iran. In the domestic politics, Turkicness was not emphasized as strong as the period Elchibey was in power, though the Turkic origins of the Azerbaijanis defined probably the most visible characteristic of the nation during the Aliyev period.

On the other hand, Azerbaijani nationalism over Turkism, or Azerbaijanism itself, was incorporated into pragmatism and counterbalancing. Although Azerbaijan manifested a civic form of nationalism after Heydar Aliyev, the Elchibey period showed signs of ethnic nationalism. Given the fact that the country supported the APF led by Elchibey – who alienated Russia and Iran – Azerbaijan has been building cordial relations with Russia and Iran in the meantime and been following a multidimensional foreign policy, granting Turkey a central role since Heydar Aliyev. Heydar Aliyev avoided overtly employing such rhetoric

that Elchibey relied on while sustaining a nationalist sentiment, nonetheless. Moreover, Azerbaijani foreign policy during the period of Heydar Aliyev was based on the rejection of ideology and the adoption of pragmatism instead (Dikkaya and Strakes, 2017: 85). The Azerbaijani public was outwardly more concerned about their economic conditions rather than a pan-Turkist or solely nationalist foreign policymaking (Bolukbasi, 2001: 58). This legacy remained as a legacy to contemporary Azerbaijani foreign policymaking.

Contrary to the mainstream Turkic belief in common ethnic and cultural characteristics, the Turkic ethnic interpretation in Azerbaijan is not founded on a primordial origin but is rather constructed (Cinar, 2013: 259). The notion of ‘Turkicness’ seems to remain in line with the modern interpretation of nationalism. The modern creation of the Azerbaijani allegiance to the Turkic kin is prominent in making Azerbaijani foreign policy by embracing Turkic identification in its domestic politics. After all, the ethnonational and cultural perceptions are fully constructed in both Turkey and Azerbaijan, but they are informed by primordial origins that rely on the primaeval days of the Turkic groups in Central Asia (Suvari and Kanca, 2012: 248–249). This is because the identity of ‘Azerbaijani’ is a given of the Stalin period nationalities policy of the Soviet Union and largely constructed in the modern period. In the meantime, Turkicness of the Azerbaijanis, like in Turkey, dated back to the Turkic empires existed BCE.

Beyond the kindred nature of relations between the two states, a few external factors come into play in the making of Turco-Azerbaijani amity. Amongst the same ‘other’ of them, the first is the perceived Armenian threat. Armenia, as one of the four Caucasian states, has had bitter relations with both Turkey and Azerbaijan. Armenian demands that Turkey recognises the forced deportation of the Ottoman Armenians and subsequent events in 1915 during World War I as genocide – which may pave the way to handing over the land in South-Eastern Turkey, given the Armenian claims on this territory – have led to relations between Turkey and Armenia crumbling. More animosity and a hostile environment have been evident between Azerbaijan and Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh. Nagorno-Karabakh and its adjacent territories, which constitute a fifth of Azerbaijani territory, was occupied by Armenia during the Nagorno-Karabakh War (1988–1994) and still undermines security and stability in the South Caucasus as a frozen conflict (Bolukbasi, 2011: 77–99).³⁰

³⁰ Though it is arguable whether the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is completely frozen because many Azerbaijani and Armenian soldiers are still killed in skirmishes along the border between the two states.

During the Nagorno-Karabakh War, the Armenian forces, assisted by the Russian Army, massacred more than 600 Azerbaijani civilians with several hundred missing in the township of Khojaly in February 1992 (Cornell, 2011: 62). The Khojaly massacre remains a source of Azerbaijani animosity towards Armenia. The enmity between the two, though, is not new as Armeno-Azerbaijani rivalry dates back to the late period of World War I and its subsequent years before both Azerbaijan and Armenia were taken under Soviet control (Gasimov, 2001).

Aside from ethnonational factors, the isolation of Azerbaijan in the post-Cold War era as its two powerful neighbours, Russia and Iran, overtly or covertly aligned with Armenia left an isolated Azerbaijan no option but to embrace their co-ethnics in Turkey. The third factor is the energy relations as Turkey offers safe transportation of the Caspian Basin oil and natural gas to Europe. The most viable option for Azerbaijan to transport its hydrocarbon riches is Turkey, given that the other possible options are Azerbaijan's neighbours Iran and Russia. However, both Russia and Iran muster support for the Armenian cause at various levels. Iran also has territorial disputes with Azerbaijan over the oil fields in the Caspian Basin (Cornell, 2011: 408). Russia asserts its account on the Caspian Sea to the littoral states of the sea as recognising the Caspian Sea as a lake rather than an "international sea" to preclude non-littoral state involvement in Caspian relations (Winrow, 1996: 139).³¹ Russia has long been committed to supporting Armenia militarily while Iran is one of a few countries that the Armenian economy relies on. After all, Turkic Azerbaijan has realist factors against Russia and Iran, but constructivist base towards Turkey.

Turkey, above all, presents – beyond a common ethnicity with Azerbaijan – a portrayal as an extremely reliable ally for Azerbaijan. Here the sectarian difference between Turkey and Azerbaijan stands aside despite the fact that the majority of Azerbaijan is Shia, whereas Turkey is a majority Sunni country. Since its independence, Azerbaijan and Turkey seem to have ignored the sectarian dissimilarity and Azerbaijan has distanced itself from Iran and even adopted a mission to control Iranian-resourced political Islam over the Shiite sect no matter how large the extent to which its diaspora in Iran constitutes the population.

The common ethnonational and linguistic ties have outweighed the sectarian differences between Turkey and Azerbaijan. Although the Iranian religious state establishment encourages the adoption of a supranational 'Iranian' identity for all sub-identity groups, mainly for Iranian Azerbaijanis and Iranian Kurds, the level of Turkic national consciousness

³¹ Russia and Iran endorse the idea that the Caspian Sea is a lake to avoid the American or any other non-littoral state navy stationing itself in the Caspian Sea and exploiting its resources (see Zimnitskaya and Geldern, 2011).

is high amongst the large Azerbaijani minority, which is some 20 million in Iran (Souleimanov, 2011: 78).³² Due to the pressure on minority nationalism in Iran, national sentiments were channelled to sports. The Tractor Sport Club (TSC), which was founded in Tabriz in 1970, carries one of the most visible manifestations of Azerbaijani nationalism, relying on Turkic identity (Souleimanov, 2011: 81). The supporters of the TSC are mainly Turkic nationalists, who support the unification of South Azerbaijan in Iran with the Republic of Azerbaijan in the north and the MHP in Turkey. It has been common to hear slogans of nationalist slogans chanted by the fans during the football matches of TSC.

In an effort to control the Iranian encroaching, Azerbaijan has even pursued friendly relations with Israel since 1992 in line with the same goal. This has led observers to question why Baku has a greater affinity with Tel Aviv than Tehran (Reynolds, 2012). Therefore, an anti-Iran Israel is regarded as one of two countries, with Turkey, that has shown, and are still showing, their support for Azerbaijan (Murinson, 2009). The argument of realism that alliances between states are made on common interest and threat perceptions is likely to be the case between Azerbaijan and Israel but for the relations with Turkey, more of an identity politics was involved (Waltz, 1979: 166). The secular attributes of both Turkey and Azerbaijan refer to more emphasis on their common Turkicness carrying impact on their relations.

After all, to a great extent, the nullified influence of the sectarian allegiance of Azerbaijan stems from its robust secular tradition. A Pew Research Center survey in 2013 demonstrated that Sharia Law is the most unfavourably received in Azerbaijan with 8 per cent compared to the rest of the Muslim-majority states in the world (Pew Research Center, 2013: 9). Moreover, according to the same survey, only 1 per cent of Azerbaijanis felt that Sunni-Shia intensity is a matter of utmost importance in Azerbaijan (Pew Research Center, 2013: 31). In sum, the sectarian difference between Turkey and Azerbaijan had no effect due to the secularism in Azerbaijan and the non-sectarian approach of secular Turkey, unlike the Shia Islam identity professed by Iran in its international relations (see Bargezar, 2008).

Regarding the relations between Iran and Azerbaijan, the Iranian Azerbaijani population centred around the north of Iran is important to note. For the large Azerbaijani minority in Iran, Fazil Mustafa (interviewed, 2018) and Kaya (interviewed, 2018) share the same view as

³² For example, in 2006, many Iranian Azerbaijanis organised large-scale protests in the cities of Southern Azerbaijan against a cartoon in the state-owned newspaper that depicted the Iranian Azerbaijani minority as cockroaches (Souleimanov and Ditych, 2007: 103).

they divide the Iranian Azerbaijanis into two groups. According to them, the first group of Azerbaijanis in Iran identify with supranational Iranian identity and adhere to Shia Islam. The first group also interprets the Iranian state as a Turkic political entity, given that most of the leaders of Iran were of Turkic descent until 1925 and the overwhelming Turkic influence in the country (Souleimanov, 2011: 77). In contrast, the second group of Azerbaijanis in Iran perceive the north of Iran – the four provinces of Iranian Azerbaijan (West Azerbaijan, East Azerbaijan, Ardabil and Zanjan) – as being under Iranian occupation and resent the Iranian state's adherence to the Republic of Azerbaijan. The second group comprises secular and ethnonationalist Iranian Azerbaijanis, whereas the first group is more religiously motivated and adherent to Shia Islam.

In that sense, the Iranian Azerbaijanis are a source of kin-state nationalism for Azerbaijan and this suggests why Azerbaijan is closer to Israel than Iran. In 2012, a group of Azerbaijani MPs proposed a bill to the parliament to change the name of the country to 'North Azerbaijan', which represented a move that could antagonise Iran (Trend News Agency, 2012). This indicated pan-Azerbaijani sentiments in the political class of the country that sees Azerbaijan as a bigger territorial body. These sentiments may be regarded as a continuation of the earlier consciousness of the Azerbaijanis before the independence as one Azerbaijani protester in the demonstrations around the Iran-Azerbaijani border in December 1989 exclaimed:

For decades barbed wire has cut us from our homeland – South Azerbaijan – which is situated on Iranian territory. For decades we have been unable to see our relatives. [...] [M]any people have sisters and brothers on the other side of the Araz [also known as Aras or Araks]. [...] It has been extremely difficult for us to visit our forefathers' graves and see our ancient monuments (quoted in Bolukbasi, 2011: 126).

The relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan also had a downward trend at times. An Azerbaijani reluctance to recognise the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) created disappointment in Turkey. This was argued by Mevlüt Duda (interviewed, 2018), a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the TBMM, as the ineffectiveness of the shared Turkic identity in the relations and realist considerations were emphasised.

On the other hand, a downward trend in the relations was seen recently in Turkey's thaw with Armenia in terms of opening the border that has been closed since 1993, as will be elaborated later. This Turkish *démarche* to normalise relations with Armenia was a diplomatic manoeuvre that led the Azerbaijanis to assume that they were 'sold out' by their kinsmen in Turkey. Prior to this, the first act of Turkish diplomacy, which was perceived as a betrayal in

the Azerbaijani eyes, was Turkey's wheat sale to Armenia at the height of the Azerbaijani-Armenian conflict in 1992 (Hale, 1998: 158; Eksi, 2009a: 103). The second marks an attempted coup against the then President of Azerbaijan in 1994, Heydar Aliyev. Aliyev, who previously served as head of the Committee for State Security in Azerbaijan, was convinced that the Prime Minister of the time, Tansu Çiller, was behind the coup attempt to overthrow him. The coup was overturned by an early warning by President Demirel to Aliyev (Cornell, 2011: 372). The Turkish government and Çiller disavowed any involvement in the turn of events that unfolded, though Aliyev kept publicly blaming Çiller for orchestrating the plot against him (Cornell, 2011: 372). Nevertheless, it was also alleged that hardliners of the MHP circles in Turkey were behind the attempt to bring the pan-Turkist Abulfaz Elchibey of the APF back into power (Oran, 1998: 465).

The recent period of the relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan, aside from the Turkey-Armenia normalisation process, has seen relations continue to grow. In contrast to the negligence of the pro-Islamic parties of Turkey such as the RP, the AKP period of Turkish foreign policy demonstrated an interest in fostering relations with Azerbaijan. As previously mentioned, the recent Turkish politics and foreign policy have been influenced by their Turkic intonation. As far as a pro-Islamic approach to politics is concerned, it is hard to tell whether the maxim "the Muslim's nationality is his faith" applies to the AKP (Zubaida, 2011: 175). As has been noted previously, the AKP's style of politics embraces the Turkish model of Islam, namely a Turkish-Islamic synthesis that contains much of Turkic identification.

Turkic identity, in much of the Turkish foreign policy discourse during the AKP period, comes out as instrumental in cementing relations with Azerbaijan for diplomatic as well as economic advancements in the Turkish sphere of influence extending toward Central Asia via Azerbaijan. Between the years 2002 and 2007, Turkish foreign policy seemed less interested in the relations with Azerbaijan, apart from in energy projects. This was because of more urgent issues surrounding Turkey, such as the Iraqi War in 2003, fluctuating relations with the EU and, related to this, the Cyprus problem waiting for a solution. But later years showed through the visits of Prime Minister Erdoğan and other policymakers to Azerbaijan that Turkey wished to engage with Azerbaijan and the other Turkic republics of Central Asia (Aydin, 2004: 16–17).

The second term of the AKP (2007–2011) in power saw a more Eurasia-leaning foreign policy, taking the Turkic republics as one of the pillars of Turkish foreign policy. Taking this

into account, the next part of this chapter is subdivided into three consecutive terms of the AKP period. The consecutive AKP terms of 2002–2007, 2007–2011 and 2011–2015, with respect to the shared Turkic ethnonational identity, will be examined in terms of Turkish policy towards Azerbaijan. The following parts of the chapter present the course of relations in the three terms with an emphasis on the Turkic facet of Turkish national identity.

3.4 Relations from 2002 to 2007: Continuity in Tradition

Turkish foreign policy during the AKP's first term was under the shadow of a serious internal problem: a post-crisis economy that required structural planning of economic stability. In this period, arguments around that a pro-Islamic party such as the AKP would not be active towards the Turkic republics, finding similarities between the AKP and the pro-Islamic RP. In contrast to the argument by Cornell (2011: 376), for example, that the AKP, akin to the RP, neglected the Turkic republics in Turkish foreign policy is an inadequate conclusion. This judgment partly overlooks the fact that Turkey had domestic priorities that urgently needed to be tackled. In this endeavour, Turkey initially saw an inward-looking approach in its political spectrum. The scares of the 2000–2001 economic meltdown were prioritised at the expense of a full push toward diplomatic pro-activism.

Moreover, the second term of the AKP proved that Azerbaijan, along with the other Turkic republics, remained on the agenda of the Turkish diplomatic apparatus. The first period of the AKP was preoccupied with the EU accession process and relations with the West at large. Instability in the Middle East was another prime source of concern among the Turkish diplomatic circles, mostly arising from the American invasion of Iraq in 2003. A summit of Turkic states, for example, was organised only once in 2006 while this occurred more frequently previously. But, as pointed out earlier, this was due to a busy agenda for Turkish policymakers with the issues in the Middle East and the emphasis placed on the EU accession scheme (Balcer, 2012: 154).

The 1990s manifested an ideology-oriented characteristic of Turkish foreign policy. The waged war against the Kurdish insurgency in South-Eastern Turkey by the Turkish armed forces led to the rise of ethnonational identification and its by-product foreign policy implications. However, Turkish foreign policy has been far more pragmatic in the new millennium. Heydar Aliyev passed away in 2003 and the pragmatic approach to foreign policy by Turkey is shared by the Ilham Aliyev administration as Azerbaijan identifies itself with pragmatism in its diplomatic interactions. Heydar Aliyev set Azerbaijani foreign policy

on three fundamental pillars: “independence, pragmatism and balancing” (Veliyev, 2017: 111). His son, Ilham Aliyev, succeeded his father and showed signs of continuity in the main lines of Azerbaijani foreign policy. Paying his first visit to Turkey, Aliyev set the main lines of the Azerbaijani approach towards foreign policy and Turkey:

As you know, the first country that recognised Azerbaijan’s independence was Turkey and since then Turkey has always stood behind Azerbaijan. We very much appreciate this and hope that this will continue to be so in the future. Our power comes from our unity. Azerbaijan’s strength is Turkey’s strength and Turkey’s is Azerbaijan’s. [...] As I maintain Heydar Aliyev’s policies in other spheres, I am loyal to Azerbaijan’s policy towards Turkey (Aliyev, 2004).

The discursive space of the new President Aliyev became a reflection of his predecessor father Aliyev in term of relations with Turkey. Maintaining the preset ‘balancing’ policy of Azerbaijan, Turkey became a natural ally, leading Aliyev to delve into prospective energy projects and regional strategies in the Caucasus in his the same 2004 TBMM speech.

The ‘balancing’ and ‘pragmatism’ strategies of Azerbaijan also caused problems in its relations with Turkey. In 2004, Cyprus became an issue of dispute between Turkey and Azerbaijan. The TRNC is not recognised by Azerbaijan for fear that Azerbaijan’s recognition of the TRNC could ignite respective recognition of the Nagorno-Karabakh as an independent state. Azerbaijan’s fear was not enough to justify its reluctance to recognise the TRNC in the eyes of the Turkish policymakers who think that the two cases are separate issues. This dissatisfaction emerged as a scandal at the voting session of the Council of Europe’s Parliamentary Assembly in Strasbourg, which was focused on deciding whether to allow the TRNC to open a representative agency at the Council of Europe. The proposal was overturned, and the Azerbaijani delegation did not take part in the voting, except for one member of the delegation. The Turkish press was antagonised by the absence of the Azerbaijani delegates (Ismailzade, 2005: 8). The outcome of the voting would be a defeat with or without the Azerbaijani votes, which constituted only seven in total (Ismailzade, 2005: 8).

The dissatisfaction with the scandal was overcome by Prime Minister Erdoğan’s visit to Azerbaijan in 2005. During this visit, Aliyev declared that Azerbaijan would recognise TRNC passports and establish official representation, symbolically, on the Peace and Freedom holiday of the TRNC on 20 July 2005. In addition to this, Aliyev promised to begin direct charter flights from Azerbaijan to the TRNC without landing in Turkey first despite the fact that this did not materialise in later years (Levent, 2017). The impact of the scandal later turned into an advantage to compensate for the dispute over the voting with an Azerbaijani

opening to the TRNC. Nationalism and pragmatism compete with each other in the case of TRNC-Azerbaijan relations. The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict usually became the determining factor of the TRNC-Azerbaijan interaction. The intensity of relations, however, was seen on the matters of energy and transportation.

During the first term of the AKP in government, Turkish-Azerbaijani relations mostly appeared to carry an emphasis on energy deals and projects. An energy contract between Azerbaijan and a Western oil consortium – including Turkey’s state-owned petroleum company –which was called *Asrın anlaşması* (Contract of the Century), had been signed in 1994 for the production and transportation of Azerbaijani petroleum to the markets in the West (Bayulgen, 2003: 209; Lo, 2015: 119). The energy projects stipulated by this contract were mostly commissioned during the AKP’s first term (Eksi, 2009a). The contract paved the way for the finalisation of two significant oil and natural gas transportation projects: the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline unveiled in 2006 and the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum (BTE) natural gas pipeline (aka the South Caucasus Pipeline), which commenced pumping gas in 2007 (Kardas, 2014: 3, 6). The BTC was the first phase of the American East-West energy corridor policy, which was first introduced and regarded as the resurrection of the Silk Road in the mid-1990s to transport the riches of the Caspian Basin and Central Asia to the markets in the West by avoiding Russian territory (Kardas, 2011: 59). The BTE became the second phase of the increasing potential of Turkey to become more strategically eminent in the energy politics of the Western markets and created the potential to also attract the transportation of the hydrocarbons of Kazakhstan and the Middle Eastern nations such as Iran and Iraq.

On 29 December 2004, Turkey, Azerbaijan and Georgia signed a protocol on the Kars-Akhalkalaki-Baku railway project (MFA of Azerbaijan, 2018) and in 2007, the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars (BTK) railway project, also known as the ‘Iron Silk Road’, was commissioned to be completed in 2010, though its opening stretched later to 2017 (Toktas and Celik, 2017: 387). The BTK railway was also planned to be extended to Central Asia to reduce Russian dominance in the transportation of goods along an alternative route to Russia. These projects meant granting a more vital role to Turkey in the energy politics of Europe and turning it into an energy hub of the region. Through the tripartite cooperation of Turkey, Azerbaijan and Georgia, the Russian and Iranian energy supply routes were alternated (Onis and Yilmaz, 2009: 7). The Turkish policy towards Georgia became important for the energy and transportation projects in cooperation with Azerbaijan. The clearly pro-Western policy of

Georgia and its souring relations with Russia served Turkish foreign policy in substituting the Armenian territory with a territorially strategic country. Georgia's relations with Armenia are also complicated. The fragile territorial integrity of Georgia in South Ossetia and Abkhazia was previously under threat from demands by its Armenian minority in Javakheti for unification with Armenia. As a post-Soviet state that is enthusiastic to leave the orbit of Russia, Turkey, with its ties and alignment with the West, had an impact on the Turkish-Georgian entente for the projects materialised in this period. Since 2007, Turkey has become the biggest trade partner of Georgia (MFA, 2019).

In an alternative to the Russian dominance in the production and transportation links of oil and gas to Europe, Turkey and Azerbaijan, with the help of Western oil companies, reduce their dependence on Russia. Whilst Turkey cleared its way to the diversification of fossil fuel supplies, Azerbaijan reduced its dependence on transporting its hydrocarbon reserves to the international markets, though the country had to include Russian stakeholders in the project with a generous share to appease Russia.³³ Turkey's need for oil and natural gas with its developing industry and increasing population increased dramatically in this period. Between the 1990s and 2010, Turkey's energy needs were predicted to rise by between 200 and 300 per cent (Murinson, 2008: 50). Turkey, moreover, enjoyed cheaper natural gas from the Shah Deniz gas field in Azerbaijan with prices as low as a third of that of the Russian natural gas for long periods (Cornell, 2011: 382). Azerbaijan has played a vital role in contributing to the energy security of Turkey and the diversification of its energy resources. Diversification of natural gas supplies, for example, gave Turkey leverage for a lower price of the natural gas supplied by Iran and Russia (Kardas, 2014: 6). The Azerbaijani supply was instrumental in supporting Turkey's ambition to become an energy hub. In contrast to the Iranian and Russian supply to Turkey, the Azerbaijani gas could be resold to third countries without any limitation (Kardas, 2011: 66).

In the making of Turkish foreign policy towards Azerbaijan, Davutoğlu – then chief advisor to Prime Minister Erdoğan – determined the course of action. Davutoğlu assigned special importance to Azerbaijan, categorising it as “the most important strategic ally in the Caucasus in general and the South Caucasus in particular” and the determining country of Turkish policy in the Caspian Basin (Davutoğlu, 2001: 127, 317). By mentioning it as a separate

³³ Turkey was the second biggest shareholder in the BTC project with 19% belonging to the state oil company of the TPAO while Russia's Lukoil owned 10%, despite the fact that Russia was against the project at the beginning (Orazgaliyev, 2017: 12).

strategic policy for the Caspian Basin, Davutoğlu saw Azerbaijan as a key country for the Turkish policy in Central Asia, suggesting cooperation with Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan to counter Russian influence in the CAC (Davutoğlu, 2001: 181). During the period from 2003 onwards, Turkey followed a committed Azerbaijan-oriented foreign policy in the Caucasus up to the eight days of war between Russia and Georgia in 2008.

By 2008, Turkey had signed agreements with Azerbaijan in the fields of military equipment, financial aid and education (Eksi, 2009a: 102–103). Davutoğlu, with the advent of a “‘zero problems’ with Turkey’s neighbours” policy, had the ambition of spearheading a sphere of security and peace in Turkey’s near geography (Aras, 2009: 134). Davutoğlu (2008: 79-84), to whom two of the fundamental foreign policy elements were also an active regional foreign policy and “rhythmic diplomacy”, channelled Turkey toward becoming more involved in the regional politics of the Caucasus and finding solutions to the regional issues.

In response to the shaking Caucasian stability, as well as to take the lead in resolving the conflict in the region to disable efforts being made by the Armenian diaspora regarding the issue of the recognition of the alleged 1915 genocide, Turkey formed the Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform (CSCP) (Winrow, 2009: 7). The CSCP was a quick response to safeguard the expanding Turkish influence in the region before the USA stepped in to take the lead in the region and recognise the alleged 1915 genocide, as Barack Obama demonstrated signs of doing so in his presidential campaign and also pressured Turkey to muster a resolution to the issue after taking office (Winrow, 2009: 9; Cornell, 2011: 386). The platform meant overseeing a rapprochement between Turkey and Armenia in order to normalise their relations. The initiative that was taken by Turkey aimed at bringing back the weakening stability in the Caucasus caused by the Russo-Georgian War and gave Turkey the key role of resolving the regional conflicts.

Davutoğlu’s vision of asserting the ‘strategic depth’ of Turkey in the Caucasus was meant to grant Turkey a peace-brokering role. However, the activism in restoring relations with Armenia led to a considerable backlash from the Azerbaijani side. The concerted negative reaction to the rapprochement led Turkish diplomatic and academic circles in Turkey to feel that the Turkish Caucasian policy had been taken hostage by Azerbaijan (Candar, 2009). This was because the CSCP was established by Turkey to attach importance to the Turkish diplomatic influence in the region and Turkey had to restore its relations with Armenia for

the initiated effort. The Azerbaijani sensitivity toward Armenia surfaced to hinder the policy of the normalisation with Armenia.

At this point, the Turkish side interpreted relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan as precariously sentimental and, as a knock-on effect, fragile. Eksi (2009a: 109) argued that the nature of relations between the two, mixed with sentimentality, ought to be turned into a strategic partnership to conduct more professional diplomacy that was safeguarded from sentimental reactions, as Davutoğlu also recommended the same approach in basing the relations on a strategic partnership.

However, what was meant by turning the relations from sentimentality to a ‘strategic partnership’ remains unclear, as even in May 1997, the two countries agreed on the Declaration on Deepened Strategic Cooperation and this declaration was reaffirmed in a stronger manner in 2001 by Heydar Aliyev, the then president of Azerbaijan (Winrow, 2004: 209). Although it is hard to tell what exactly was needed to take the relations to the phase of a strategic partnership, the critical approach by Turkey against Azerbaijan was presumably a derivative of the deteriorating Azerbaijani response to the rapprochement efforts of Turkey with Armenia. In 1997, then-President Heydar Aliyev expressed the following in his speech at the TBBM Assembly:

As a result of our negotiations yesterday, we signed eight agreements, each of which has special importance. Especially important among these agreements, the Declaration on Deepened Strategic Cooperation between Turkey and Azerbaijan is a historic bill signed between two Presidents [Ilham Aliyev and then President of Turkey Demirel] (Aliyev, 1997).

Following the ordeal of worsening relations with Azerbaijan, Turkey reinstated its relations on the grounds of common ties with Azerbaijan, and important to note, without even a visible lobby group in Turkey (see section 3.7.2 for more of this discussion) because of the mutual trust inherently built between the two over the shared past and commonalities (Eksi, 2009b). Both Turkey and Azerbaijan, however, became adherent to adjusting their foreign policy principle toward pragmatism. The only difference was the issue of time as Azerbaijan adopted pragmatism in its foreign policy earlier than Turkey, at least in a consistent manner, after the period of Heydar Aliyev. As King and Melvin (2000: 118) point out that “[p]olitics, not identity, has been the major determinant of when and how successfully foreign policy reflected ethnic linkages”, the relations usually began with a discourse on fraternity and continued with a pragmatic equilibrium to which both countries are evidently subscribed. Although pragmatism was evident, the role of Turkic ethnonational identity provided

diplomatic space in forming the course of relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan and was not at odds with pragmatic reasoning in the foreign policies.

Turkey's quest for more active policy in the Caucasus was mainly established in an Azerbaijan-oriented policy in the aftermath of the demise of the Soviet Union. The Azerbaijan-oriented policy of Turkey in the Caucasus can be justified not only by geopolitical dictation but also by considerable non-geostrategic reasons. Among these reasons, the commonalities with Azerbaijan and ethnic, cultural and linguistic ties complement the bigger picture of policymaking towards Azerbaijan. In this regard, ethnic and cultural links trump the religious allegiances of the states, and realist assumptions that were common during the Cold War such as self-help and more considerations of self-interest. The perceptions of Azerbaijan also differ such as between Turkey and the European countries. The EU, for example, included Azerbaijan in the European Neighbourhood Policy action plan in 2005 and human rights records of Azerbaijan was a matter of concern for the EU but it is hard to see the human rights issues of Azerbaijan as a matter of discussion in relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan (Human Rights Watch, 2006). The Turkic links led Turkey to determine a set of policy lines dependent on Azerbaijan in the Caucasus.

In this setting, as Sadri (2003: 186) points out, Turkey oversaw four mainline efforts of which Azerbaijan remains at the centre: the first one was to reduce the expanding or at least control Russian influence in the region; the second effort was to diminish Iranian influence in the region; the third endeavour was to protect ties arising from nationalistic sentiments; and the final goal of Turkish foreign policy regarding Azerbaijan is to make the most of the investment opportunities and oil-gas projects in the country. The shared Turkic identity provided a safe ground to protect Turkey's place in the Caucasus. To be a more preferable ally against Iran and Russia in the Caucasus, Turkey's existence in the projects and the regional politics was empowered by its Turkic facet that made the four goals above more achievable.

In order to offset the influence of the Soviet past of Azerbaijan, and the religious influence of Iran, Turkey was influential by its soft power in the region. In every aspect of the official, public and cultural diplomacy of Turkey in vying for growing influence, education and media have been just two of the most important breakthrough areas in realising the maxim 'one nation, two states'. Turkish schools in Azerbaijan and TV stations airing 24 hours a day helped pave the way to replace the Russian-speaking old Soviet elite with Istanbul Turkish-

speaking, Western-oriented gentry (Cornell, 2005: 304). The Azerbaijani students who studied at Turkish universities from the outset of the Azerbaijani independence created the impetus for the above purpose in creating a Westward youth halting the long-reigning Russian influence in Azerbaijan (Oran, 1998: 460).

As will be elaborated later in the chapter, privately owned Turkish schools and religious groups in Azerbaijan were seen instrumental in this endeavour. The AKP's first term in this sense welcomed a more established non-Russophone elite in Azerbaijan with greater national consciousness in terms of Azerbaijan's Turkic identity. In this period, Turkey's higher education system attached importance to internationalisation of its universities and the international students from the Turkic republics were at the core of this policy. Historically, the number of Azerbaijani students were at the top of the list of international students in Turkey. For example, in 2007, 870 Azerbaijani students were sent abroad to study on governmental scholarships and 594 of these students chose Turkey as their destination of study (Mammedov, 2013: para. 9). In line with this, the Cooperation Protocol on Science and Education was signed between Turkey and Azerbaijan in November 2006 (MFA of Azerbaijan, 2018).

The Azerbaijani vision to stray from the Russian influence has channelled the Azerbaijani leaders toward adopting a Western-style democracy and market economy since independence. This vision with secularism is probably one of the major reasons why Azerbaijan has never signed up to an Iranian theocratic polity or any Iranian influence. It has become evident that as a NATO member, Turkey, as part of the Western bloc, attracted Azerbaijan more than any country in the region. The interest of Azerbaijan in Western-led organisations can be seen in its membership of NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP) programme since 1994, in which Turkey has been a supporter and contributor in military training. As a result of this policy, relations, with the ease of non-material ties, grew increasingly over time, including the first term of the AKP foreign policymaking. This tradition usually had an ethno-symbolic and Turkic attribute, as seen on the opening of the monument of the national leader of Azerbaijan Heydar Aliyev in the business district of Şişli of Istanbul on 26 June 2004 and then a central street in the district of Sarıyer was named after Heydar Aliyev (MFA of Azerbaijan, 2018). Referring to the importance of myths and memories of nations in building nationhood, the monument and naming the street after Aliyev were significant for creating a memory for a Turkic leader in Turkey.

In terms of official diplomacy, 2004 marked the opening of the Azerbaijani consulate in the eastern border city of Kars, which borders Armenia (MFA of Azerbaijan, 2018). In addition to this, Turkey and Azerbaijan took part in another Turkic institution that connects the municipalities of the Turkic world under the supranational institution of the Union of Municipalities of Turkey, whose headquarters is in Istanbul (TDBB, 2018). The organisation is not confined to the Turkic states and it comprises 29 members in total from Africa, the Balkans and Eastern Europe. While Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan remain non-member states, most of the member states have historical and cultural links with Turkey. The charter member status of Azerbaijan was as usual to join Turkish or Turkic-led supranational organisations. More importantly, the TDBB specifically organised “Turkey-Azerbaijan friendship nights”, allocating special importance to the relations with Azerbaijan (MFA of Azerbaijan, 2018). In line with this, the eleventh TÜDEV summit was held in Baku after the tenth one held in the Turkish riviera city of Antalya, creating foundations for the formation of the CCTS. In this summit, there was a heavy presence from the MHP, and Azerbaijani President Aliyev expressed a positive correlation between increasing economic cooperation with Turkey and the Azerbaijani economic power, and also called Turkey “the way that opens to the markets” (*Hürriyet*, 2007b)

The cultural and sentimental dimensions of the relations aside, the economic dimension can be interpreted as significantly progressive. Figure 4 demonstrates that trade turnover increased sharply between the two states between 2002 and 2007. The increasing volume of economic relations shows that even in the AKP’s first term, an increasing interest in Azerbaijan was evident on the foreign policy agenda. The volume of trade is comparatively low when comparing the Turkish trade numbers with major European economies such as Germany, which topped the list of the biggest trade partners of Turkey by more than \$29.5 billion in overall trade turnover. Taking the overall trade of Turkey in 2002 as more than \$87 billion and more than \$277 billion in 2007, the trade volume with Azerbaijan is, as oft-repeated words of Turkish-Azerbaijani engagements, “lower than expected from two fraternal states” (TurkStat, 2018). However, given the previous volume of Turkish-Azerbaijani trade turnover prior to 2002 and the small size of the Azerbaijani economy, the rise in the trading relationship is significant.



Figure 4: Volume of trade turnover between Turkey and Azerbaijan (2002–2007) (Azstat, 2018)³⁴ – thousand USD.

With the increasing cooperation between the two states, Turkey and Azerbaijan embarked upon signing 40 protocols or agreements in culture, economy, military, technical support and education fields, as well as law synchronisation in the period between 2003 and the 2007 general elections in July (MFA of Azerbaijan, 2018). The increasing interaction with Azerbaijan fell in line with the multi-tracked nature of the recent Turkish foreign policymaking. The tradition of multi-dimensional foreign policy, which mainly started with Özal and continued with Foreign Minister Cem, went ahead in this period.

The EU accession process was on the agenda as the government initiated some integration reforms to meet what is known as the ‘Copenhagen Criteria’ of 1993. Although not much progress towards membership was made, the government and parliament took steps to bring the political and jurisdiction measures up to the standards of the EU. The reforms included reduction of the military involvement in politics, introducing the so-called ‘adultery law’ to decriminalise adultery and abolition of the controversial *Devlet Güvenlik Mahkemeleri* (State Security Courts), as well as placing international agreements above internal legislation in the context of basic human rights and freedoms (Sengupta, 2014: 32). In addition to this, the relations with Azerbaijan and Eurasia at large developed simultaneously. The multiple identities of Turkey, including European, Turkic, Middle Eastern and Balkan, were instrumental in following a multifaceted foreign policy at once.

³⁴ This bar chart and the following single bar chart was produced in Microsoft Excel by using statistical data from the State Statistical Committee of Azerbaijan and Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat).

To sum up, Turkey and Azerbaijan during the AKP's first term were by no means far from strategic cooperation. Nevertheless, a closer examination of the Turkish opening up to Armenia in the next section will shed light on the process that led many in Turkey to comment upon a sentimentality in relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan stemming from their common ties.

3.5 Relations from 2007 to 2011: A Test of the Fraternity

It is one of the most frequently quoted facts that the ethnic, cultural and linguistic ties between Turkey and Azerbaijan have engendered enormous political and economic opportunities for the two co-ethnic countries (Karagol, 2014). The role of a wider sense of belonging between the two, however, created a fragility that led the Azerbaijani public sphere, as well as the political class, to overreact when Turkey, following the initiative of Switzerland (i.e. as a mediator), decided to normalise relations with Armenia, a Turkish diplomatic move under preparation since 2007 (Eksi, 2009a: 97).³⁵ The turn of events clearing the way to the Turkey-Armenia normalisation process had three major incentives. The first cornerstone was the assassination of the Turkish-Armenian journalist Hrant Dink, who had long campaigned for reconciliation between Turkey and Armenia. The second incentive occurred when Barack Obama gave hints of a resolution with the recognition of the Armenian account of the alleged 1915 genocide and his support to integrate Armenia into the Western bloc through Turkey by opening the borders (Cornell, 2011: 386–387). And last but not least, there was the eight-day-long Russo-Georgian War in 2008, which added two more potentially impasse conflicts to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict: Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

Aside from the perceived conjuncture in the Caucasus, Turkey's approach to the Armeno-Azerbaijani conflict was beyond the means of strategic diplomatic moves. Coşkun Çakir (interviewed, 2018), an MP and Deputy Chairman of the Parliamentary Commission on Foreign Affairs of the TBMM, stated that:

Azerbaijan is the most exceptional among the Turkic states and we [Turkish foreign policymakers] and the Azerbaijani diplomats, with a few exceptions, vote coherently on almost all the same proposals in the international platforms.

According to Çakir, this special relationship stems from “the same Turkic origins and having the closest linguistic characteristics with Azerbaijan compared to the rest of the Turkic states or communities” (Çakir, interviewed, 2018). An official briefing paper regarding bilateral relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan confirmed that the international stance of both

³⁵ There was already a mediation effort by Switzerland that had been ongoing since 2002.

countries “on regional and international issues are very close or the same” and both states “arrange consultations and support each other in international organisations” (MFA of Azerbaijan, 2018). Beyond the expressions of Turkic solidarity internationally, Turkey consistently perceived the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the rest of the Azerbaijani territories under Armenian occupation as domestic issues. This perspective was reciprocated by the Turkish public providing full support to the policymakers. As Turkish foreign policy is Azerbaijan oriented in the Caucasus, Turkey asserted its own interests in the region by equating its national interests to those of Azerbaijan. Thus, the sense of Turkic solidarity emerged as a way of forwarding Turkish interests in the region (Has, 2016). This was in line with the relationship between interest formation and state identity in the Caucasus.

Turkey, after the demise of the so-called Iron Curtain, recognised Armenia in tandem with the other 15 post-Soviet states. The Turkish recognition of Armenia was the second after the USA (Hill, Kirisci and Moffatt, 2015: 132). Diplomatic relations between the two, however, never came into existence after the Turkish recognition. Armenia became subject to substantive humanitarian aid from Turkey in the aftermath of its independence. The Turkish aid, including the sale of electricity and wheat to Armenia during the Karabakh War, led to a backlash against Turkey from Azerbaijan (Bolukbasi, 1997: 84; Welt, 2013: 209). Following the occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh, Turkey closed its border with Armenia in 1993 and it has remained closed since then (Lussac, 2008: 39).

In an endeavour to normalise relations with Armenia, Turkey stipulated three conditions to Armenia: a) the abandonment of efforts expended nationally and internationally to solicit Turkey to recognise the alleged Armenian genocide; b) Armenian withdrawal from Nagorno-Karabakh and agreement on a lasting peace with Azerbaijan; and c) recognition of the Treaty of Alexandropol and the Treaty of Kars signed in 1920 and 1921, respectively, and thus the current Turkish-Armenian border (Gurcanli, 2008).³⁶

The Minsk Group of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which was founded in 1994, granted the USA, Russia and, presumably due to its large Armenian population, France the major mediator role in resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (Strimbovski, 2015: 124). Turkey and Azerbaijan, in addition to Armenia, became permanent members of the Group and Belarus, Czechia, Germany, Italy, Sweden also took

³⁶ Armenia recognised these treaties at the time of their signature but currently does not accept the present border with Turkey and is looking to revise it.

part (Bolukbasi, 2011: 201). The Minsk Group, however, has not yet been successful in resolving the conflict.

It is important to state that the commencement of diplomatic and economic relations between Turkey and Armenia was actually an old proposal that first emanated from Armenia under the then President Levon Hakobi Ter-Petrosyan of Armenia in the aftermath of the dissolution of the Soviet Union to distance Armenia from the orbit of Moscow and ultimately integrate into the West, as well as to run smooth relations with the neighbours of Armenia (Hill, Kirisci and Moffatt, 2015: 132).³⁷ The proposal remains promising as in the case of opening borders with Turkey, the Armenian economy is expected to receive a major boost with a 35 per cent rise in its gross domestic product (GDP) (Gurcanli, 2008).

From the Turkish perspective, in the case of a resolution by thawing the deteriorated relations between Turkey and Armenia with open borders, Turkey would benefit most in political rather than economic terms, given the small size of the Armenian economy and population. The EU and American pressure on Turkey over its relations with Armenia would have been alleviated by a new revamped image of Turkey with the difficult ambition of ‘zero problems with its neighbours’. By having open borders with Armenia, moreover, Turkey would be able to distance Armenia from the Russian sphere of influence, which could bring the country closer to the Western bloc by integrating the small-size Armenian economy into the Western market economy. In addition to that, Turkey could channel its economic influence over Armenia as a vehicle to pressurise for a resolution in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (Gurcanli, 2008). A resolution between Turkey and Armenia, however, seems unlikely in the near future, given the fact that Turkey perceives the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict as a domestic issue and no progress is seen on the prospect of a solution to this conflict (Has, 2016).

Efforts in the normalisation process of Turkey and Armenia continued with the protocols of the ‘Establishment of Diplomatic Relations and the Development of Bilateral Relations’ in February 2009 and these were not publicised until the end of August 2009 due to fear that a negative public reaction from Turkey and Armenia could hinder the process (Bilgin and Bilgic, 2011: 188). Following an invitation from Armenia, the then President of Turkey, Gül, began the so-called ‘football diplomacy’ with a football match played between the Turkish

³⁷ In a 1991 interview with the Turkish journalist Mehmet Ali Birand, Ter-Petrosyan stated that “Turkey can contribute to a peaceful resolution of the Karabagh conflict. [...] As soon as Turkey establishes political and economic relations with Armenia, the resolution of the Karabagh conflict will come sooner” (Ter-Petrosyan, 1991). Compared to his hawkish successors, who were mostly from the conflicted Nagorno-Karabakh, Ter-Petrosyan was warm to the idea of peaceful relations with Turkey.

and Armenian national football teams in Yerevan. For Turkey, the match indicated not only a contest on a football pitch but a reinforcement with “the creation of a climate of friendship in the region”, according to an official statement from the Turkish presidential office (quoted in Tait, 2008). In the return match played in the Atatürk Stadium of the Turkish city of Bursa, Azerbaijani flags were banned in compliance with FIFA rules – which banned third country flags – leading to Azerbaijanis removing Turkish flags from a Baku martyrdom cemetery and a few more in various places in retaliation (Akgunes, 2009). As nationalism also gets involved in sports competitions, the role of football in this sense and the idea of including football in the rapprochement process could be argued critically, as Orwell (2018: 52) does this to determine the impact of sporting competitions on the rise of unhelpful nationalist sentiments:

[B]ig-scale sport is itself, I think, merely another effect of the causes that have produced nationalism. Still, you do make things worse by sending forth a team of eleven men, labelled as national champions, to do battle against some rival team, and allowing it to be felt on all sides that whichever nation is defeated will ‘lose face’.

Thus, it is arguable that it was the correct idea to follow football diplomacy, which had the potential to turn into negative nationalism because the flag crisis went to the extent of sending diplomatic notes, from Azerbaijan to Turkey, regarding the removal of the Azerbaijani flags in Turkey, and from Turkey to Azerbaijan over the new measures concerning the Turkish flags in Azerbaijan. Egemen Bağış, one of the cabinet ministers at that time, stated that “Turkey has not struck an attitude against Azerbaijan for not recognising the TRNC so far” before mentioning the “one nation, two states” notion of the relations. The crisis attracted criticism against the government from the political opposition in Turkey. The Vice-President of the MHP, Cihan Paçacı, commented that “it is wrong to normalise diplomatic relations with Armenia at the expense of relations with Azerbaijan” (*Habertürk*, 2009).

The Azerbaijani side reacted negatively to the whole process for fear that Azerbaijan was going to lose its political leverage in negotiations with Armenia over the occupied Azerbaijani territory. This was reflected in the energy relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan. Turkey was privileged to buy natural gas from Azerbaijan at a third of the price of the Russian and Iranian price range. The normalisation process led Aliyev to review this privilege and after the flag crisis he said the following:

Azerbaijan establishes relations with all countries [...] on mutual interests. [...] It is no secret that for many years Azerbaijan has been selling gas to Turkey for one third, 30 percent of the market price. Which country sells its natural resources, especially under the present circumstances, for 30 percent of

the market price and is satisfied with it? This is beyond any logic. [...] We want to sell our gas for a price close to the market price, if not the market price. If we are not paid equal to the price paid for Russian gas, then let it be 8 percent, 10 percent lower, but not 50 percent lower (Azeri Press Agency, 2009).

To alleviate the Azerbaijani reaction, Erdoğan had to organise a visit to Baku and reassure the Azerbaijani government, besides its public sphere, during his speech at the Azerbaijani National Assembly by emphasising that without a resolution on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in favour of Azerbaijan, opening the Turkish-Armenian border would be out of the question (Trend News Agency, 2009). Erdoğan's reassurance, based on the common ties, came out as a response to the increasingly deteriorated relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan. This indicated that Turkic nationalism protected the interests of the same nation, i.e. the Turkic nation. In his speech to the National Assembly of Azerbaijan he said:

I would like to highlight one point here that during the period of the reconciliation process, we have never taken a single step that is against the national interests of Azerbaijan and will never do in the future. [...] I would like to reiterate that Azerbaijan's sorrow is our sorrow and its happiness is our happiness. [...] There is no such term like a fraternity (brotherhood) in the literature of IR. This term only exists between us in the world (Erdogan, 2009).

However, from the Turkish point of view, the Azerbaijani reaction – which to them resembled tit-for-tat – to Turkey over the normalisation process was seen as unjustified. Erdoğan explicitly stated that various Azerbaijani envoys that came to Turkey during the rapprochement “went astray” (CNN Türk, 2009). Then the leader of the opposition CHP party, Deniz Baykal, encouraged President Gül to extend the dialogue with Ilham Aliyev – the then President of Azerbaijan – regarding the Azerbaijani concerns (CNN Türk, 2009). It was in this period that critical voices emerged with ideas to upgrade the relations to a strategic partnership, a call to the unsustainability of relations by avoiding a sentimental approach to the diplomacy between the two states, especially in the event of a crisis. The critiques voiced mostly by the commentators in Turkey and the political circles and the public sphere remained relatively optimistic.

At this point, an important workshop was organised by Turkish and Azerbaijani policymakers and intellectuals at the SETA think-tank in July 2009. The workshop was aimed at assessing the pitfalls of Turkish-Azerbaijani relations in response to the worsening relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan. The workshop concluded that the motto ‘one nation, two states’ should be qualified by a strategic partnership and the relations should not be solely based on sentimental expressions of Turkic solidarity. Rather, energy relations and a new intention to better understand the policy dynamics of Turkey were recommended (Eksi, 2009b). It was, however, acknowledged that expressions of solidarity and cultural proximity are important,

provided they are reinforced by a strategic partnership. The recommendations at the workshop focused on improving relations on a systematic basis and increasing bilateral political, public and academic interaction (Eksi, 2009b).

Despite a brief antagonism between Turkey and Azerbaijan, a relaxation in relations came after a row over an exchange of words between the leaders concerning how strong the ties were between the two countries. The conclusion of the alleviation of the escalating crisis in between was an emphasis on the deep-seated bond between the two countries. Turkey's goal to resolve the Armenian dispute with Azerbaijan, however, remained pending. There has been no progress made since the beginning of the resolution rapprochement. The Turkish initiative to commence relations at the expense of the Azerbaijani friendship proved that Turkey was able to bypass the Western involvement if there was a need for an initiative to be taken in order to resolve a regional conflict. The cultural commonalities between Turkey and Azerbaijan were the basis of a political understanding regarding the rationale of the normalisation process. The common ties re-emerged to play a facilitator role as the shared Turkic identity between Turkey and Azerbaijan was not confined to facilitating cooperation and better relations but also curtailed or at least mitigated a potential crisis.

In the destabilised environment of the Caucasus in the aftermath of the Russo-Georgian War, Turkey, with the help of the CSCP amid the escalating conflict between Russia and Georgia, embarked upon materialising the chief foreign policy advisor Davutoğlu's ambitious initiative-taking role for Turkey rather than playing an auxiliary role against grand designs *ex-ante* by the global powers in its near political sphere (Aras, 2009: 136). Excluding the USA, the EU and Iran in the normalisation process indicated that Turkey initiated a conflict resolution scheme without any Western power taking the lead and rather included Russia, which led to obscurity in the Western capitals over the purpose of the initiative. But it was then apparent that the CSCP was a diplomatic manoeuvre by Turkey to prevent Western interference in the regional politics of the Caucasus and take the lead in resolving the crises that emerged (Veliyev, 2015: 88).

In addition to the obscurity concerning the purpose of Turkey mentioned above, the normalisation attempts towards Armenia caused repercussions in the relations with Azerbaijan. The backlash from Azerbaijan against Turkey proved that Turkey should be aware that the relations with Azerbaijan should not be taken for granted. The Azerbaijani response to the Turkish rapprochement toward Armenia showed itself as an Azerbaijani

rapprochement toward Russia as President Aliyev signed a gas deal with Moscow, following his visit to Russia. What Aliyev signalled by his visit to Russia was a message to Turkey that Azerbaijan had options if Turkey acted out of Azerbaijani interest by also skipping the Alliance of Civilisations meeting in Istanbul, a much-owned project of Turkey in partnership with Spain (Candar, 2009). Moreover, Azerbaijan was represented by a single minister in a ceremony where the Nabucco Project was signed in Ankara (Dikkaya and Strakes, 2017: 97). During a meeting with President Dimitri Medvedev, Aliyev referred to the Azerbaijani approach by saying he saw “no constraint in selling the Azerbaijani gas to Russia” (quoted in Candar, 2009). Moreover, the Turkish government was not only in the line of fire from the Azerbaijani side. The then leader of the main opposition party in Turkey, Deniz Baykal, called the rapprochement “the biggest diplomatic mistake of the republican history” (CNN Türk, 2009).

The rapprochement process was against the identity-interest equation of Turkish policy in the view of many Turkish policymaker and observers. For many, it was a must to act line with the Azerbaijani interests in the Caucasus because the shared Turkic identity required to do so. The attempted reconciliation with Armenia did not produce the positive results that were aimed initially but caused collateral damage in the political and economic interaction with Azerbaijan, though this did not last long.

Economic interaction and trade between the two decreased relatively to less than \$1 billion compared to more than \$1.4 billion in 2008 despite the fact that the trade turnover exceeded \$1.7 billion in 2011 (Azstat, 2018). The decreasing trend in the volume of trade between Turkey and Azerbaijan from 2008 to 2011 presumably derived from the impact of the 2008 financial crisis. In addition to this, the Turkey-Armenian normalisation process might also have had an impact on the decrease in the trade volume in those years, but this was unlikely to be too effectual.

Ilham Aliyev, the son of Heydar Aliyev, has been following suit in balancing Azerbaijani affairs both in the region and around the world. In this endeavour, Turkey’s place in Azerbaijani foreign policy remained unchanged. To highlight the distinction of Turco-Azerbaijani relations, Ilham Aliyev, in his first election as president, stated: “Where Azerbaijan stands, Turkey is there; where Turkey stands, Azerbaijan is there” (AZERTAC, 2003). In the same vein, it is common on the Turkish side to see the same discursive space in Turkish political and diplomatic circles, such that Turkish Prime Minister Davutoğlu stated

during his speech at ADA University in Baku, “[w]here the Azerbaijani flag flies, the Turkish flag is there; where Turkish flag flies, Azerbaijani flag is there”, followed by a quote from the famous Azerbaijani poet Bakhtiyar Vahabzade referring to the nature of Turkish-Azerbaijani relations: “We are two sons of one single mother” (Newtimes, 2015). The equation of national interests and identities between the countries was seen on the Azerbaijani side equally. Ilham Aliyev paid his first visit to Turkey after being elected as president in 2008 and delivered his second speech at the TBMM. He referred to the common achievements with Turkey in energy and transportation projects and the election of Turkey as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council, for which Turkey received Azerbaijan’s support, and he called it not only Turkey’s success but also Azerbaijan’s success (Aliyev, 2008). The reliance on the common past and its discursive expression became a binding factor in the relations, especially at times of crisis. As has been mentioned, this period also saw a tilt towards Eurasia and Azerbaijan was re-emerged as an important country in the Caucasus.

3.5.1 The Eurasian Shift and the Place of Azerbaijan in Turkish Foreign Policy

Turkish foreign policy saw a turning point in 2007 with the election of the new Turkish President, Abdullah Gül, one of the founders of the AKP and former Minister of Foreign Affairs. The jurist predecessor of Gül, former President of the Constitutional Court of Turkey, Ahmet Necdet Sezer (2000–2007), showed no harmony, politically or ideologically, with the elected government during the AKP term from 2002 to 2007, hence the termination of his presidency. Sezer, contrary to the stance of Gül in terms of foreign policy, was based on Kemalist principles that relied on safeguarding the *status quo*. Sezer’s tenure of the presidency showed no consonance with the AKP government and Sezer was a president who adamantly opposed the government, leading one observer to call it “the strongest opposition figure in the face of the AK Party government” (Duran, 2014). This included foreign policy choices made by the government as Sezer’s term of office was an extension of the traditional static foreign policy of Turkey.

Unlike Sezer, the election of Gül as the next President of Turkey not only cleared the way to a president who was in harmony with the government but also to a more active foreign policy to follow globally. Furthermore, what marked the advent of Gül was his significant emphasis on the relations with the Turkic republics. Gül overtly took Heydar Aliyev’s “one nation, two states” approach a step forward in seeing the six independent republics of the Turkic world as

a single nation, stating, “If we do see ourselves as a part of one nation, it is natural right of all our states to facilitate the utmost cooperation between our citizens, societies and states” (NationalTurk, 2011). Coming from a background with the Islamic credentials of the former RP, the emphasis that Gül put on Turkey’s relations with the Turkic republics is worth noting to demonstrate how distinct the recent period of Turkish foreign policy was in relying on Turkic ethnonational identity in managing relations with the Turkic republics and the role of the ethnonational and cultural ties in connecting Turkey to the rest of the Turkic republics. In this, conservative nationalism emerged as influential because Gül had a background in the pro-Islamic politics of the RP, but relied more on the Turkish-Islamic synthesis, attaching importance to the Turkic facet of Turkish foreign policy. As multiple Turkic, Western and pro-Islamic identities became visible simultaneously, relations with Eurasia along with Europe and the Middle East developed in tandem. Conservative nationalism inherently included a Eurasian intonation in its rhetoric. Turkic peoples of the CAC were the main reason for this emphasis in Eurasia. This emphasis became a dilemma with the deep-seated Europeanisation policy of Turkey, as Onis and Yilmaz (2009: 8) argue that Turkey tried to “reconcile its long-lasting European orientation with a countervailing trend towards Euro-asianism”.

In the emergence of a greater accent on the relations with the Turkic world, Azerbaijan notably stayed on top of the Eurasian shift in Turkish foreign policy, encouraged by the common national sentiments with the Turkic states. The interpretation brought forward by Gül in viewing the Turkic world as ‘one nation’ was a reflection of the Turkish-Islamic synthesis that deviates from Islamic universalism, which implies another one single ‘nation’ or ‘nationality’, usually regarded as the ‘nation of Islam’. This can also be seen as a dilemma, but marrying Turkicness and Islamic conservatism represents the *sui generis* attribute of conservative nationalism, which is popular in contemporary Turkish politics.

At any rate, relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan underwent a vibrant transition during the presidency of Gül. Turkey and Azerbaijan, in partnership with Georgia, signed and commenced construction of the BTK railway project that was hailed as a new ‘Iron Silk Road’ due to its expected role in connecting London and China (*Hürriyet*, 2007a). It was envisaged that Aktau, a Kazakhstani city on the eastern coastline of the Caspian Sea, would be connected to Urumchi, China, by railway (Veliyev, 2015: 89). With the introduction of the undersea Marmaray tunnel connecting Europe with Asia Minor under the Bosphorus in 2013, a cargo train could travel from Beijing to London via Istanbul. At the time of writing, a cargo

train has passed through Marmaray for the first time, bound for Prague, the capital of Czechia. The BTK also empowered the strategic position of both Azerbaijan and Turkey for Europe. The BTK was a blow to Russian dominance in the transportation lines of the Caucasus. It was presumably for this reason that the BTK was supported by the European development platform the 'Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia' (TRACECA). However, later years of the project saw the EU cutting off its financial support because of the criticism that Armenia was excluded from the project.

The route of the BTK railway project could have been more efficient by taking a short cut across Armenian territory. Citing the territory of Azerbaijan occupied by Armenia, however, the route of the project bypassed Armenia and rather included Georgia. During the sod-cutting ceremony, Gül took the opportunity to send a message to the Armenian authorities: "All projects in the Caucasus are open to all Caucasian countries" but only the ones that "have the desire to contribute stability, peace, welfare and good neighbour relations in the region" (CNN Türk, 2008). The by-passing of the BTK together with other oil and natural gas projects of the Turkey-Azerbaijan-Georgia quadripartite cooperation, for Armenia, appears to be the result of solidaristic attitudes in the diplomacy between Turkey and Azerbaijan, and their common perceived other. The commonalities of Turkey and Azerbaijan in their perceived other facilitate the projects in the region bilaterally but at the same time factually complicate cooperation with Armenia.

Following the establishment of the Baku-headquartered TURKPA for the cooperation of the parliaments of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkey in 2008, 2009 marked the establishment of the CCTS and the International Turkic Academy, both of which Azerbaijan was their founding member. In August 2010, Turkey and Azerbaijan signed a Strategic Partnership and Mutual Assistance Agreement to upgrade their relations to the strategic level in the economy, security and military spheres, including the first Article of the agreement ruling that in the case of a military attack against any of the two states, the two countries would have consultations with each other (*Strategic Partnership Agreement*, 2011). This was followed by an agreement over the establishment of the High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council (HLSCC) (Aras and Akpınar, 2011: 62). The official document of the Strategic Partnership Agreement introduced Turkey and Azerbaijan as "neighbour and fraternal states" and projected cooperation in political, economic and cultural spheres (*Strategic Partnership Agreement*, 2011).

The HLSCC assumed annual meetings and bilateral visits between the two presumed relations to upgrade to the level of strategic partnership. Cooperation in the military industry, transportation and energy constituted the presumed areas for bilateral relations. In the first annual meeting of the HLSCC, one of the experts from the Strategic Studies Centre of the Presidency of Azerbaijan, Gulshan Pasayeva, referred to not only national ties but also strategic means to “determine the future line of strategic and fraternal relationship between Azerbaijan and Turkey” (AZERTAC, 2011). Given the Turkish reaction to the purely sentimental nature of the relations, it was evident that the course of the relations began to focus more on strategic cooperation. The notion of a ‘fraternal relationship’, however, remained the backbone of the bilateral relations.

The above agreements upgraded the relations to the next level and forged a more systematic agenda of cooperation rather than *ad hoc* efforts to improve the relations. These initiatives came after the failed reconciliation process of Turkey with Armenia and indicated that relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan returned to the former state with a more active course of relations after the bitter experience of bilateral antagonism on Turkey’s policy towards Armenia.

It was clear that Turkish foreign policy towards Azerbaijan in the second term of the AKP was captivated by the Eurasian drift of Turkish foreign policy. In this period, Turkey distanced itself from accession to the EU and altered its foreign policy orientation eastwards towards Eurasia. Most of the Turkey-backed international organisations of the Turkic republics were established in the second half of the AKP’s second term, including the CCTS, the International Turkic Academy and TURKPA. Azerbaijan and Turkey were natural charter members of all these organisations aimed at fostering political and economic relations amongst their member states. The ties between Turkey and Azerbaijan that stem from their similar national consciousness were in harmony with the new Eurasian redirection of Turkish policy. The re-emphasis seen in Turkish foreign policy on the Turkic republics is akin to the change in direction of the British government in terms of reclaiming relations with the states of the Anglosphere in the ordeal of Brexit.

The Turkic republics in the CAC reinforced the increasing Eurasian reorientation of Turkish foreign policy. Turkish foreign policy towards the Caucasus, a vital part of the Eurasian landmass, was predetermined from the prism of strategic realignment with Azerbaijan. As Azerbaijan is essential in Turkey’s opening up to Central Asia and the Far East of Eurasia,

relations with Azerbaijan became a determining factor. The relations between the two remained an indispensable priority (Cornell, 2005: 275). The Eurasian turn in Turkish foreign policy was influenced by the static nature of the Turkish accession to EU membership.

The importance given to Eurasia in Turkish foreign policy continued in the third term of the AKP. The premiership period of Erdoğan (2011–2014) and Ahmet Davutoğlu (2014–2015) from 2011 to 2015 continued to further the Eurasia-oriented foreign policy, such that Turkish foreign policy, now distanced from the EU accession scheme, turned to a quest to look for alternative organisations to the EU. And in the search for an alternative, Azerbaijan and the Turkophone republics presented an option. Besides the Turkic republics in Eurasia, Russia became the centre of Eurasian quest for Turkey and this phenomenon has a historical and intellectual background.

3.5.2 The Turkish Inclination to Eurasia and Russia

The rhetoric on Eurasia in Turkey is influenced by Turkey's relations with Russia as much as with Azerbaijan. This stems from the territorial and economic size and importance of Russia in Eurasia, as well as the historical interaction of the country with the Turkic peoples of the CAC. It has been noted that late Presidents Özal and Demirel, as well as Foreign Minister Cem, aligned with the idea of co-existence of advanced relations both with the West and Eurasian countries. This had developed from the idea of perceiving Turkey both as a European and a Eurasian country at the crossroads of both Europe and Asia.

This political stance emerged after the demise of the Soviet Union and the discovery of a new geography based on the cultural affinities of the Turkic republics and communities with Turkey. Turkey's policy towards Azerbaijan – and the Turkic republics in general – was co-promoted by Eurasianist (*Avrasyacı*) thinkers, who emerged as Kemalist but not believers in a solely Western-oriented foreign policy in the post–Cold War period. The Turkish poet Attila İlhan was one of the pioneers of Turkish Eurasianism, and Doğu Perinçek, the leader of *Vatan Partisi* (Homeland Party) in Turkey, is an adamant supporter of a Eurasia-centred foreign policy, though remaining on the fringes of the Kemalist political current. As Eurasia and Eurasianism arrived in the political rhetoric of Turkey after the fall of the Soviet Union, the same outlook on foreign policy orientation was seen in the AKP period of foreign policymaking. The Turkic republics formed the mainline of Turkish foreign policy in Eurasia, but Russia remained an important actor in the region, influencing Turkish policy in the CAC.

There has been a continuous perception in Turkey that the country should co-promote relations with the West, the Middle East and the CAC after 2002. As Eurasia was a part of Turkish foreign policy in this period, Russia emerged as Turkey's biggest partner. Trade turnover with Russia in 2010 exceeded trade turnover with all of the Turkic republics combined, reaching over \$26 billion, compared to \$6.8 billion with the Turkic republics (TurkStat, 2019).

Although Russia has historically been a rival of Turkey and the Ottoman Empire, the post-Cold War period in general and the post-2002 period, in particular, saw a sharp rise in the economic relations of the two states. Previously, a high level of cooperation among the Turkic republics and Turkey had been a threat to Russian interests on the ground in Russia's immediate 'near abroad' (Cummings, 2001: 147). This is a proclamation that the CAC is a part of Russia's natural sphere, and there was anxiety that it would be dominated by a country other than Russia. The fear of Turkish influence in the context of pan-Turkism seems to have faded away, owing to the increasing economic interdependence between Turkey and Russia and Turkey's more culturally motivated policy towards the CAC, rather than the politically motivated dreams of pan-Turkic territorial expansion.

There are different approaches to Eurasianism in both Russia and Turkey (Mostafa, 2013: 161–163). Eurasianist ideas in Russia are more diverse, ranging from the support of a peaceful co-existence between the Turkic and Slavic peoples of Eurasia, to a radical right-wing Eurasianism such that promoted by the Russian political analyst Alexander Dugin, who once encouraged Russians to kill Ukrainians (Hovorun, 2018: 78). The tendency towards a Eurasianist approach in Turkey is shared by political trends on both the right and left. The studied period in Turkish foreign policy was inclined to include a Eurasian intonation stemming from the conservative nationalism (Turkish-Islamic synthesis) previously elaborated. The pro-Turkic sentiments, however, included no anti-Russian sentiments, as can be seen from the political and economic relations of Turkey with Russia. Inevitably, Russia was part of Turkey's Eurasian policy in the political and economic interaction with the CAC. The active involvement of Russia in Eurasia-based international institutions – such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) – required Turkish policy to manage cordial relations with Russia while avoiding a conflict of interests in the region.

Eurasianism and Turkey's relations with Russia offers a constructivist view, as Russia was once "an imminent threat to Turkey's very survival", but "has become Turkey's largest

trading partner” (Akturk, 2004: 207). The condition of Russo-Turkish relations explains how the perceptions of ‘friend’ and ‘enemy’ are socially constructed. Indeed, Turkey was on the side of the Western bloc during the Cold War, and the then Soviet Union naturally became the enemy ‘other’ (with their communist identity) for Turkey. Following the end of the Cold War, however, cooperation between the two improved quickly, paving the way for Russia to become a part of Turkish foreign policy as an important partner. The premise of constructivism in emphasising changing and evolving identities may be helpful for interpreting this swift change in foreign policy relations between Turkey and Russia.

In this discourse on Eurasia, Azerbaijan occupied an important place, as this country is a gateway for Turkey, providing an opening to Central Asia and the Far East. As previously noted, Turkey is Azerbaijan’s access route to Europe and international markets. This bilateral and geostrategic relationship was, however, dependent on the trend of managing cordial relations with Russia. Although Azerbaijan could be regarded as the least Russophone post-Soviet Turkic republic, it managed to sustain a close working relationship with Russia.

3.6 Relations from 2011 to 2015: Rising Eurasian Trends

The third term in power of the AKP government marked an ongoing workable relationship with the EU and an increasingly Eurasia-leaning foreign policy. The shift in Turkish foreign policy probably came against a series of changing standards for the membership criteria that Turkey is expected to meet. The protracted process of the Turkish accession to the EU had its repercussions in the Turkish political and societal spheres in reviewing the whole EU membership (Onis and Yilmaz, 2009: 13–14). The shift towards Eurasia came as a response to the stagnated progress towards the ultimate purpose, i.e. membership.

The Arab Spring in the Middle East in 2010 and the breakout of the Syrian civil war in 2011 were other factors of the Turkish distance from the EU scheme. These unforeseen events came as a blow to the much-wished ‘zero problems with neighbours’ policy of Turkey. Escalating instability in the Middle East deriving from the subsequent revolts in the Middle Eastern and North African countries and some Kurdish groups in Syria created new challenges for Turkish diplomacy with the Kurds in Turkey and subsequently led to problematic relations with the USA. Above all, the EU membership process remained stagnant, as Hale (2013: 138) puts it, the relations with the EU were “frozen in a ‘European winter’ (in contrast to the ‘Arab Spring’)”. Therefore, a Eurasian and Turkic opening came to

the fore no strings attached compared to the relations with the Middle East, the EU or the USA.

In this time of foreign policy emphasis on Eurasia, Erdoğan voiced the Turkish search for alternative organisations other than the EU to be part of a greater alliance. During a visit to Moscow in 2012, Erdoğan voiced his personal request to Russian President Vladimir Putin to join the SCO (T24, 2012). In Erdoğan's words addressing Putin (T24, 2012):

From time to time you have jokingly asked me what the point was in bothering with the EU. So I am now asking you that you let Turkey become a member of the SCO and we then review the EU membership process.

Erdoğan reiterated this call to Putin in a stronger tone in the following year in the Russian city of Saint Petersburg. Referring to the 50 years of the static process of the Turkish accession to the EU, he said: “[...] enrol Turkey into the SCO and disembarass us [from this EU membership process]” (T24, 2012).

More precisely, Erdoğan clarified his intention with the following remark in 2013: “If we get into the SCO, we will say good-bye to the European Union” (quoted in Wang, 2016b). Azerbaijan, a dialogue partner of the SCO, falls into the centre of attention in the eyes of the Turkish government. With its rich hydrocarbon resources in the most strategic part of the Caucasus, Azerbaijan represents a vital ally in the region that has the ability to connect Turkey to the Central Asian states. Given the increasing attention attached to Eurasia in Turkey in this period, Azerbaijan, in the third term of the AKP, with the ideational endorsement of the then Minister for Foreign Affairs, Davutoğlu's *gönül coğrafyası* perception, an increasing Turkish presence in Eurasia was aimed. In terms of this ambition, the kinship and cultural ties with Azerbaijan are viewed as an obstacle for Turkey in building constructive relations in the Caucasus. Punsmann (2013: 3), for example, argues that the nature of relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan based on the shared Turkic identity is an impediment to allowing Turkey to apply a pragmatic foreign policy in the Caucasus to lead a transformation towards a more stable neighbourhood and cooperation.

This argument is true due to the fact that the impact of the ethnonational link produces limitations on the relations between Turkey and Armenia and simply reflects the Turkish inability to transform the South Caucasus into a more stable region founded on the kinship-based nature of the relations. This interpretation, however, overlooks the fact that the Turkish-Azerbaijani relations forged by the sense of belonging from the shared Turkic identity foster cooperation not only with Azerbaijan but also with another South Caucasian

country, namely Georgia. Although the kinship-based nature of relations can be a barrier to the regional stability of the Caucasus, a strategic relationship powered by common ties seems to be more reasonable given the greater stability Turkey can offer to the region. In addition to this, the Turkic facet of Turkish state/national identity projected its interests in line with friendly relations with Azerbaijan.

It is hard to say otherwise that the conflictual nature of the South Caucasus with its frozen conflicts is triggered by the level of solidarity professed over the commonalities between Turkey and Azerbaijan because arising opportunities in the Caucasus in the post-Soviet period came with ethnic and religious conflicts in the region. In this setting, the commonalities between the two endorse furthering cooperation that can help stabilise the region at large. It is no secret that the interdependent nature of political and economic cooperation or integration tends to interlock states and narrow the chances of aggressive nationalism or adventurism among states. The European states in the EU, for instance, are widely viewed as outstanding examples of presenting a peaceful entente for the long-warring, divided rival states of Europe by interlocking them through cooperation and mutual interests, making also the liberal institutionalist theory viable in explaining the outcomes of political and economic interdependence.

Through the privileged place of Turkey in Azerbaijani foreign policy, for instance, Turkey and Azerbaijan signed the Trans-Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline (TANAP) project on 26 June 2012 (Punsmann, 2013: 6). The project assumed transportation of natural gas from the Shah Deniz gas field of Azerbaijan to Europe through Georgia en route to the Turkish eastern Anatolian city of Erzurum and then to the European markets via the Trans-Adriatic Pipeline (TAP) (Tanchum, 2014).³⁸ No prophecy was needed to assume that Russia would have opposed the project, which is projected to additionally pump fossil fuels from Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan in the future. Beginning with the BTC pipeline, Turkey and Azerbaijan began realising projects independently of Russia. The Western view became in favour of the project as both the USA and the EU promoted the project, which would reduce dependency on the Russian supply.

It is deduced from this action taken by Azerbaijan that selling its natural gas to European markets not via the existing Russian pipelines by increasing their capacity but through newly-

³⁸ The project was finalised and inaugurated by a ceremony in the Turkish central Anatolian city of Eskişehir on 12 June 2018. The pipeline began pumping natural gas from the Azerbaijani Shah Deniz 2 gas field to Turkey, and was expected to extend its route to Europe at a later time (see *Hürriyet Daily News*, 2018).

built pipelines via Turkey as a transit country demonstrates the decision to distance Azerbaijan from Russia and rather become closer with Turkey. The Azerbaijani goal of slowly breaking away from the orbit of Russia had been a matter of fact since Heydar Aliyev. For example, Heydar Aliyev, while looking at the most economical options for the transportation of natural gas and oil to the international markets, asserted to former American President Clinton that he was “not a businessman but a politician” and thus he placed more emphasis on the partner in running the projects, rather than on the most economical route of the pipelines, and consequently stated that “the pipelines must traverse Turkey” (quoted by Qasimli, interviewed, 2018). As already noted, this tradition in the course of relations with Turkey continued in the Ilham Aliyev period and Turkey had a natural priority in the hydrocarbon and transportation projects in the region.

Aliyev, through his approach described above, suggested embarking upon the energy projects with Turkey that traverse the Turkish territory, bypassing the options of the pipeline projects through Russian or Armenian territory. In by-passing Iran, too, for transportation of natural gas to the international markets, Azerbaijan set the line of its foreign policy choice in terms of long-term partnering. Against the centuries-long Russian dominance and its southern neighbour Iran, which supports Armenia for fear of secessionism with its large Azerbaijani minority, Turkey came to the fore as a prudent ally in the energy politics of not only Azerbaijan but the whole region.

Given Azerbaijan’s future prospect of sustaining an independent democratic, secular country with an integrated economy in the global economic system, Turkey was not merely an ally that has fraternal ties. The political, economic and social characteristics of Turkey still outweigh Russia and Iran and influence Turkey’s tilt towards Azerbaijan. So much so that this period illustrated that the volume of economic relations in 2015 after the recession of the financial crisis of 2008 and its subsequent years had an upward trend – close to \$3 billion in 2015 (Azstat, 2018). The level of trade turnover never satisfied both the Azerbaijani and Turkish governments, leading both Aliyev and Erdoğan to emphasise the level of economic interaction. The volume of trade turnover between the two could be seen as minimal compared to, for instance, the UK, whose trade turnover with Turkey exceeded \$10 billion in 2015 (TurkStat, 2018). However, the economic size and trade capacity of Azerbaijan makes this justifiable. The main point here lies in the argument that the trade turnover and economic interaction between Turkey and Azerbaijan increased dramatically in comparison with the previous period.

Moreover, Kardas (2014: 5) highlights “Azerbaijan’s resistance to Russian offers and its unequivocal preference for Turkey” and argues that Turkish concerns over the energy security and the European quest to diversify natural gas supplies from the Caspian Sea as an alternative to the Russian supplies created the rationale for cooperation with Azerbaijan. On 26 October 2011, an agreement on an oil refinery plant in the Turkish city of Izmir was signed between Turkey and the state oil company of Azerbaijan (SOCAR). The value of the investment was planned to be \$5 billion, which was thought to be not only the biggest Azerbaijani direct investment in the history of relations between the two states but the biggest foreign direct investment made on one occasion in the history of Turkey. With this investment, Turkey took another step towards becoming an energy hub of Europe as a transit country in the transportation of Central Asian and Azerbaijani oil to Europe (*Hürriyet*, 2011). This investment was important for Turkey as it came in a period of decreasing flow of direct foreign investment in the Turkish economy. The refinery increased the hopes that in the future, Turkmen and Kazakhstani oil and natural gas may be stored and processed.

The interconnected nature of relations between Turkey, Azerbaijan and the EU is important in reflecting the mutual interests between them. Turkey was an intermediary country between Azerbaijan and Europe in the early 1990s. In the studied period, however, Turkey, Azerbaijan and the EU have had common interests in terms of energy relations. More than that, the image of Turkey from the regional outlook as a Western-oriented country with a market economy helped create the potential to make Turkey more attractive in the eyes of Azerbaijani foreign policymakers. This brought about a role for Turkey in the Caucasus and this became more significant with the Turkish foreign policy orientation with diplomatic activism in the studied period.

The role of Turkey in the Caucasus marked another cornerstone in the effort to normalise relations with Armenia. With regard to the alleged 1915 genocide, Erdoğan, through an official announcement, delivered his condolences to “the Armenians who lost their lives in the context of the early 20th century” in 2014 (quoted in Letsch, 2014). An unexpected move from a Turkish leader, after the tumultuous normalisation process previously resulted in a failure, this second attempt to normalise relations with Armenia did no harm to Turco-Azerbaijani relations, nor did it cause any harsh Azerbaijani backlash. In fact, three days after, Aliyev revealed his stance against the announcement by defending Turkey against the then Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan during the EU’s Eastern Partnership meeting in Prague. Sargsyan, denouncing the announcement, reserved much of his speech for the alleged

1915 genocide in the absence of Turkey in the meeting. Aliyev, who was present at the meeting, responded to Sargsyan on behalf of Turkey. In addressing Sargsyan during the meeting, Aliyev stated before giving a comprehensive follow-up answer:

As you know, Turkey is not represented here, and you are taking advantage of this, but I am here and responding to your claims to tell you why the Turkish-Armenian border remains closed. Turkish-Armenian border was closed in April 1993 after the invasion of Kalbajar. Prior to this, the Azerbaijanis, who consisted of 30% of the Nagorno-Karabakh population were displaced. Currently, one-fifth of the Azerbaijani territory is under Armenian occupation (*Hürriyet*, 2014).

Aliyev's answer on Turkey's behalf received sympathy in Turkey, something that was mentioned during the interviews conducted for this thesis.

As well as standing up for Turkey in solidarity, the answer back indicated that there was no sign of an Azerbaijani backlash, which Turkey previously oversaw during the normalisation process. The reciprocal reaction by Aliyev, furthermore, represented a clear example of how the shared Turkic identity helped build a more supportive diplomatic environment for Turkey. The cross-border loyalties between the two states were in favour of Turkish foreign policy on political, economic and diplomatic levels.

In response, Turkey hosted the G-20 summit in 2015, and as the host country, a non-member country could be invited to the G-20 at the host country's discretion. Turkey used this vote for Azerbaijan. Erdoğan stated in a one-to-one press meeting with Aliyev: "We have used our right to choose one non-member country to invite to the G-20 summit for Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan will join the summit as our invitee" (Sputnik News, 2015).

The state identity of Turkey and Azerbaijan allowed creating such diplomatic and thus governmental environment for the two, as has been surveyed so far in the context of the shared Turkic identity. In the meantime, non-governmental people-to-people contacts were influential because the course of the relations was not influenced only by the official state identity but also social 'national identity' of the people. To address this, Track II diplomacy interactions of the two states with third sector organisations will be examined in the following section. For its extensive existence and influence on Turkish policy in the region, one non-governmental organisation will be elaborated in more detail, which is the Gülenist organisation.

3.7 Track II Diplomacy (People-to-People Contacts)

Track I diplomacy is a type of diplomacy that is processed through governmental-level interactions, and has already been covered in many aspects in this thesis for the studied

countries. There is also Track II diplomacy, which is implemented through non-governmental means. Track II diplomacy, termed as such by former American Foreign Office employee Joseph V. Montville, is no alternative to Track I diplomacy but is rather complementary to it. Montville defined Track II diplomacy as the total of non-governmental interactions for the resolution of issues between two or more hostile states or groups of people (Yilmaz, 2007: 43). Of course, there is no hostility between Turkey, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan. However, unofficial contacts between the civil societies of Turkey, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan have played a role in determining the nature of their relations. In addition to this, through its role in Turkish-Azerbaijani relations, Track II diplomacy could be an influential factor in the relations between Turkey and Armenia, although, as discussed previously, this stems from the stalemate relations of Turkey with this country. Turkey's Track II diplomacy in Azerbaijan was strongly influenced by the Gülenist network, which will be explained in the following section.

3.7.1 Track II Diplomacy and the Gülenist Network

On 15 July 2016, Turkey experienced an attempted coup, which left more than 250 people dead and more than 2000 wounded. Almost unanimously in Turkey, the Gülenist movement was held responsible for the attempted coup. Since then the presence of the Gülenist network has become one of the most urgent issues to solve in Turkey. Prior to the coup attempt, the Gülenist network was an influential actor in Turkish foreign policy in the CAC. The network had a huge impact on Turkish foreign policy towards Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and the other Turkic republics, but it is hard to determine exactly when the Gülenist network began to be active in these countries. By the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s, however, the Gülenist network had become active in the business relations of these countries and then their educational enterprises (at all levels of schools and universities). The Gülenist network had an impact on developing Turkey's interaction with Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan and the other Turkic republics. This was because the network utilised Turkic ties with these countries and is associated with the rise of Turkism in these countries after the end of the Soviet Union, making the Gülenist network not merely an Islamic movement. After all, the Gülenist movement had its roots in the Turkic republics in the CAC as it “developed alongside the emergence of new nations that populations that spoke either Turkish or another language in the Turkic linguistic family” and Central Asia became the “first laboratory for the Gülen movement” to expand its influence (Balci, 2014b).

The Gülenist movement came into existence in the 1960s through the sermons of the Muslim cleric Fethullah Gülen, an Islamic preacher and imam. His sect started in the Aegean Turkish city of Izmir and then spread around the world. The attributes of the movement were for a long time a matter of discussion in Turkey on the grounds of whether it was an Islamic movement or merely a civil society group. The movement was also seen as a threat to the laic attribute of the state, leading Gülen to relocate to a large mansion in Pennsylvania in 1999. Seemingly, the movement thrust itself forward in disseminating Turkish culture and language, inter-faith dialogue and the fight against poverty, but it was later condemned as an interest-driven, religion-abusing organisation (Timeturk, 2018).

The Gülenist network was previously known as the ‘Gülen movement’, and its aim was to foster intercultural and inter-faith dialogue among nations and communities. The network began its activities under cover of a religious order in Turkey around the cult of Fethullah Gülen, disseminating the *Risale-i Nur* books of Turkish-Kurdish theologian Bediüzzaman Said Nursi. The Gülen movement subsequently transformed into an international network of business and educational enterprises, opening schools in 160 countries worldwide. The leader of the network, Gülen, born in 1941, earned fame with his preaching of *Risale-i Nur* across Turkey. Gülen became a celebrated figure, establishing his own religious order in the 1970s (Bayrakli and Ulutas, 2017: 13). The activities of the movement became most visible when Gülen, in his writings published in *Sızıntı*, the main periodical magazine of the Gülen network, encouraged his businesspeople followers to open schools to recruit promising students from underprivileged backgrounds (Timeturk, 2018).

With the help of the shared Turkic ethnonational identity, Track II diplomacy as a whole became influential in Turkey’s relations with the Turkic republics after the end of the Cold War. In these non-governmental interactions, the Gülenist network bore additional importance. The Gülenist network influenced Turkish foreign policymaking through their business, education and cultural activities in the Turkic republics until the failed coup on 15 July 2016 and subsequent designation as a terrorist organisation in Turkey as the FETÖ (*Fethullahçı Terör Örgütü*, Fethullah Terrorist Organisation).

The FETÖ was also brought into Turkey’s Red Book (*Kırmızı Kitap*), which is regarded as the main foreign policy guide of the country. The FETÖ was active in various spheres, such as banking and finance, trade and cultural diplomacy. However, education became the most important of these fields. Starting from the 1980s, the network attached importance to

education in Turkey and abroad with the help of domestic political-bureaucratic support and, more importantly, international support. It was later noticed that this ambition derived from three main motives. The first was to recruit new members to the organisation, who would then help lobby for the network. The second motive was to earn legitimacy both in Turkey and abroad under cover of their educational activities. The third motive was to gain financial power through their educational enterprises in Turkey and across the world (Police Academy of Turkey, 2017: 25).

The beginning of the premiership of Özal in 1983 became a milestone for the Gülen movement. Obstacles to opening new schools were lifted during this period. The first school was opened as ‘Yamanlar College’ in Izmir. The number of schools dramatically increased and became an attraction point for the children of the conservative-liberal elite originating mostly from Central Anatolia. This growth in education then skyrocketed when the Gülenists noticed the huge interest in the country because of its *dershane* or university preparatory centres, leading them to establish country-wide university preparatory centres (Timeturk, 2018).

It is apparent that contemporary international politics is manifested by soft rather than by hard power, making the realist school of IR less relevant after the Cold War. In asserting soft power, not conventional or nuclear arsenal but the notions of culture, identity and commonalities became effectual. Like many other states, Turkey was inclined to operationalise its soft power abroad. Turkish foreign policymakers discovered and relied on soft power, and the Gülenist network had initial governmental support in Turkey. Media, as one of the most important elements of soft power, occupied a significant place in the organisation of the FETÖ. The recent media activities of the network in Turkey and abroad served the ends of the Gülenist network on an international scale (Olcekci, 2018: 427). The NGOs and media organisations of the Gülenist network capitalised on this soft power, leading the way to the failed coup of 15 July.

In these circumstances, education became the main soft power vehicle of the Gülenist movement, providing the principal expansion by their schools that their members established abroad. The member businesspeople of the network abroad were influential, but this remained subordinate to the ‘Turkish schools’ founded abroad. According to one intelligence report of Turkey, the Gülenist schools existed in more than one hundred countries in five

different continents with 767 diploma-awarding schools (SETA, 2019). Most of the Gülenist schools were founded in Central Asia, the Caucasus and Africa in the 1990s.

Using these schools as means of soft power abroad, the schools were opened in some countries before a Turkish diplomatic mission arrived. Following the advent of these schools, Turkish businesspeople came to do business largely in developing countries of the CAC and Africa (Kasapoglu, 2016a). The Gülenist schools mainly enrolled the children of political and economic elites in every country they in which operated. Seemingly, the schools brought in Turkish identity to countries that are foreign to Turkey culturally and geographically. The Turkic identity of Turkey was used by the organisation in the Turkic republics, and their schools became determining actors of Turkish policy in the CAC. These schools helped an Istanbul Turkish-speaking, Turkish-TV-channel-watching elite to emerge; these were to replace the Russian-speaking older elites in the Turkic republics of the CAC. This could be regarded as one of the reasons for the governmental and public sympathy toward these schools in Turkey.

The former Turkish ambassador for Azerbaijan, Ünal Çeviköz, said that the rise of the Gülenist network through opening schools and developing business links in the CAC and Africa occurred after the fall of the Soviet Union. According to Çeviköz:

The traditional method of Turkey's interaction with a country was to open an embassy first and then to establish and develop relations via the embassy, followed by the advent of civil society and business organisations in that country. This tradition was reversed [by the Gülenist movement and their schools and businesspeople], and the businesspeople and the schools, which can be seen as a part of business affairs, started to arrive in new countries before a Turkish embassy. Many of these countries had no Turkish diplomatic mission at the time and the embassies were opened after the Gülenist enterprises in these countries. The schools, business and third-sector enterprises of the Gülenist network smoothed the way for the Turkish government to open embassies because the members of the Gülenist network had links with the political elites of these countries (quoted in Kasapoglu, 2016a).

The Gülenist network was supported by the subsequent AKP governments in its role abroad in acting as a source of Turkish soft power. This continued until 2011 when the divergence between the Turkish government and the Gülenist network began. A leak emerged detailing that the Gülen network had asked Erdoğan to take on 150 MPs, sympathisers of Fethullah Gülen and his network, before the general election of 2011. Erdoğan rejected this and the conflict between the AKP government and the FETÖ intensified when a governmental decision was taken to close down all university preparation centres in Turkey in November 2013. The closure of these centres naturally had the potential to cut down the human sources of the network they provided. This led the FETÖ adherent prosecutors in the judiciary (called 'parallel state' members to denote Gülen sympathisers in the governmental bodies) to start

filing a number of lawsuits against aides of Erdoğan and some supporters of the AKP on 17 and 25 December 2013 (Tapan, 2013).

The Gülenist movement had gained human and financial resources by using their schools abroad. For example, the children of elite families in Kenya studied at a school known as the ‘Light Academy’. The annual tuition fees of the school varied between \$3 thousand and \$10 thousand, depending on the options of a local and an international curriculum, age group and boarding (Kasapoglu, 2016a). According to the French researcher Gabrielle Angey, who researched the Gülenist schools in Africa, the Gülenist entrepreneurs had two motives: “To disseminate their religious mission and [to create] space for better relations with African countries. With these schools, new market opportunities were created” (Kasapoglu, 2016b). Angey stated this regarding the Gülenist schools in Africa, but the Gülenist schools in the CAC had the same mission. The schools helped to expand the political, economic and social power of the Gülenist network because, opened across the world, they were used for lobbying and for intelligence activities of the network (Duran, 2017). Official demands from many countries came to Turkey to close down the schools following the attempted coup of 15 July.

As an example of the Turkic privilege of the FETÖ, five well-known Gülenist universities founded abroad and apart from Georgia, the rest were founded in the Turkic republics of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan. Among these Turkic republics, Azerbaijan was the country that the FETÖ organised similar to its organisation in Turkey and succeeded swift progress in increasing its presence, but Azerbaijan applied anti-terrorism measures against the organisation after the attempted coup of 15 July (Police Academy of Turkey, 2018: 69, 70).

3.7.2 Track II Diplomacy Between Turkey and Azerbaijan

As is the case with other spheres, cultural interaction between Turkey and Azerbaijan dates back to the pre-Cold War period. Through the initiative of Mehmet Emin Resulzade, who migrated to Ankara in 1947, the Azerbaijan Culture Association was founded in Ankara on 1 February 1949 (Azerbaycan Kültür Derneği, 2019). The Association became an influential ground for Azerbaijani and Turkist activism for liberation and independence from Soviet rule. The association also sought to gain Turkish support for Azerbaijani transnationalism. Starting from April 1952, the Association published a periodical magazine that covered the issues of all the Turkic peoples in the Soviet Union, calling them “captive Turks”, a term most used by Turkish nationalists before the end of the Soviet Union. The Association

became the voice of the Azerbaijani émigré in Turkey, creating a diasporic group in relation to the independence of Azerbaijan. The mission of the independence and freedom of Azerbaijan was adopted by the Association, which was actively involved in the process leading to the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the independence of Azerbaijan on 18 October 1991. The Association is still active as a centre for the Azerbaijani diaspora in Ankara, organising remembrance days for the establishment of the ADR and the invasion of Baku by the Russian and Armenian forces on 28 May 1918, and by the Red Army on 27 April 1920, as well as the Khojaly Massacre of 1992 (Turan, 2016: 1182).

There is also the Turkey-Azerbaijan Association (TÜRKAZDER), which was established on 31 July 2010. The opening ceremony of the Association occurred at the Turkish Centre for International Relations and Strategic Analysis, a think-tank in Ankara with close links with the MHP. The Association was founded by the former MP from the MHP Sinan Oğan, who claimed to make this NGO a centre for lobbying for Azerbaijan in every province of Turkey and crucial capitals of the world, as well as stating that:

The Association will work primarily on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the Khojaly massacre and encountering the Armenian theses in the world to empower the ‘one nation, two state’ notion of relations. Inspired by the words of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, who said that ‘Azerbaijan’s happiness is our happiness and Azerbaijan’s sorrow is our sorrow’, the late President Heydar Aliyev’s ‘one nation, two states and Ilham Aliyev’s ‘one nation cannot have two diasporas’, the Association aims to coordinate the diaspora activities of Azerbaijan and Turkey. Moreover, we aim to coordinate the diaspora activities of the Turkic world (quoted in Zeynebiye, 2010).

Although both associations had ambitious rhetoric and agendas to fill the third-sector sphere of relations, it is evident that this did not translate into a strong pressure group in Turkey. The civil society groups in Turkey were far from becoming influential stakeholders in foreign policymaking processes. These associations mainly focused on the remembrance days of important events in the history of Azerbaijan and encountering Armenian diaspora activities. The expectation from the Turkish government, in this sense, was support in its foreign policy for Azerbaijani issues such as the Nagorno-Karabakh and remembrance of the Khojaly massacre, rather than fostering relations in the economic sphere. However, these NGOs helped to increase interaction between Turkey and Azerbaijan on a people-to-people level. Among the civil society presence of Turkey in Azerbaijan, the FETÖ schools and its university along with business and cultural foundations such as the Turkish Confederation of Businessmen and Industrialists (known as TUSKON) acted as the Turkish civil society groups in Azerbaijan. When the strife started between the Turkish government and the FETÖ

in late 2013, the influence of these organisations reduced in favour of a better Turkish civil society presence in the country.

Azerbaijan was reluctant to take measures against the FETÖ prior to 15 July, but following the failed coup all activities of the FETÖ were banned in the country. Subsequent to the crackdown on the FETÖ in Azerbaijan, Fethullah Gülen threatened ‘to dump [İlham Aliyev] in the Caspian Sea’. This became a warning about how far the FETÖ could go, as well as the ongoing power of this network in the press, business sector, bureaucracy, police and military organisations. The FETÖ is still active in sabotaging relations and creating crises, along with a defamation campaign against Aliyev. The influence of the FETÖ is affected by the Azerbaijani diaspora in Russia and the FETÖ members in this diaspora pressurising the Azerbaijani government (Yilmaz, 2019).

After the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991, a political and ideological vacuum in the Turkic republics emerged and Turkey came to the fore through its commonalities with those republics to fill this vacuum. This period coincided with the opening of the Gülenist movement abroad, capitalising on these commonalities to become active, initially in the Turkic republics. At the end of 1991, the education enterprises and companies of the FETÖ became active first in Turkic Central Asia, followed by schools and companies established in the Caucasus and the Balkans, and then in some other Asian and African countries. Exploiting a political and social vacuum, the Gülenists’ first school opened abroad was the Nakhchivan Turkish High School (Timeturk, 2018). The first Gülenist university, Qafqaz University, was established in Baku in 1993.

After the failed coup attempt, however, the Azerbaijani government gave full support to Turkey and closed down or nationalised all Gülenist schools. Qafqaz University in Baku was acquired by Baku Higher Oil School and the contracts of 50 Turkish Gülenist academics from the university were not renewed (Sputnik News, 2016). This was seen as a show of solidarity with Turkey after the incident of 15 July. Moreover, the private ANS TV channel of Azerbaijan attempted to do an interview with Fethullah Gülen after the failed coup attempt and faced temporary closure by Azerbaijan’s National Television and Radio Council. In the briefing of the Council, the justification was presented by a statement that the TV channel was temporarily closed “to prevent mischievous activities toward the strategic partnership with Turkey and promotion of terrorism” (Al Jazeera, 2016). As a whole, Azerbaijan cooperated fully with Turkey to crack down on the FETÖ after the failed coup that gave

Turkey an upper hand in countering FETÖ activities worldwide. Aliyev sent a letter to Erdoğan expressing the condolences of the Azerbaijani people and their enthusiasm to cooperate against the FETÖ.

The letter regarding the failed coup attempt read:

I have followed the turn of events last night with great sorrow and discomfort [...] This is a misdeed against Turkish society, its will and democratic choice. I am sure that your measures with the unity of the society and the administration will stabilise the situation; shortly democratic governance will resume (quoted in 15 Temmuz Şehitleri, 2019).

In contrast to the responses of many states against the failed coup, Azerbaijan showed swift support during and after the attempt. The Azerbaijan representative of the FETÖ, known as the ‘Azerbaijan imam’ of the network, was arrested and stood trial shortly after 15 July (*Sabah*, 2016). It can be concluded that although there is a lack of strong civil society interaction between the two countries apart from what has been elaborated above, the governmental-level sympathy toward Turkey determined the course of relations.

In the social sphere, the Azerbaijani diasporic groups in Turkey were far from being influential on Turkish policy in the Caucasus. The Turkish citizens of Azerbaijani descent mostly reside in the eastern Anatolia, most notably the border city of Iğdır bordering the Azerbaijani exclave of Nakhchivan. In Ankara, no prominent Azerbaijani civil society organisation exists apart from the Azerbaijan Culture Association. This shortage of civil society groups in Turkey and Azerbaijan indicated that the state identity of both countries was influential leading to put more emphasis on governmental interactions.

3.8 Conclusion

Since the outset of Azerbaijani independence, Turkey has set its sights on close relations with geopolitically strategic Azerbaijan. Among the newly independent Turkic states at the end of the Soviet Union, Azerbaijan was the most developed. In addition to this, the hydrocarbon resources of Azerbaijan offered energy-hungry Turkey an opportunity with its newly-found brethren nation in the Caucasus.

The approach Azerbaijan adopted towards Turkey has usually been implemented in the teeth of Russia and Iran. With its persistent perception of a centre-periphery, Russia, with its ‘near abroad’ approach perceives Azerbaijan as its proclaimed backyard. Iran tends to oppose a strong Azerbaijan due to its domestic sensitivities because of its large minority of Azerbaijani descent. In this setting, Turkey enjoys the advantage of becoming a craved ally, endorsed by

the underpinnings of common ties with Azerbaijan compared to Russia and Iran. The AKP era of Turkish foreign policy towards Azerbaijan made no difference in capitalising on the common Turkic ethnonational and linguistic characteristics with Azerbaijan.

Turkish foreign policy, accordingly, demonstrated a close and cooperative approach with Azerbaijan encouraged by the 'one nation, two states' notion of relations. Turkey, however, remained committed to its westward outlook in foreign policy – with a strong emphasis on relations with the EU in regard to membership and the USA from 2002 to 2007. The end of the AKP's first term under the premiership of Erdoğan witnessed an attempted normalisation process with Armenia that negatively interrupted relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan. The normalisation efforts of Turkey tested its relations with Azerbaijan to the limit. The blow to relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan stretched into the second term. During the normalisation process, voices were raised to end the sentimental side of Turkish-Azerbaijani relations to preclude a sentimental backlash from the Azerbaijani side and Azerbaijani pressure in Turkish foreign policy. Despite the scares of the normalisation process, Turkish-Azerbaijani relations survived intact after a series of reactive measures from the Azerbaijanis.

The second term of the AKP from 2007 to 2011 signalled a radical shift in foreign policy. The Eurasian shift in the second term marked an increasing Turkish interest in the Caucasus. Azerbaijan was centred on the Turkish Caucasian policy because of its very workable characteristics in terms of diplomacy. During the tenure of President Gül, the directional focus of Turkish foreign policy increasingly moved from the West to Eurasia. Drawing on personal relationships with the leaders of Azerbaijan and other Turkic states, Gül paved the way for a further Turkish Eurasia-leaning foreign policy. The AKP's second term also became a witness to newly-established international organisations among the Turkic states bringing Turkey and Azerbaijan even closer.

Turkish foreign policy in the third term of the AKP from 2011 to 2015 manifested a more visible dominance of Eurasia. Turco-Azerbaijani relations gained momentum while Turkey-EU relations suffered slow progress. The importance of the Caucasus in Turkish foreign policy increased and pushed Erdoğan to release a statement offering his condolences to Armenia for the lives lost during World War I. A gesture aimed at normalising relations with Armenia did not have the expected result. Following the announcement of Erdoğan, however, Azerbaijan showed no sign of a negative reaction, which proved that a mutual understanding

was achieved on the matter. The trust-building nature of the relations with Azerbaijan has been markedly sustained.

To sum up, the position of Azerbaijan in Turkish foreign policy is special and hard to be explained by realist assumptions of material considerations. The shared Turkic state identities of the two were coupled with the rising Eurasian identity of Turkey after 2007. The changing foreign policy identity of Turkey with a rising Eurasian facet contributed to the relations with Azerbaijan. As socially constructed identities determine the interests of states in a constructivist sense, Turkey's Turkic state identity and emerging Eurasian identity projected Turkey's interests in cooperation with Azerbaijan in the studied period.

This special relationship stems from not merely a utilitarian geopolitical choice but a mutual sense of nationhood that foresees their future interests in the partnership. This suggests that as one of the components of a nation is a single common future prospect, Turkey and Azerbaijan have indicated a common future through their understanding of 'one nation' in the context of their Turkic identity. The national allegiance between the two states creates a sort of safe space in bilateral and multilateral relations and it seems that the perceived safe space fosters cooperation and provides advantages for Turkey. As for the aggregated cooperation, the common Turkic nationalism became facilitative. Turkicness of Turkey remained intact from 2002 to 2015, though hybridised with a pro-Islamic facet. Moreover, a Eurasian state identity emerged to define Turkish policy in the Caucasus and Azerbaijan was articulated in this identity-interest formation, making Turkey a more advantageous country in the region.

CHAPTER 4

KAZAKHSTAN IN TURKISH FOREIGN

POLICY (2002-2015)

4.1 Introduction

Turkey's policy towards Kazakhstan has been based on Turkic identity since the independence of Kazakhstan. But as noted before, an early unrealistic excitement existed in relations between the two until the end of the 1990s (Kuscu, 2015: 90). The sentimental approach to the relations in this period was far from pragmatic and based rather on Turkey's early excitement in finding a new space of diplomatic outreach after the end of the Cold War. The contemporary period of Turkish foreign policy became more rational in regard to policymaking towards Kazakhstan.

The two countries share a common Turkic identity that created natural proximity in the relations. This chapter focuses upon the shared Turkic identity between the countries and its impact upon the bilateral relations. Since the independence of Kazakhstan, the common ties with Turkey have usually been regarded as an advantage for Turkey in relation-building with Kazakhstan (Winrow, 1992: 101–102; Gaber, 2011: 138). It is argued that the role of the shared Turkic identity in bilateral relations was an active element affecting the course of relations in the studied period. Turkic identity was utilised by the foreign policymakers of Turkey to extend Turkey's outreach to Central Asia, and likewise, Turkey's interest in Kazakhstan was instrumental in the balance of power in the foreign policy of Kazakhstan. Moreover, Turkic identity was also an element to be functional in the domestic politics of Kazakhstan for its nation-building and social cohesion. The formation of Turkic identity and its revitalisation in Kazakhstan was associated with its relations with Turkey. The shared Turkic identity with Turkey provided advantages to Turkey's policy goals in Central Asia and this phenomenon was examined from the prism of constructivist interpretation of identity-interest formation in the bilateral relations of the two Turkic countries.

4.2 Emergence of State and Identity of Kazakhstan

There is a common agreement among scholars that the Kazakhs were a separate ethnic community as early as the fifteenth century. Based on common Turkic communions, the Kazakhs lived a nomadic and tribal life (Kesici, 2011: 36). Explaining the nomadic history, it was discovered that the name 'Kazakh' was first used in a written source in 1215, in a dictionary of the Mamluk Sultanate of Egypt. In this dictionary, 'Kazakh' was defined as "free, nomadic" (Komekov, 2007: 50). It was, however, the case that the Kazakhs formed small tribal statelets called 'khanate'.

Forming the first Khanate in 1465 in Central Asia, the Kazakhs formed three different tribal divisions as Hordes: The ‘Great Horde (*Uly zhuz*)’ in the south of today’s Kazakhstan; the ‘Middle Horde (*Orta zhuz*)’ in the north of Kazakhstan; and the ‘Small Horde (*Kishi zhuz*)’ in the west (Kesici, 2011: 36–37). Thus, before the advent of capitalism and industrialisation, a sense of ethnonational consciousness existed at a tribal level. However, as Gellner (1983: 8–18) calls it, it was an ‘agrarian society’.

For military defence, the Kazakh tribes depended on Russian military power. But then the Russian army encroached into the Kazakh steppes to secure trade routes in Central Asia. This was followed by a flow of Russian settlers into the Kazakh steppes that caused the displacement of the ethnic Kazakhs (Cummings, 2005: 15). The interaction with Russian and European newcomers to the region led to the formation of the ‘Alash movement’, which was formed by elite Kazakh nationalists in reaction to the Russian conquest with Turkic and Islamic elements of identity (Cummings, 2005: 15). The Alash movement organised a nationalist rebellion against the Russians in 1905 and, following the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, the movement turned into a political party as the Alash Orda, forming a short-lived autonomous republic between 1917 and 1920. The capital of Alash Orda was Orenburg, which remains within the borders of today’s Russia (Dave, 2007: 42). The Russian aggression toward the ethnic Kazakhs may be seen as an impactful factor that ignited the Turkic belonging of the Kazakhs.

As the civil war between the Bolsheviks and the monarchists of Russia, which began in 1917, ended in 1920, the Alash Orda was incorporated into Russia and became a part of the Kyrgyz Soviet Socialist Republic (Kesici, 2011: 39). With the Alash Orda movement, Kazakhstan became the only Central Asian country to form a nationalist movement prior to its Soviet period (Roy, 2000: 191). Moreover, the national consciousness of Kazakhstan is associated with the Soviet experience of the ethnic Kazakhs after gaining socialist republic status from Joseph Stalin and forming a separate socialist republic in 1936 (Kesici, 2011: 40).

The mainstream accounts on Kazakh identity refer to the Soviet experience of the Kazakhs that contributed to the creation of a distinct Kazakh identity and paved the way to easier nation-building after the dissolution of the Soviet Union (Dave, 2007: 4–5). Although the nomadic lifestyle of the ethnic Kazakhs before the Soviet period prevented them from being an industrialised modern society in tandem with the Western-style nationhood, the Alash Orda movement reflects an earlier national consciousness among the ethnic Kazakhs.

The ethnic Kazakhs had a settled life through forced collectivisation and sedentarisation that enabled them to aggregate the ‘virgin lands’ of Kazakhstan into agricultural production during the Soviet epoch from the 1940s to 1960s (Cummings, 2003: 143). Due to a Soviet-inflicted famine in 1930, the Kazakh population set back by some two million. In addition to this, a series of mass Slav immigration to Kazakhstan following the collectivisation in the Soviet period, the ethnic Kazakhs comprised only 39.5% of the population in 1989 (Cummings, 2003: 145). Mustafa (interviewed, 2018) argued that the population deficiency of the ethnic Kazakhs became a determining factor that led to the formation of a stronger national consciousness, which created a greater inclination towards nationalism over Turkic ethnonationalism than among the Turkish and Azerbaijanis in the early days of their independence.

Kazakhstan gained independence from the former Soviet Union on 16 December 1991. The flag of the state represented the identity of its people. The Turkic facet of Kazakhstan was manifested in the turquoise blue colour of the flag. In contrast to the Azerbaijani and Turkish flags, the flag of Kazakhstan had no crescent-like symbol or green colour, which indicated that religion played a less important role for the state (Kesici, 2011: 47). Kazakhstan is reliant on secular governance because only “one-third of the people claim an Islamic heritage” (Onis, 1995: 67). Given the Islamic references that Turkey historically and traditionally has, the close relations are less reliant on religious grounds and more on the ethnonational basis. Secularism, as in the case of Azerbaijan, plays a relatively less important role than the Turkic background between Turkey and Kazakhstan.

Due to the population drawback in the early days of independence, the state adopted a more civic form of nationalism to avoid a potential separatist movement of the Slavic groups concentrated in the north of the country. Along with this civic nationalism, ethnic nationalism was apparent in the nation-building of the country, showing attributes of what Brubaker (1996: 63, 108) calls a ‘nationalizing state’ or ‘nationalizing nationalism’ due to its inclination toward ethnonational promotion with ethnonational heterogeneity. The Slavic groups tended to identify with a civic identity of ‘Kazakhstani’ while most of the ethnic Kazakhs preferred to identify with the ‘Kazakh’ ethnic identity (Aitymbetov, Toktarov and Ormakhanova, 2015: 5).

Although today’s Kazakhstan sustains a majority ethnic Kazakh population, owing to mass Slav emigration from the country following independence, a fear of a Russian rebellion in the

still Russian-majority north remains a possibility in spite of its 'limited' capacity (Diener, 2015: 484). Although the Turkic Kazakh identity of the country is promoted in order to make it a distinct nation, the multi-ethnic structure dictated that the leadership of Kazakhstan should be wary and balance the Turkic and Slavic factions of the country. To this end, the leadership of Kazakhstan has been utilising its relations with Turkey in a context of soft-balancing policy for both its domestic and foreign policies. In fact, Kazakhstan's foreign policy is centred on Turkey and Turkic identity to escape a mono-track foreign policy that relies solely on Russia (Nurgaliyeva, 2016: 101–103).

The reliance of Kazakhstan on Turkic identity was seen in the discourse of Nazarbayev, such that Russian President Putin declared that “the greatest geopolitical catastrophe” in the twentieth century was “the collapse of the Soviet Union” in 2005 (BBC News, 2005). Overlooking the fact that two world wars occurred in the same century, Putin also asserted that “there had never been a country called Kazakhstan” prior to 1991 and the country “was purely the product of the current president [Nazarbayev]” (quoted in Traynor, 2014). Nazarbayev was up in arms about these contentions and asserted that the Kazakhs had always been in the same territory where Kazakhstan is now located and added: “Kazakhs are the true descendants of Huns, Göktürks, the Golden Horde and the Kazakh Khanate in Turkestan before the Russian conquest” (quoted in Yalinkilicli, 2017). Since the implications of Putin's comment concerning Ukraine as a quasi-state remained fresh in the minds before the Russian interventions against the territorial integrity of Ukraine, such a claim by the Russian leadership against Kazakhstan raised the question of whether Kazakhstan is the next potential target of the post-Cold War Russian irredentism (Lo, 2015: 101). The reference to the Turkic roots that is seen in the words of Nazarbayev above indicates the Kazakh identity, which relies on a primordial Turkic identification.

The nation-building of Kazakhstan has been built on its Turkicness, mainly constructed after its independence. Returning to its Turkic origins, the country recreated a Turkic state in the middle of Central Asia steppes. In doing this, there was no diplomatic experience of the country. Regarding this, President Nazarbayev stated that:

We had no tradition of foreign policy. The duties of the Foreign Affairs Ministry of Kazakhstan were far away from diplomacy. Think about a state facing the hardest issues and it had no diplomatic mission and diplomatic experience, adding up to the lack of traditions and qualified staff (quoted in Tokaev, 2007: 186).

The creation of the statehood and conditions of the geography along with historical background required also different constructions of identity.

Though the most visible, Turkic identity did not become the only element of state/national identity of Kazakhstan. A Eurasian identity was articulated into its state identity and along with this, a Slavic facet also embraced for social cohesion. As a bridging country between Europe and Asia, the Kazakhstani state identified with Eurasianism. Moreover, the country refused the realist perceptions of the Cold War and became the only country that denuclearised itself voluntarily by transferring all its Soviet-era nuclear weapons in Semipalatinsk to Russia in the early years for its independence. Significant importance attached to inter-state cooperation and mutual-understanding and from its independence on, Kazakhstan initiated a number of intergovernmental organisations, such as the CIS, which was founded in Almaty in 1992 (Tokaev, 2007: 194). Cordial relations built with its neighbours; Russia, China and the other bordering Turkic republics.

4.3 Turkic Identity and the Course of Relations Until 2002

As a land of superlatives – the biggest landlocked country in the world and the largest in Central Asia, as well as being home to over 120 nationalities – Kazakhstan gained its independence together with 14 other fellow ex-Soviet states in a volatile political landscape (Aitymbetov, Toktarov and Ormakhanova, 2015: 2). Fourteen minutes after Kazakhstan declared independence, Turkey recognised it as an independent and sovereign state with a phone call from Özal to Nazarbayev (Kara and Yesilot, 2011: 241; Mukhamedjanov, 2011: 224). Moreover, the first ambassador, who presented a letter of trust to Nazarbayev, was the Turkish diplomat Argun Özpay and the first ambassador of Kazakhstan was the Kazakh ambassador to Ankara (Ametbek, 2015: 133). Turkey was the first country to recognise Kazakhstani independence and the Turkish recognition after minutes of the declaration of independence typified the Turkish approach towards the newly emerged Turkic republics of the CAC.

The Kazakhs as a sovereign nation rose from being a meek nomadic community of ‘*Homo Sovieticus*’ to a Turkic nation occupying more territory than the rest of the Turkic states combined (Schatz, 2000: 74). In an interview in 2003, Nazarbayev commented that “[referring to the statehood, not the nationhood] [t]here was no such thing as Kazakhstan” and accepted that Kazakhstan was “just a chunk of the Soviet Union” (quoted in Pope, 2005: 127). The traumatic Soviet experience of the Kazakhs with famine, forced deportation, collectivisation and enforced socialist internationalism for seven decades diminished the national consciousness of the ethnic Kazakhs. Internationalism, meanwhile, remained a

legacy to modern Kazakhstan and turned into an instrument of social cohesion (Schatz, 2000: 73).

The national consciousness in Kazakhstan was created by top-down nation-building that demonstrated Turkic, Slavic and internationalist elements all together. The long-serving president of Kazakhstan, Nazarbayev, was seen as the main actor in the nation-building endeavour of the country. Known as *Aksakal* ('white beard' to imply 'wise elder person' among the Turkic communities) in the Turkic republics, Nazarbayev became a figure who is hailed as a wise Turkic leader in Turkic circles, especially in Turkey.

There is a difference in perception of how Kazakhstan is seen in the world. In the West, the country is usually seen as a vehicle to avoid Russian dominance in energy projects in the East-West energy corridor, as well as its authoritarian and anti-democratic attributes and poor human rights record. The British mockumentary figure 'Borat', who was portrayed by the British actor Sacha Baron Cohen to tell the story of a Kazakh journalist travelling to the USA, is a classic example of the Western perception of Kazakhstan. Moreover, Kazakhstan was made the first episode of the BBC's three-episode TV programme 'Dictatorland', depicting the country as a pure dictatorial regime.³⁹

Contrary to the Western views on Kazakhstan, the country is mainly seen sympathetically as a friendly co-ethnic country in Turkey, and President Nazarbayev as a heroic figure who recreated a Turkic nation in Central Asia from the ashes of the Soviet Union, very similar to the perceptions of Atatürk. As the president of the country since independence, Nazarbayev is similar to Atatürk in terms of the nation-building process of his country. Nazarbayev highlights how the urgent need for nation-building emerged after independence:

I had to build a country, to establish an army, our own police, our internal life, everything from road to the constitution. I had to change the minds of the people 180 degrees, from totalitarian regime to freedom, from state property to private property. Nobody wanted to understand that. My comrades from the communist party were against me. I had to train myself too (quoted in Pope, 2005: 127).

Following the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Kazakhstan embarked on a swift nation/state- building. The Kazakh nation-building was akin to Atatürk's style of nation-building as both focused on the primordial Turkic history (Turkic Fatherland of Central Asia) in their national identity. It is no secret that Nazarbayev is an admirer of Atatürk as he likens himself to Atatürk due to the conundrums that he encountered during the nation-building period (*Sabah*, 2009). Kazakhstan is the only Central Asian country where an Atatürk statue

³⁹ The other two episodes cover Belarus and Tajikistan.

exists in a central square of a capital. Indeed, from embarking on creating new capitals⁴⁰ to the revolutionary language reforms, Atatürk and Nazarbayev resemble each other in their leadership style. The Turkification policy in the early republican days of Turkey is also identical to the “Kazakhisation” policy of the early days of independent Kazakhstan (Melvin, 1993: 208). In the words of Nazarbayev:

I respect Mustafa Kemal Atatürk very much and appreciate him. When my country gained its independence, one of the first books I read was about Atatürk’s life and his reforms. We made a statue for this great person in one of the most beautiful places in Astana (quoted in Ametbek, 2017a: 100).

As regards the admiration shown toward Atatürk by Nazarbayev and other Turkic leaders of Central Asia, Lipovsky (1996: 212) points out a “natural affinity for the Kemalist form of democracy: controlled and directed, as it was from above” and also “Turkey’s ethnic, linguistic and religious closeness” to Kazakhstan. Indeed, the societal characteristics of Kazakhstan as a Central Asian nation are similar to the characteristics of Turkish society.

In terms of characteristics, however, Kazakhstan is not as close as Azerbaijan is to Turkey. The Turkish and Azerbaijanis are from the same Oghuz tribal branch of the Turkic family tree, whereas the Kazakhs are of Kipchak origin. The linguistic difference, compared to Azerbaijan, is far more distinct between the Turkish and Kazakh languages. In addition to this, the Kazakhs are the most Russophone among the independent Turkic states. Russian is still being used in bureaucracy and education, making the Russian language the *lingua franca* of the country for communication between the ethnic Kazakhs and the other ethnic groups.

Kazakhstan announced independence as the last socialist republic to break away from the Soviet Union for political and material reasons, such as its long border with Russia, its economic interdependence with Russia and the large ethnic Russian community in its northern regions in the run-up to the demise of the Soviet Union (Dave, 2007: 122–123). With a view to pragmatic utilisation of the Soviet legacy, Kazakhstan, in contrast to the other post-Soviet republics cursing their Soviet past, is reconciled with its Soviet background and even utilises it as one of the unifier forces of the country through placing an emphasis on the shared history between the ethnic Kazakhs and Slavic minorities (Ametbek, 2017b: 75). Kazakhstan, apart from Kyrgyzstan, is the only member Central Asian and also the Turkic state of the Russian-dominated Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU)⁴¹, as the rest of the

⁴⁰ Atatürk moved the capital from Istanbul to Ankara in October 1923 and Nazarbayev moved the capital of Kazakhstan from Almaty to Astana in December 1997, six years after independence.

⁴¹ Whose members are Kazakhstan, Russia, Armenia, Belarus and Kyrgyzstan.

Central Asian Turkic states and Azerbaijan have reduced the sphere of Russian influence since the end of the Cold War (Lo, 2015: 113).

The closeness between the Turkish and Kazakh languages resemble the proximity between the Germanic languages of Swedish and German (Robins, 1993: 607). The Turkic roots of both nations, at least at the governmental level, underpin the Turkish and Kazakh national identities. Prior to the recent period, the Ottomans and Kazakhs were also close in terms of religious proximity. For instance, Arminius Vámbéry, the famous nineteenth-century traveller of Central Asia, says that the three Turkic Khanates of Central Asia had political relations with the Ottoman Empire along with “different kindred elements with which it is connected by the bond of common language, religion and history”, mentioning a geography stretching from the Adriatic to China (Vambéry, 1864: 435). Turkey, then under the administration of the Ottoman state, secured prime links at least in terms of religion, i.e. Islam. The shared Turkic identity of Turkey and Kazakhstan and the historical ties with the Ottoman Empire in the past are seen as being of prime importance in Turkey’s interaction with Kazakhstan. Turkey’s ties with the West also became instrumental in playing an ‘intermediary’ role in bringing Kazakhstan into political and economic contact with the Western bloc after the end of the Cold War (Lipovsky, 1996: 221).

Relations between Turkey and Kazakhstan are closest among the Central Asian Turkic republics. The primordial Turkic identification by the Kazakh nation-building on the one hand, and Turkey’s endeavour to break its post-Cold War isolation by close relations with the Turkic republics on the other, coincided with close engagement soon after the independence of Kazakhstan. The level of relations hitherto has been higher than among the other Turkic republics in Central Asia. The two republics share a bridging role at the crossroads of Europe and Asia: while Turkey bridges Europe and Asia, Kazakhstan is a connective state between Europe and the Far East. President Nazarbayev himself was quoted as saying that Kazakhstan would be open to the world, adding that “the destiny of our country is to be a unique bridge between Asia and Europe, between great cultures of the West and the East” (quoted in Makasheva, 2008: 44).

For Turkey, in addition to its geostrategic importance, Kazakhstan holds great attraction in Central Asia as it possesses the world’s eleventh biggest reserves of oil, which have provided Kazakhstan with a flow of petrodollars since its independence (International Crisis Group, 2007: 6). By 2006, Kazakhstan stood as the most prominent state in Central Asia, not only for

Turkey, producing 60 per cent of the total GDP of the region, and thus Kazakhstan is regarded as the economic locomotive of Central Asia (Zarakhovich, 2006).

Due to its prominence as one of the leading countries of Central Asia, Kazakhstan comes to the fore as an enormous mineral and fossil fuel wealthy state at the heart of Central Asia. To reduce dependence on Russian gas and oil, the EU and the USA are more than keen to promote alternative energy routes to transport Kazakh and Turkmen gas to Europe. With this effort, Turkey remains the most important actor of European energy security and American energy geopolitics (Mullerson, 2007: 69). In reference to the nineteenth-century rivalry between the British and Russian Empire over the dominance of Central Asia, recognised and remembered as the “Great Game” owing to the writings of the British journalist and writer Joseph Rudyard Kipling, the post-Soviet period rivalry between Turkey and Russia is referred to as the new “Great Game” (Meyer and Brysac, 2006; Caman and Akyurt, 2011: 55). The new ‘Great Game’ involves major powers, including the USA, China and Iran. The rivalry between Turkey and Russia, both vying for influence in Eurasia, is also interpreted as the revival of the so-called ‘Eastern Question’, denoting the late Ottoman period from the angle of great European powers of the time (Blank, 1998).

In the perceived new geostrategic game playing, Turkey has more trump cards than any other country due to its ethnic, cultural and linguistic affinities with the region. Rashid (2002: 153) argues that Turkey is a “major player in the new Great Game” and adds that the demise of the Soviet Union benefited Turkey most in prompting a new vast land for the attention and operation of Turkish foreign policy. It is hard to conclude that an intense rivalry continued permanently between the two. As noted in the previous chapter, Russia has been a significant part of Turkey’s Eurasian policy after the Cold War. It is the case, though, that Russia is presumably the most advantageous in extending its radius of influence towards Kazakhstan due to its geographical vicinity to Central Asia, inherent dominance in the region, and military and economic interdependence with the states of the region and thus Kazakhstan (Lipovsky, 1996: 222).

However, Abdulvahap Kara (interviewed, 2018), a history professor of Kazakh descent in Istanbul, touched upon the course of energy relations of Eurasia and contended that the special relationship between Turkey and Kazakhstan provides a significant advantage for Turkey against Russia and Iran in the run-up to being an energy terminal of the region. According to him, “the kinship between the two countries plays a vital role” in building

relations based on a strategic partnership. In fleshing out his comments with an example, Kara also touches upon the wave of Turkish soap operas that captured the imagination of the Kazakhs and relates the popularity of the Turkish soap operas in Kazakhstan as a result of the cultural proximity, adding that the Kazakh broadcasters prefer to buy Turkish-produced TV series to help the economy of a co-ethnic state develop. Kara justifies this as follows:

The Kazakh tourists prefer to spend their holidays in Turkey merely because of the idea that the money spent on their holiday should go to our fraternal state of Turkey. There is a cliché motto from a realist perspective that “nations do not have friends, only interests” but this has exceptions as you cannot justify this solely by material interests. In some cases, such as between Turkey and Kazakhstan, material interests remain in the background and friendship accompanied by ethnonational, cultural or religious factors come into foreplay. The influx of more than 3.5 million Syrian refugees into Turkey, for example, is a discernible act of such exceptions. It is hard to explain this by material interests as Turkey did this as a duty to humanity as well as a duty to its fellow neighbouring Muslims fleeing from war-torn Syria to Turkey. (Kara, interviewed, 2018)

The sense of ‘consumer ethnocentrism’, which is ascribed to consumers of a certain country who prefer home products to imported goods or services, engenders an international nature in the case of the ethnocentric Kazakh consumers based on the commonalities (Watson and Wright, 2000). The sense of belonging of the Kazakhs to the Turkic allegiance overrides the idea of consumer rationality in preferring products or services from Kazakhstan and stretches out to the borders of Turkey – and presumably to Azerbaijan too. The Turkic allegiance governing the sense of belonging to the Turkic nation of the Kazakhs derives from the nation-building process of Kazakhstan since independence. Given that even the Turkish consumers are non-ethnocentric and rather rational consumers (Acikdilli, Ziemmowicz and Bathhouth, 2018), the ethnocentric behaviour of the Kazakhs is worth noting to emphasise their perception of the nation.

However, the political circle of Kazakhstan is far more enthusiastic in fostering cooperation with Turkey while it is hard to identify the increasing collaboration in the discourse of Turkicness fully translated into public opinion in Kazakhstan. The top-down nation-building by the leadership of Kazakhstan comprises a grass-roots rapprochement with Turkey. Although there is a majority ethnic Kazakh group in Kazakhstan with a positive perception of Turkey, the population of the country overall is not that positive about Turkey. A survey conducted by a Turkish think-tank indicated that Turkey ranks as the seventh most sympathetic country out of 12 other countries among the general Kazakhstani public. The survey also concluded that 32 per cent of the Kazakhstani public expresses negative views regarding the Turkish people (Akyurek and Bilgic, 2012: 56).

This implies that the public sphere of Kazakhstan overall is not aligned with the official policy on the Turkic allegiance as much as the political class. On the diversity of the loyalties in contemporary Kazakhstani society, an academic from Narxoz University in Kazakhstan (interviewed, 2018) categorised the society into three separate groups:

- a) the Russian-speaking secular Kazakhstanis of Slavic and Turkic origin who aspire for the country to be in line with the West, b) the nationalistic group who identify with Turkic identity first and tend to speak mostly Kazakh, c) the religious Muslim Kazakhs who also identify with Turkic identity and speak both Russian and Kazakh.

The academic emphasised, however, that no matter which of the above groups they belong to, “the Kazakhs are moderately receptive to the news of Turkey, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, listing it by declining trend”. Among the groups in Kazakhstan, it is safe to infer that the nationalistic Kazakhs comprise the group of Kazakhstanis who are inclined to have positive opinions about Turkey.

Promotion of the Turkic primordial origins by Nazarbayev to undergo a swift nation-building process to break away from the Russian dominance and the Soviet past led, to a great extent, to a series of ideological narratives. In the same vein, reinterpreted and nurtured by Nazarbayev, a new form of Eurasianism (neo-Eurasianism), blended with a pragmatic approach to both internal stabilisation and the foreign policy of the country, was formulated (Anceschi, 2014: 737). In regard to this pragmatism that lies behind the Eurasian discourse, Ametbek (2017a: 104) argues that “in domestic politics and foreign policy Nazarbayev’s Eurasianism serves to prevent the crises of national identity” of Kazakhstan.⁴²

The Turkic identity of Kazakhstan serves to empower the domestic coherence of Kazakhstani society on the one hand while drawing the Turkic economic and political attention to Kazakhstan on the other. The Strategy for Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan until 2030 – set out by President Nazarbayev in October 1997 – includes prospects to secure “[d]omestic political stability and consolidation of the society” elaborated as to “[s]afeguard and strengthen domestic political stability and national unity. It would enable Kazakhstan to put the national strategy into practice in the course of the current and the upcoming decade” (Nazarbayev, 2018).

Olcott (2010: 144) argues that “Kazakhstan courted Turkey and, to a lesser extent, the oil states of the Middle East, reminding them of its shared identity (with Turkey) and religious

⁴² The Eurasianism promoted by President Nazarbayev is different from Russian and Turkish interpretation of Eurasianism and is centred on “Eurasian solidarity” based on supranational organisations in the region (Mostafa, 2013: 161).

identity (with the other Muslim states)". On the episode of promptly fostered relations between Turkey and Kazakhstan, Akiner (2011: 7) describes the determinants and their outcomes:

Co-operation between the two countries was facilitated by the common cultural and linguistic heritage. A wide range of joint projects, sponsored by the Turkish government as well as private sector, were undertaken. They included the establishment of a network of Turkish schools in Kazakhstan and two universities, as well as thousands of annual grants for Kazakh students to study in Turkey, in the commercial sector, too, there was a large Turkish presence, particularly in the construction and textile industries.

The Eurasian basis of the nation-building and foreign policy included Turkic orientation toward reaching a Eurasian vision for the Kazakhstani state. The societal fabric of the society, though, presents no singularity in reference to its origins. There is a divergence between two main groups in Kazakhstani society on how the members of the society identify themselves. The first group is the ethnic Russians and the other Slavic groups whose perceptions of Kazakhstan materialise as "the extension of Russia" and the ethnic Kazakhs along with other Turkic communities who consider Kazakhstan to be part of the Turkic-Islamic world (Ametbek, 2017a: 91).

The idea of Eurasianism or a combination of Slavic and Turkic elements that exist in the discourse of Nazarbayev is a result of an imperative balancing act between the domestic and foreign policies of Kazakhstan. An internationalist approach to ethnonational polity inherited from the Soviet Union is dominant in domestic politics (Schatz, 2000: 490–492). Ethnic and civic elements of nationalism coexist in Kazakhstan and both are instrumental in policy choices. The Eurasianism promoted by Nazarbayev serves not only further cooperation with Russia but other small or large states in Eurasia such that the SCO, the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA) and the EAEU came into existence as a result of the personal enterprise of Nazarbayev himself (Ametbek, 2017b: 81–82). Ametbek (interviewed, 2018) commented upon this duality in the nation-building and foreign policy of Kazakhstan:

For one who goes through a quick review of the contemporary history of Kazakhstan since its independence, it is visible that whenever Nazarbayev took part in initiatives reinforcing Eurasian or Neo-Eurasian sentiments, he simultaneously took steps for the cooperation of the Turkic world. This balancing strategy can be spotted from the personal initiatives of Nazarbayev pioneering the establishment of the EAEU and TÜRKSÖY or the CCTS. To exemplify this, the CIS was formed by a summit held in Almaty in 1991 with substantial support from Nazarbayev. Similarly, the leaders of the newly independent Turkic states founded TÜRKSÖY in a summit held in Almaty in 1993. For the Eurasian cooperation, the EAEU was first proposed by Nazarbayev. The CCTS, on the other hand, was initiated by Nazarbayev again for the Turkic integration. In short, it is the bidirectional foreign policy of Kazakhstan that is compatible with the domestic cohesion of the country.

From the reliance on the Turkic origins of Kazakhstan, Nazarbayev was wary of a potential Russian reaction that may be triggered by the politicisation of the Kazakh and Turkic identity by pan-nationalist rhetoric. Turkic identity was predominantly at play in cultural and economic spheres of relations between Kazakhstan and the rest of the Turkic republics. Turkey was a significant actor in the Kazakhstani nation-building endeavour on the lines of the Turkic past because the Turkic national narrative existed well before Kazakhstan's independence.

Importantly, the Ministry of National Education and the Ministry of Culture in Turkey had invested in projects aimed at standardising the school textbooks in history and literature in Turkey and the Turkic republics. Naturally, this included Kazakhstan, and the official historiography dated the Turkic history back to Central Asia (Winrow, 1996: 137). Nazarbayev, however, distanced himself from provoking Turkist rhetoric and perceived the Turkic states "as a loose, diverse group, like the Anglo-Saxon or Slavic countries" (Pope, 2005: 131). This suggested that a depoliticised understanding of Turkism existed in Kazakhstan rather than a political pan-Turkist agenda.

As Nazarbayev resembled Atatürk in his nation-building, the foundations of the Kazakhstani state were placed under the Central Asian origins of the early Turks. The allegiance to the Turkic roots was indoctrinated top-down to the public by the political elite. Turkey, with its relative experience in democracy and a market economy, asserted itself to overcome its post-Cold War isolation as a model Turkic state for Kazakhstan (Bal, 1998). For Kazakhstan, nation-building is still an ongoing process.

In 2014, Nazarbayev suggested changing the name of the country from Kazakhstan to "Kazak Eli – or Kazakh Nation – as an alternative" or "Land of the Kazakhs" (BBC News, 2014). The proposal was hailed by Turkic circles as it includes a Turkic flavour in the word "Eli" (Zorlu, 2014). On the other hand, it was also seen as an attempt at an image makeover in the name of the country by removing 'stan' to avoid being categorised with the rest of the countries in Central Asia that have the Persian suffix 'stan' at the end of their names – meaning 'place of' in the Persian language or 'settlement' in Russian (*The Economist*, 2014b). The move was also interpreted as an effort to re-emphasise and consolidate the Kazakh ethnic dominance in the country due to the large Russian minority and largely multicultural nature of the society (Fisher, 2014).

First and foremost, the idea of changing the name of the country reflected unfinished nation-building. The rationale behind it lies apparently between an effort to rebrand the country and annihilation of the Russian/Soviet legacy through more intense reference to the ethnic Kazakh or Turkic origins as the true possessor of the country, such that the governing circle of Kazakhstan attached importance to the international recognition and reputation of Kazakhstan. This can be presumed from the common practice of renaming the Kazakhstani cities and streets, as three oblasts⁴³ together with 12 cities, 53 districts and 957 small settlements had their names changed to Turkic/Kazakh names between 1991 and 2005 (Brauer, 2014).

The rationale, however, illustrated a regressive effort in Kazakhstan's national harmony, at least as a knock-on effect, to undo what was planned in the early days of independence of Kazakhstan. This is because the governing elite of Kazakhstan tended to rely on civic nationalism by turning the ethnic Kazakh connotation in the name of the 'Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic (Kazakh SSR)' before independence into a more inclusive the 'Republic of Kazakhstan' (Ametbek, 2017b: 66).⁴⁴ The motivation behind the reliance on civic nationalism at the outset of independence was the lessons drawn by the ethnic conflicts in the post-Soviet Caucasus (e.g. the Armeno-Azerbaijani conflict) and other conflict zones (e.g. the Tajik Civil War). Regarding this, Nazarbayev was once cited saying that "God grant that no one should stir up Kazakhstan on ethnic grounds. It would be far worse than Yugoslavia" (quoted in Diener, 2015: 472).

As a result, the ethnic intonation in the official identity of the people in Kazakhstan was avoided, and rather than 'Kazakh people', the use of 'Kazakhstani people' was preferred (Ametbek, 2017b: 66). The Kazakhstani state co-promoted internationalism and the revival of ethnic Kazakh identity – the former for the domestic peace of the country and for the satisfaction of the non-Kazakh minorities while the latter served the ethnic Kazakh majority (Cummings, 2005: 78). In sum, a balancing act has been at play aimed at preserving the domestic integrity of the country while simultaneously capitalising on Turkic identity in foreign policy and defining its interests at home and abroad.

In addition to the name changes, for example, Nazarbayev issued a presidential decree changing the name of the South Kazakhstan region to Turkestan in June 2018, stating that

⁴³ An administrative region in Russia and most of the ex-Soviet states.

⁴⁴ Supporting the notion of civic governance, Article 39 of the Kazakhstani Constitution states that "[a]ny actions capable of upsetting interethnic concord shall be deemed unconstitutional" (The Constitution of Kazakhstan, Art. 39).

“[t]he region’s centre is the city of Turkestan, which for centuries has been the heart of the political and spiritual life of the Kazakh khanate and the entire Turkic world” (quoted in Seisembayeva, 2018). Considering the enforced ‘One China policy’ of the Chinese administration and the move by Nazarbayev together, the renaming of the region could be regarded as a dangerous decision that was taken, despite China, for the sake of the nation-building of Kazakhstan based on its Turkic characteristics.

Ametbek (interviewed, 2018) interprets this as a sign of ambition for the ongoing nation-building of Kazakhstan and contends that given the ethnically fragile autonomous East Turkestan or Xinjiang⁴⁵ province of China, “the name change of the South Kazakhstan region is a potential threat to the Chinese territorial integrity”. This suggested a divergence from the balance-oriented and “multivector” foreign policy of Kazakhstan in that Nazarbayev added more emphasis on the Turkic origins at the expense of relations with the powerful neighbour of China (Cummings, 2005: 2). Corresponding to this, the Turkestan region of Central Asia is respected as the cradle of Turkic civilisation in the national identities of both Turkey and Kazakhstan. According to İpek (interviewed, 2018), “the shared identity and culture are the basis of bilateral relations between Turkey and Kazakhstan”, and the discourse of the “Turkic world” and the “Turkic identity” with the origins in Turkestan of Central Asia is pivotal to the establishment of relations.

Above all, the Turkish approach to Kazakhstan, similarly to other Turkic republics, commenced with an early sentimentality that stemmed from the very common ties (Onis, 2001: 67). Proposals by Turkey to establish a single market with Central Asian Turkic republics while asserting that the Turkish lira should be the single currency for trade remained unrequited (Fidan, 2010: 116). As a matter of fact, it was soon noticed that Turkey had shortcomings in meeting the high expectations raised in Turkey and Kazakhstan of forging closer relations. The ethnonational similarities with Kazakhstan could not aggregate with the political and economic power centred in Turkey. The early excitement was then acknowledged as premature and replaced by a strategic partnership discourse. Kazakhstan did not receive the support it anticipated in the early years following independence. A discourse

⁴⁵ Xinjiang refers to ‘New Borderland’ in Chinese (Pope, 2005: 168). The province, known only as East Turkestan in the pre-annexation period, was annexed by China in 1949 and has since remained like a soft belly due to the ethnically fragile composition of its population – between the indigenous Turkic Uighurs and the Han Chinese who migrated to the region in the post-annexation period. Like the Tibet Autonomous Region of China and its exiled leadership (Dalai Lama), the Xinjiang Region is a source of separatist movements and international pressure on China by the exiled prominent Uighurs abroad, mostly in the USA (see Clarke, 2011).

formed over calling the twenty-first century the ‘Turkish century’ and an ambitious foreign policy agenda concerning this did not translate into reality in the 1990s (Dundar, 2016: 5).

In light of Kazakhstan’s urgent need for a nation/state-building without a substantial political and economic endorsement from Turkey in the first decade of its independence, the country developed an avant-garde multi-directional foreign policy that indicated an increasing tendency toward pragmatism and a decreasing tendency toward nationalism (Cummings, 2003; Makasheva, 2008). The multi-vectored foreign policy offered flexibility to the Kazakhstani foreign policymakers in manoeuvring in terms of diplomacy towards Russia, China, the USA and other stakeholder states in the regional politics. The multi-vector foreign policy of Kazakhstan was largely oriented as “tri-vectored” against Russia, the West and China to safeguard its long-fought-for independence (Lo, 2015: 112).

The relations of Kazakhstan with the USA, Russia and China can be categorised as fundamental and reveal the motivations of the Kazakh leadership as attracting maximum “investment flows” and obstructing any “potential predatory advances” from these three great powers envisaged to balance each other out in their relations with Kazakhstan (Akiner, 2011: 4). While Kazakhstan is a close partner of Russia in that sense, it has also been a member of NATO’s PfP programme since 1994 (Akiner, 2011: 3). In contrast to the fast-track integration ambitions of Ukraine and Georgia with the West, which resulted in Russian military interference, Kazakhstan followed a more balanced multi-tracked foreign policy. Russia’s self-declared ‘near abroad’ policy, which virtually designated the 14 post-Soviet republics as a natural sphere of Russian influence, created an imperative for the balanced multi-dimensional foreign policy of Kazakhstan.⁴⁶

Identical to the multi-directional foreign policy of Turkey in pragmatic terms, Kazakhstan adopted a balancing foreign policy – sustaining working relationships with Russia and China and approaching the USA for the planned goals of the country regarding integration into the global system in political and economic terms. The multi-vector foreign policy orientation, parallel to the orientation of Turkish multi-tracked foreign policy, envisaged cordial relations with Russia, China, the USA and the EU all together while upholding balanced relations with other states in the region (Akiner, 2011).

⁴⁶ ‘Near abroad’ is a term used by Russia to denote the former Soviet republics and usually attracts negative sentiments from many of the 14 ex-Soviet republics, which regard it as a type of Russian self-entitlement.

The efforts of Kazakhstan in regard to nation-building and balancing foreign policy meant filling a political and social vacuum in the domestic and foreign policies of the country. The demise of the Soviet Union not only generated a power vacuum in the CAC but also an ideological vacuum. The ideological vacuum in the new unilateral post-Cold War world exposed the fragility of the post-Soviet sphere. Nationalism, as an alternative to the reign of communism, dispersed across the CAC as well as Russia, showing the duality of ethnic and civic nationalisms in the case of Kazakhstan (Isaac and Polese, 2015: 374). Ethnic, religious and cultural allegiances came into play in filling the political and ideological vacuum in the post-Soviet space of the CAC.

For the Kazakhstani state, the political vacuum was meant to be filled by returning to the historical Turkic roots and unleashing a transition to democracy and a market economy. This was, however, merely one facet of multi-faceted foreign policymaking of Kazakhstan. Under the aegis of the USA and the EU, Turkey came to the fore with its democratic posture based on the market economy as a culturally and linguistically close state to Kazakhstan. Turkey, in many respects, has presented a palatable role model and partnership for Kazakhstan, given the alternatives of Russia and Iran, which both crave to exert influence in Central Asia. As far as Russia is concerned, irredentist actions, though limited, have the potential to take place in the course of a further Kazakhstani rapprochement to NATO and the West at large, as was seen in the cases of Ukraine and Georgia. However, a divergence from the Russophone past and the Russian sphere of influence is visible.

In the same vein, for example, Kazakhstan launched its script transition process in 2017 and set a timetable stretching to 2025 for the completion of the switch (Turkstra, 2018). The move was interpreted mostly as not economic but political. One Kazakh think-tank researcher stated that “it is more a question of national identity we are trying to find, and are ready to pay for that” (quoted in Chen, 2018). In its search for an established national identity, the Kazakh government began synchronising the Kazakh language with the Turkish, Azerbaijani and Uzbek languages. As President Nazarbayev saw Atatürk as a role model, and therefore presumably planned to bring similar reforms into existence in Atatürk’s nation-building style. Other accounts suggest that, against Russian influence, Astana planned to disengage from the Soviet legacy, and the reminder of long Russian rule – and one of the pillars of that legacy is its script.

The Turkish experience of nation-building and forming an alliance with the West has long been seen as a model by Kazakhstan. It is, however, difficult to overlook the prospects of Kazakhstan for better harmonisation with the rest of the Turkic states. In addition to the fact that more than two-thirds of the population of the world communicate using the Latin alphabet, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan have remained the only Turkic states using the Cyrillic alphabet (Turkstra, 2018). The decision of the Turkophone republics in the CAC to opt for the Latin alphabet was taken despite Iranian and Saudi Arabian encouragement to return to the Arabic alphabet (Sasley, 2010: 207). The Kazakh alphabet switch from Cyrillic to the Latin script, concordantly, characterised the trajectory of the Kazakhstani state (Higgins, 2018). According to Kara (interviewed, 2018), the script change emanates from combining two interwoven purposes as the country intends to synchronise its alphabet with the other Turkic republics and also with the international community as “the first Kazakh Latin script was based on adopting each letter on the international English computer keyboard”. Given the fact that the Latin alphabet is the most commonly adopted script in the world, this move by President Nazarbayev clearly created an impetus for the integration Kazakhstan with the rest of the Turkic republics and symbolised its aspiration to position itself in the Western world.

Another motivation was to remove the memory of the long-imposed Russification by ridding itself of the Russian script. Nazarbayev was manifestly convinced that the alphabet switch to Cyrillic “in 1940 was a politically motivated act to impair historical Kazakh national identity” (quoted in Yalinkilicli, 2017). Gülzar İbrahimova (interviewed, 2018), a professor of IR at Baku Eurasia University, notes that Kazakhstan, along with Kyrgyzstan, has been late in switching its alphabet to Latin compared to other Turkic republics, which actualised the script switch to Latin in the early 1990s, thanks to the fact that Kazakhstan remained under ossified Russian and Soviet dominance for two centuries. It is thus understandably unfair to expect the country to rid itself promptly of the deep-seated Russian influence.

The above suggests that Kazakhstan, due to its historical background and political, economic and military interdependence with Russia, has to undergo a gradual withdrawal from the Russian orbit for its transition to full-scale independence in terms of decision-making and divergence from the Russian sphere of influence. Consequently, the Kazakhstani leadership had a limited choice in foreign policy and domestic affairs, given its large Russian minority. But it is worth noting that the country, though slow-paced, succeeded in heading towards a breakaway from the Russian scope of influence while leaning on the Turkic republics and the

West by following a cautious foreign policy in line with balancing and pragmatism. The landlocked geography of Kazakhstan, though, makes it difficult to achieve this in the short run as its neighbour states are pivotal in terms of it joining international trade easily (see Idan and Shaffer, 2011: 249–254).

Thanks to the Turkic background with a Western-flavoured political and economic outlook, Turkey was quick to penetrate the Kazakh economy for the Kazakh transition. In this endeavour, Turkish products and businesspersons have been widespread in the economic progress of Kazakhstan since the early days of independence. From the outset of independence onwards, the shared past, linguistic similarities and similar culture created an “ethno-cultural affinity” between Turkey and Kazakhstan and this was coupled with “practical considerations” that led Kazakhstan to being as close as possible to Turkey (Nurgaliyeva, 2016: 102).

In addition to this, the posture of Turkey and Kazakhstan in response to international and regional matters is similar and this contributed to the Turkish engagement with Kazakhstan in political and economic spheres. The early engagement of Turkey in Kazakhstan’s transition economically was described by one observer in the centre of Almaty in this way: “[T]he best new hotel of the 1990s was a brass-and-marble luxury spaceship that was Turkish-built, Turkish-managed, Turkish-catered and named after the Turkish capital” (Pope, 2005: 184).

The CAC received the highest development assistance between 1992 and 1996 overall and Kazakhstan benefited from Turkish aid and developmental assistance from TİKA in the 1990s (Ipek, 2013: 8). Between 1992 and 2003, Kazakhstan received the highest number of TİKA development projects among the 25 countries in which TİKA conducted development projects (TİKA, 2004: 26). Turkish cultural and educational interaction also contributed to the development assistance of Kazakhstan.

Two Turkish-Kazakh universities, Süleyman Demirel University in Almaty and Akhmet Yassawi University in the city of Turkestan in Kazakhstan, crowned by the help of the Great Student Exchange Programme constituted the cultural domain of Turkish-Kazakh further cultural engagement. The public diplomacy activities of the YTB along with privately-owned Turkish schools in Kazakhstan granted an expanding cultural approximation to both countries. Thousands of Turkish students studied at these universities besides the students from Kazakhstan who studied in Turkey thanks to scholarships provided by the YTB, which

indicates that scholarships are primarily provided “from regions where the kin and related communities live” (Yurtnac, 2012: 10).

A more Eurasia-oriented alignment of Turkish foreign policy from the late 1990s to the new millennium by the then Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, Cem, marked a new era in Turkey’s relations with Kazakhstan along with the other states of Turkic Central Asia, as was detailed in Chapter 2. It is arguable that the political and rhetorical harmony between Turkey and Kazakhstan was fully materialised in economic relations as the largest trade partners of Kazakhstan were mostly from the West: the USA, the Netherlands, the UK and Russia (Yilmaz, 2017a: 819). Turkey, nevertheless, increased its exports to Kazakhstan 39 times while imports from Kazakhstan increased 110 times in the space of 23 years after Kazakhstan gained its independence (Simsek, Canaltay and Simsek, 2017: 7). In foreign investment in Kazakhstan, Turkey topped the list in terms of the number of companies and secured the fourth biggest place in the list of foreign investor states, following the USA, South Korea and the UK (Nurgaliyeva, 2016: 101).

From the outset of the relations, the ethnicity and culture cards of Turkey contributed to the course of multiple spheres of relations with Kazakhstan. Fidan (2010: 114) refers to ethnic and cultural ties between Turkey and Central Asian Turkic communities by stating that these ties “facilitated Turkey’s relations with Central Asia”, while Caman and Akyurt (2011: 48) agree that “cultural and historical links” “simplify relations with Central Asia”. Thanks to the support of Western states, i.e. the USA and major European powers, Turkey had the chance to have closer relations with Kazakhstan in political, economic and cultural spheres. In this multi-faceted démarche, the swiftly paced relations emanated from the fraternity discourses of the two countries along with Kazakhstani enthusiasm to integrate into the globalised world of democratic governance and a liberal market economy.

It is the general belief that Turkish political parties with religious colours have little interest in the Turkic republics, complying with Islamic internationalism. Contrary to this judgement, it will be argued that the period of relations from 2002 to 2015 between the two Turkic states indicated no decrease in the level of bilateral interaction. If anything, relations between Turkey and Kazakhstan gained momentum from the outset of the AKP period in Turkish politics in 2002. In that trend, the shared Turkic identity of both states cleared the way to unchallenging relations. The personal peculiarities of both Erdoğan and Nazarbayev embracing and emphasising the common ancestral ties became the pivot of the relations.

The Turkic tie and the typically regarded common ancestral reminders constructed the discourses of relations of the two countries. Accordingly, the AKP period from 2002 to 2015 oversaw a facilitated relationship with an increasingly developing volume of engagement in political, economic and cultural contexts. With the embracing of the Turkic facet of Turkish national identity in the AKP period of Turkish foreign policymaking, relations between the two states increased significantly. The following sub-sections focus on a detailed analysis of the relations between Turkey and Kazakhstan between 2002 and 2015. The three consecutive governments formed by the AKP will be analytically illustrated from the perspective of the shared Turkic identity.

The 2002–2007, 2007–2011 and 2011–2015 terms of the AKP will be examined, respectively, to discover the extent to which the common ethnic and cultural ties shaped Turkish foreign policy in this period. The first sub-section will examine the first period of Turkish foreign policy towards Kazakhstan. The following sub-sections will examine the following two governmental terms, respectively. It is noted that Turkish foreign policy is influenced by the multi-layered facets of Turkish national identity and the Turkic facet is significant in terms of its influence on the relations between Turkey and Kazakhstan. On that note, relations between the two states will be examined from the perspective of the common Turkic identity and the influence of this identity on the political, economic and cultural cooperation of both states.

4.4 Relations from 2002 to 2007: Foundations for Strategic Cooperation

During the first term of the AKP government, Turkish foreign policy was overshadowed by a series of domestic issues, as indicated in Section 3.4. The recovery from the economic crisis was only one of them. The urgent need to put the country back on track from a stagnated economy and domestic reforms that needed to be addressed immediately left little room for an outward-looking political perspective. The outbreak of the Iraq War in 2003 on the southern flank of Turkey entangled the country in a more cautious line of foreign policymaking. Relations with the EU, however, remained cordial – with the maintenance of a close engagement for an ongoing membership process, though with little prospect of actual membership.

Until 2005, an assertion of soft power with a ‘zero-problem’ policy and courting the Annan Plan for the resolution of the Cyprus issue, as well as joining the Alliance of Civilizations Initiative following the proposal of Spain, were important steps taken to meet EU demands

and foster European collaboration at inter-state level. The Turkish government began negotiations for full accession to the EU in October 2005, but the German and French blockage of Turkish accession and the stalemate situation in the Cyprus dispute brought the negotiations to deadlock. As the long-held Europeanisation policy of Turkey remained in stagnation, the importance of Eurasia in Turkish foreign policy increased. As Onis and Yilmaz (2009: 12) point out, Turkey followed a policy of “loose Europeanization” and “soft Euroasianism” (Onis and Yilmaz, 2009: 17–18).

Aside from the relations with the EU, Turkey was interested in furthering bilateral relations with Kazakhstan. Despite not yet illustrating a Eurasian shift in foreign policy during this term, Turkish interaction with the Central Asian Turkic republics demonstrated a new impetus. This new impetus commenced with Nazarbayev’s visit to Turkey in 2003, laying the foundations for a strategic partnership agreement between the two countries. Confirming these foundations, Turkey and Kazakhstan signed a long-term Economic Cooperation Agreement on 22 May 2003, and a Joint Commission on Land Transportation was initiated for an improved transport link in 2006 (Fidan, 2010: 115).

Then-Prime Minister Erdoğan visited Astana in 2003, and he and Nazarbayev agreed to increase cooperation on the international platforms (Kara and Yesilot, 2011: 242). This led to Turkey’s interest in engaging with international organisations that were initiated by Kazakhstan, such as the CICA. In the same vein, Turkey began attending CICA conferences at presidential and ministerial levels in 2004 and 2006 (Kara and Yesilot, 2011: 243). The conferences were held in Almaty because of Kazakhstan’s term in the chair between 2002 and 2010, creating space for better involvement by Turkey in the organisation.

Turkish foreign policymaking in the first term of the AKP reflected an interest in increasing its presence in Central Asia. As a result of this effort, official talks between Erdoğan and Kazakh officials came to fruition with an increase in the relations between the Turkish and Kazakhstani parliaments resulting in the establishment of inter-parliamentary friendship groups and a large number of political and economic engagements (Aslan and Bozyigit, 2014: 139). In 2003, a cooperation agreement on customs and a long-term trade and economic cooperation agreement were signed. In addition to these, an implementation programme of the latter agreement was signed in 2007 (Yilmaz, 2016: 173).

The context of energy relations is subject to Kazakhstani foreign policy, as energy relations are inclined to lead the course of the foreign relations of Kazakhstan. A proposed Trans-

Caspian Pipeline (TCP) under the Caspian Sea to transport Kazakhstani natural gas to the Western markets through the BTC pipeline traversing Azerbaijani territory was paused in 2006 (Ipek, 2007: 1191). The TCP project to circumvent Russian territory via the East-West energy corridor was supported not only by Turkey but also the USA and the EU, and the American support came out of opposition to the sale of Iranian gas to Western markets and the desire to curb Iranian influence in the energy relations of the region (Uslu, 2003: 179).

The Western reaction to Kazakhstan regarding its fluctuating preference for Russia and China concerning the sale or transportation of oil and gas was important. In particular, the Kazakhstani entente with China over oil and gas sales led observers to question its foreign policy orientation despite the fact that the foreign policy of the country was manifested as ‘multi-vector’. This was because in spite of the plans to have Kazakhstan join the BTC pipeline, an oil pipeline was unveiled from the Kazakhstani town of Atasu to Alashankou in China (Ipek, 2007: 1179). The leadership of Kazakhstan was inclined toward balancing acts of the country between the dominant powers of the USA, Russia and China (Yilmaz, 2013: 502). Following the new Silk Road project of China called the ‘One Belt One Road Initiative’ (BRI) aimed at connecting China with Europe via sea lanes and a railway traversing Central Asia put Kazakhstan on the spot in terms of Chinese interests. Kazakhstan presented a centre of gravity in materialising grand projects such as the BRI in connecting China with Europe and the Chinese vector of Kazakhstani foreign policy showed an increase in this period along with Turkey (Dave, 2018: 97–108). This was compatible with the plans in Turkey to create a new Silk Road after the inauguration of the BTC pipeline and the BTK railway, as such an initiative was seen on the Turkish side later to establish railways from Turkey to China, traversing Kazakhstan (see Colakoglu, 2019).⁴⁷

As of 2004, Kazakhstan, after Kyrgyzstan, had acquired the second-highest share of Turkish development assistance (TİKA, 2004). TİKA also sponsored the publication of a Turkish-Kazakh dictionary to create a “tool to bring the two countries closer” (TİKA, 2004: 73). Through the initiatives of TİKA, however, Turkish foreign policy extended its focus beyond the Balkans, the CAC and the Middle East. Africa, South America and some other parts of the world were included in the spotlight of Turkish foreign policy (Ozkan, 2011). With regard to the extending outreach of TİKA, for instance, a TİKA project coordinator highlighted that

⁴⁷ The efforts of Turkey were later embodied by the project of the “Trans-Caspian East-West-Middle Corridor Initiative”, or shortly know as the Middle Corridor. The project aimed at expanding routes of the existing railways from Turkey to China (Colakoglu, 2019).

the founding document of TİKA in 1992 began with a regional coverage for “the Turkish republics and the fraternal communities”, but this was revised later to encompass “all developing countries” covering most of the Middle East, Africa and South America (quoted in Ipek, 2013: 11). This was because of the multi-tracked foreign policy of Turkey during this period. Nevertheless, the importance given to the Turkic republics and Kazakhstan continued to grow.

Dudu (interviewed in 2018) challenged the idea of extending the range of Turkish soft power by TİKA and claimed that the extension of TİKA activities into a wider geographical scope beyond Kazakhstan and other Turkic states should have been reversed to its former state:

There are important points to make regarding TİKA. TİKA was founded in 1992 to provide social, economic and cultural support to the kin communities in the Turkic republics but its geographical scope is changed in the AKP period. During the AKP period, the geographical scope is extended from the Turkic geography to 170 countries. The number of TİKA offices rose from 12 to 60. There are now TİKA offices opened from Asia-Pacific, Africa and the Middle East to Central Asia and from the Balkans to the Caucasus and South America. That is to say that the budget of TİKA multiplied but its efficiency remained low.

From acquiring its independence to the early 2000s, Kazakhstan was subject to considerable political, economic, social and educational support by Turkey. TİKA has two offices in Astana and Almaty and provides considerable technical, educational and infrastructural projects in Kazakhstan (Yilmaz, 2016: 118). Although the first term of the AKP showed relatively less interest in the Turkic republics, it was difficult to conclude that the AKP with Islamic affiliations tended to neglect Kazakhstan. As already noted, conservative nationalism embraces both Turkic and Islamic elements and the Turkic facet of contemporary Turkish national identity created a space in foreign policy towards Turkic relations. Meanwhile, the Islamic element is embedded in the identity and co-existed with the Turkic facet. As Aydin (2004: 16) also argues, it is true that the advent of the AKP with its Islamic and conservative references prompted the feeling that the Turkic republics in general, and Kazakhstan in particular, would be off the Turkish foreign policy agenda. The visits of Erdoğan to Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan in 2003 before taking office as prime minister were not enough to “prevent speculation that the AKP would not be as strongly predisposed towards closer relations” with Kazakhstan and other Turkic republics as previous governments (Aydin, 2004: 16).

In 2006, on the initiative of Turkey, another Turkic summit was organised in the Turkish city of Antalya. Five years after the last Turkic summit had been organised, the 2006 summit had symbolic significance. The presidents of Turkey, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan,

along with the Ambassador of Turkmenistan in Ankara, attended the summit while Uzbekistan chose not to send any representative. Turkish President Sezer hosted the event and Nazarbayev reiterated what he had proposed at the previous summit in Istanbul in 2001: to establish the Council of the Elders (part of the CCTS) and the TURKPA (CCTS, 2019). These proposals remained shelved for several years, but the initiator role of Kazakhstan in the formation of the CCTS, TURKPA and TWESCO existed well before the establishment of these organisations. In this period, an enthusiasm existed on the Turkish side to forge closer relations with the Turkic republics, but the concrete steps to do so usually were initiated by Kazakhstan. The developing relations with Kazakhstan translated into increasing cooperation among the other Turkic republics in general.

In the economic sphere, Figure 5 shows that the volume of trade relations between Turkey and Kazakhstan increased dramatically from around \$500 million to some more than \$2 billion, multiplying the volume of the bilateral trade more than four times. The rise in the bilateral trade between Turkey and Kazakhstan in the period from 2002 to 2007, in contrast to the account that claims a less interested government engaged with the Turkic republics, presents an example of relations coming closer in terms of trade. This again is not a huge volume of trade turnover when the Turkish overall trade is taken into account, which accounted for more than 1% of Turkey's total foreign trade in 2007 (TurkStat, 2018). What is important in reading the trade figures is the sharp increase in the trading relationship between the two states. Moreover, Turkey showed dramatic economic growth in this period and the rising trade figures were a common attribute of the Turkish economy. In any case, the rise in the economic interaction between Turkey and Kazakhstan indicated that this period was similar to that of İsmail Cem's period of Turkish foreign policy in the simultaneous efforts to upgrade relations both with the West and Eurasia.



Figure 5: Trade turnover between Turkey and Kazakhstan (2002–2007) (TurkStat, 2018) – thousand USD.

When the increasing level of economic relations between the two states is taken into account, Turkish foreign policy towards Kazakhstan in the first AKP government showed interest in relations with Kazakhstan despite the fact that an emphasis on Eurasia was not on the agenda. It can be concluded that the Eurasian vector of Turkish foreign policy had an upward trend and Turkey-Kazakhstan relations increased. The developments in this period and the increasing Turkey-Kazakhstan relations largely stemmed from Turkic ethnonational identity, as can be seen from the proposals for the establishment of Turkic institutions. The following sub-section will elaborate on the impact of the divergence from the EU towards Eurasia and the position of Kazakhstan in this trend.

4.5 Relations from 2007 to 2011: Upgrade to Strategic Partnership

The advent of Abdullah Gül as the 11th president of Turkey in 2007 built momentum for stronger Turkish relations with Kazakhstan. Gül adopted a different course of action in his conduct of foreign affairs to his predecessor Sezer. Through his more pro-active approach to the foreign affairs of Turkey, Gül drew special attention to the Turkic states of the CAC, and Kazakhstan was at the centre of that attention in Central Asia. Nazarbayev had organised his first foreign trip to Turkey on the brink of the break-up of the Soviet Union in 1990 when the Soviet administration agreed to grant Kazakhstan's much-anticipated independence (Ametbek, 2018: 8). Similarly, the first visiting foreign leader to be welcomed in Turkey after

Gül had been sworn in as president was Nazarbayev, and the two presidents enjoyed a close personal relationship as well as countless official engagements (Kara and Yesilot, 2011: 242).

The close relationship between Gül and Nazarbayev defined the course of relations between the two countries. In terms of the presidential-level booster role played by both presidents in the relations, special attention needs to be drawn to the personal role played by Nazarbayev in moving the Turkish-Kazakhstani relations a step forward. Yilmaz (2017a: 822) presents a compilation of initiatives and projections on the part of Nazarbayev through interviews and articles from experts and policymakers: a) an invitation by Nazarbayev to Turkey for membership of the EAEU; b) his projection that a possible Turkish accession to the EU would pave the way to the accession of Kazakhstan to the EU because, along with Russia, Kazakhstan is the only country that has territory in Europe; c) his belief that Turkey can be a pioneer by drawing all the Turkic republics together through the Turkic Council; d) his suggestion, in every possible bilateral interaction, of increasing the volume of relations in political, investment, transportation, tourism and trade spheres; e) signing a Strategic Cooperation Agreement with Turkey in 2009 to bring the relations to the strategic level, which will be elaborated upon later. These policies were put forward by presidential-level policies, which indicated the role of the president in foreign policymaking.

The role of political leaders in fostering the relations between Turkey and Kazakhstan is influential. In regard to that influence, the extent to which the late President Özal influenced Nazarbayev in constructing his view on Turkey and the friendship between the two leaders played an important role in the construction of a positive image of Turkey in the eyes of Nazarbayev and the following cooperation moves between the two countries and the rest of the Turkic states (see Ametbek, 2017a). The foreign policy of Gül in terms of the importance assigned to Eurasia was in that sense similar to that of the Özal period at the presidential level. Gül was different from his predecessors in his active involvement with foreign policy and he changed the course of the previously symbolic position of the president in the governance of the country. This created a presidential-level endorsement of the relations with the Turkic republics, much like Nazarbayev's policymaking.

Article 40 of the Constitution of Kazakhstan states: "The President of the Republic of Kazakhstan shall be the head of state, its highest official determining the main directions of the domestic and foreign policy of the state and representing Kazakhstan within the country and international relations" (Law No. 254, Art. 40). Article 44 of the same constitution

increases the responsibility of the President of Kazakhstan in foreign policy by declaring that the president shall “annually address the people of Kazakhstan with a message on the state of the country and main directions of the domestic and foreign policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan” (Law No. 254, Art. 44). The “tremendous concentration of foreign policy-making in the president” suggests that the perceptions and interpretation of Turkey and the Turkic world in the views of Nazarbayev set the course of relations between Kazakhstan and Turkey (Fawn, 2003: 20).

The leader cults of both Turkey and Kazakhstan reinforce the role of presidents in foreign policymaking. The role of leaders is also associated with myths and memories of both countries. In the same vein, Nazarbayev himself unveiled an Atatürk statue in a park in the centre of Astana in October 2009. This was in addition to the previously unveiled statues of the Kazakh poet Abai Qunanbaiuly in Istanbul, Ablai Khan of the Middle Juz in Niğde and the Kazakh writer Mukhtar Auezov in Ankara. Moreover, as a response to the gesture of the Atatürk statue in Astana, a statue of Nazarbayev (see Figure 6 below) was unveiled in front of Ankara’s Gençlik (Youth) Park in June 2010. As Smith (1999: 127) emphasises that common myths and memories of ethnonational groups, or what he calls *ethnies*, create a sense of belonging, the statues may be seen as a reflection of the same myths and memories coming to the surface in 2009 and 2010.



Figure 6: Nursultan Nazarbayev statue in Ulus, Ankara.

Source: author’s own picture, 2019

In the energy sphere of relations, Kazakhstan was one of the countries that entered into an agreement on building the BTC pipeline on 18 November 1999 after an OSCE summit in Istanbul (Aras, 2000: 42). Following the agreement, Kazakhstan joined the BTC project on 24 January 2007, projecting that a significant percentage of the Kazakh oil would be supplied through the BTC pipeline to the Mediterranean port of Ceyhan in Turkey by its shipment to Baku from Kazakhstan across the Caspian Sea (Cohen, 2008: 140–141). With this agreement, Kazakhstan commenced supplying crude oil via the BTC in 2008 (Balci and Liles, 2018: 15–16).

It was envisaged that the transportation of Kazakh oil along with Turkmen oil (from 2010 onwards) through the BTC pipeline would be supplied to the EU via the Turkish territory. On the Turkish side, the Kazakh participation in the project meant the fulfilment of the ambition to forge Turkey as a hub of energy transit routes by discarding the Iranian route to the Gulf and other routes travelling across the Russian territory, as a part of converging prospects identified by Turkey as the epicentre of the flow of natural gas and oil from Central Asia, the Caspian Basin, the Gulf and the Middle East to Europe and the rest of the international markets (Cohen, 2008: 140).

As the vast mineral and fossil fuel resources of Kazakhstan are subject to intense European, American, Russian, Chinese and Iranian attention, the impact of this attention materialised as a stiff contest to control or be part of the transportation of those resources. Among these competing global actors, Turkey is situated at the heart of oil and natural gas relations with Kazakhstan. A major stepping stone for American energy policy around the Caspian Basin is Turkey. Since the Russian annexation of Crimea and the ongoing conflict in eastern Ukraine dictates that the Russian supply of gas is not only at stake but also not in their interest, the EU is also in favour of Turkish engagement in the transportation of Central Asian gas and oil to the European markets. After all, “the most powerful weapons” of Russia are not its nuclear or conventional arsenal but oil and gas, due to the fact that Russia supplies more than 25 per cent of European oil and gas (Marshall, 2016: 27). To counteract this dependence on the Russian supply, the East-West corridor was propagated by the USA and the EU to alleviate the dependence on oil and natural gas from Russia.

In October 2009, as with the agreement signed between Turkey and Azerbaijan, a visit by Nazarbayev to Turkey produced a Strategic Partnership Agreement between Turkey and Kazakhstan (Tuimebayev, 2015). This was the first such agreement on the part of Turkey

with a Turkic republic, even preceding the one signed with Azerbaijan in 2010. After the Friendship and Cooperation Agreement, which was signed between the two countries in 1994, the Strategic Partnership Agreement created a more robust foundation for their relations (Kara and Yesilot, 2011: 242).

The trade between the two states increased to more than £2.5 billion in 2008. In 2009, the trade turnover fell to some \$1.5 billion due to the effects of the 2008 financial crisis. However, with an increasing trend in the trade turnover between the two states, presumably the boosting impact of the Strategic Partnership Agreement following 2009 and a decreasing impact of the 2008 financial crisis before 2009, the trade turnover climbed close to \$3 billion (TurkStat, 2018). The Strategic Partnership Agreement could be seen as an official expression of interest to upgrade the relations from the rhetorical expressions of friendliness to a strategic level. The Strategic Partnership Agreement did not include as much ‘Turkic fraternity’ as the Strategic Partnership signed with Azerbaijan. However, it was also an important document for Turkish policy towards the Turkic republics because some of the articles included developing relations with the Turkic supranational organisations.

Article 4 of the Agreement stated that both countries “will work for more integration of the Turkic-speaking states” and provide any support necessary for the CCTS, TÜRKSOY and TÜRKPA. Article 17 of the document encouraged both countries to support the researches on the history and culture of the Turkic-speaking states, protection of the common Turkic inheritance and the activities of TWESCO (*Strategic Partnership Agreement*, 2009). The promotion of common policies concerning the Turkic republics was an indication of both Turkey and Kazakhstan’s inclination toward the Turkic tie in their foreign policies.

Furthermore, the ‘Protocol on Turkey and Kazakhstan Joint Economic Commission’ – which was first effectuated in 1995 – was commissioned in 2011 (Caman and Akyurt, 2011: 49). With this commission, Turkey pledged support for the accession of Kazakhstan to the World Trade Organization (WTO) (Fidan, 2010: 115). In return, Kazakhstan supported non-permanent membership of Turkey on the UN Security Council for the year 2009–2010, resulting in the election of Turkey for the role (Gencler and Akbas, 2011: 5).

Given the total volume of economic and political relations between the two countries, the ambassador of Kazakhstan to Ankara, Zhansait Tuimebayev, commented that Kazakhstan had “established friendly relations with many countries of the world” and “Turkey has a special place in these relationships” (Tuimebayev, 2015). Tuimebayev (2015) recalls the

geostrategic locations of both states and maintains that Turkey, as a relative state, “is ready to support initiatives by [...] Kazakhstan, because we have common roots and a common world view”, by detailing the reinforcement of the common peculiarities between the two countries:

Our common grounds and mutual support on many political issues are reflected in the interaction within the framework of international and regional organisations such as the UN, OSCE, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation, the OIC [Organisation of Islamic Cooperation], CICA, the Turkic Council and TÜRKSOY.

Turkey played a ‘door-opening and right-advocating’ role in the involvement of Kazakhstan along with other Turkic Republics in the above-mentioned supranational organisations (Caman and Akyurt, 2011: 47). In turn, Turkey enjoyed Kazakhstani support in further involvement in international organisations. In addition to the reinforcement of voting cohesion in the UNGA elaborated in Chapter 2, Turkey, through its close cooperation with Kazakhstan and other Turkic republics, took over the chairmanship of the CICA for two years in 2010, and then extended the term to 2014 (Caman and Akyurt, 2011: 48).

The candidacy of Turkey came after a personal proposal by Nazarbayev (Kara and Yesilot, 2011: 244). The CICA, an Astana-headquartered 22-member international organisation for regional cooperation and trust-building, was first proposed by Nazarbayev in 1992, following the 47th session of the UN General Assembly (Kara and Yesilot, 2011: 243). Turkey’s takeover of the chairmanship of the CICA came after a succession of eight years of tenure by Kazakhstan from 2002 to 2010 and with the support of Kazakhstan (Caman and Akyurt, 2011: 48). The apparent multi-tracked foreign policy of Turkey followed after 2002 was compatible with an area of activity in Central Asia besides its Middle Eastern and European policies pursued simultaneously.

Similar support came from Turkey for Kazakhstan for its election to the chairmanship of the OSCE in 2010. As the first non-European country chairing the organisation, the Kazakhstani chairmanship coincided with the Turkish chairmanship of the CICA. At the summit of the Turkic states of 2010, which gathered in Istanbul, the conclusion was drawn that both Kazakhstan and Turkey would encourage each other “to be more active on the multidimensional cooperation platforms” (MFA, 2020). Furthermore, Kazakhstan took over the term presidency of the OIC in June 2011 until November 2012 during the term of Turkish Secretary-General Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, who led the OIC between 2004 and 2014. During the 2010 summit, the participant countries pledged support for this role of Kazakhstan (MFA, 2020). This period of engagement with Kazakhstan and the other Turkic republics became more important later after the eruption of the Arab Spring in 2010. Due to the incendiary

turmoil and instability escalating in the Middle East, Turkish policy in the CAC gained additional importance.

The second term of the AKP coincided with the initiatives of creating international organisations such as the establishment of the CCTS and TWESCO in 2009. Both organisations are the result of personal initiatives by Nazarbayev and Turkey. The CCTS can be noted as the derivative of the TÜDEV summits of the 1990s initiated by Nazarbayev as an adamant promoter of closer engagement among the Turkic republics (Yalinkilicli, 2017), such that the CCTS was founded three years after the 2006 TÜDEV summit held in Antalya when Nazarbayev reiterated his proposal for the formation of a supranational body to institutionalise the summits (CCTS, 2019). In the formation of these organisations, Turkey and Kazakhstan played a pioneering role in encouraging the other Turkic Republics to become involved. Ametbek (interviewed, 2018) emphasised the continuing interest of Kazakhstan in the Turkic supranational organisations by recalling that:

The incumbent Secretary-General of the CCTS is Baghdad Amreyev, who is a Kazakh diplomat; the incumbent Secretary-General of TÜRKSOY since 2008, Prof. Dr Dusen Kasseinov, is of Kazakh origin; and the president in charge of TWESCO, Darkhan Kydyrali, is again a Kazakh.

Accordingly, the second term is the period in which more Eurasian emphasis was placed on the Turkish foreign policy agenda. From this point, the Turkic states presented an alternative to the EU accession scheme of Turkey that insisted on remaining at a standstill. The foreign policy activism of Kazakhstan as an influential player in the region overlapped with the Turkish quest for an alternative to the standstill of the EU membership process. Kazakhstan, under the leadership of Nazarbayev, presents itself as a country of huge soft power in the middle of the tumultuous Central Asian steppes. From voluntary denuclearisation and upholding multiculturalism/diversity to spearheading peace and security initiatives in its neighbourhood, Kazakhstan operates with hyperactive foreign policymaking to ensure that the country takes its principal place in potential security and cooperation enterprises in the region while strengthening its hand in its endeavour to balance the great powers.

With this attribute of contemporary Kazakhstan as an important member of Asian supranational organisations such as the SCO (of which Turkey is a dialogue partner) and the EAEU, the importance of Kazakhstan increased in Turkish foreign policy. In the case of a Turkish quest to join these organisations, Kazakhstan can be regarded as a natural supporter of Turkey. Even if Turkey is not seeking to engage with these organisations, Kazakhstan presents support for the inclusion of Turkey in these organisations. In this regard, it is known

that Kazakhstan is a supporter of Turkish accession to the Moscow-based Eurasian Customs Union (Kasim, 2015: 21).

Turkey is central in the balancing multi-vector equation of Kazakhstani foreign policy. A speech delivered by Nazarbayev (2009) to the TBMM Assembly on 22 October 2009 indicated that Kazakhstan raised higher expectations from Turkey in that Nazarbayev stated that the volume of trade turnover was “lower than expected from the two co-ethnic and friendly states”, and encouraged Ankara to increase its presence in Eurasia:

We support the Turkish accession to the EU. Having said that, as our relatives, we think it would be appropriate to turn your face to the East. Developing a strategic partnership with Russia and running a balanced foreign policy with China would contribute to the prestige of Turkey.

The suggestion by Nazarbayev of encouraging Turkey to increase its presence in Eurasia suggested that Kazakhstan needs Turkey for its soft-balancing policy domestically to empower its ongoing nation-building efforts, and externally for its balancing acts in foreign policy towards its major power neighbours of Russia and China. In the same speech, Nazarbayev also expressed his support for being involved in Turkey’s plans to build the Samsun-Ceyhan crude oil pipeline that will lessen the pressure on the shipping traffic in the Turkish Straits (Nazarbayev, 2009). This came after Barack Obama’s earlier speech at the TBMM Assembly in the same year in which he described Turkey’s “central role as an East-West corridor for oil and natural gas” (Obama, 2009).

Nazarbayev’s motivation to engage with Turkey more closely demonstrated the importance of bilateral relations in the foreign policies of both states. Having accepted the American endorsement of the energy projects in the region, Kazakhstan is naturally involved in the plans to reduce Russian dominance in the energy politics of Europe, especially after the much-hoped-for Nabucco project was discarded later. The Kazakhstani enthusiasm to bring Turkey closer to the Central Asian and Eurasian regional politics was apparently a state policy and Turkic ties stood out as being a linking component of this expectation. Kazakhstan usually balanced Russia and China with the USA, but also Turkey remained as one of the vectors of Kazakhstani foreign policy. Otherwise, a policy similar to that of Ukraine and Georgia, which is to follow an exclusively Western-oriented policy, could result in similar conflicts to those Ukraine and Georgia experienced with Russia.

The same attitude of Kazakhstan was seen towards China as well. It was apparent from the words of Nazarbayev above that the country saw Turkey as a contributor to the balanced relations with China as well. The Kazakh entente with China dates back to October 1993, the

signing of the “Joint Declaration on the Foundations of Friendly Relations between Kazakhstan and China”, and solving border disputes with this country (Diyarbakirlioglu and Yigit, 2014: 77). Turkey’s more active role in Asia, however, would contribute to the future of Sino-Kazakh relations. In this vein, it was apparent that a positive correlation was created by the Kazakhstani leadership between more Turkish presence around Central Asia and Kazakhstani interests.

4.6 Relations from 2011 to 2015: Rising Eurasian Intonation

The third term of the AKP encompasses a more Eurasian connotation in foreign policy. Through its multi-dimensional foreign policy, the country had the flexibility to conjecturally move away from the Western diplomatic spectrum towards Eurasia. Corresponding to this, Davutoğlu stated in 2011 that “[i]t would be impossible to develop a Eurasian policy without taking Kazakhstan into account” (Davutoglu, 2013: 6). Davutoğlu believed that the importance and success of Turkish foreign policy towards the West is a derivative of the success of Turkish foreign policy in Eurasia. To explain this, Davutoğlu uses a bow and arrow analogy by contending that the more Turkey stretches the bow in Asia, the further the arrow stretches out to Europe. This suggests that “Turkey would be constrained in its relations with the EU without having a strong presence in Asia” (Davutoglu, 2001: 562–563). The third period of the AKP, as touched upon in Chapter 3, illustrated a declining interest in the scheme of accession to the EU. Turkey’s quest for more integration into the supranational organisations of Eurasia such as the SCO intensified in this period, following the negative prospects of the accession of Turkey to the EU, beginning with the failed full-membership application in 2005.

Although overall trade between Turkey and Kazakhstan showed a decreasing trend in this period due to the accession of Kazakhstan to the EAEU, a series of economic agreements were laid out. The trade turnover fell from around \$3 billion in 2011 to less than \$2 billion in 2015, though the overall trade with the Turkic republics increased (TurkStat, 2018). In October 2011, an agreement to establish a “joint Kazakh-Turkish industrial zone” in Kazakhstan was signed, and an action plan on trade regarding the period 2012–2015 to materialise a common programme called the ‘New Synergy’ was agreed in order to foster investment in Kazakhstan by Turkish investors (Simsek, Canaltay and Simsek, 2017: 8). Following this programme, a Kazakh-Turkish Business Forum was organised to boost bilateral economic and investment relations with the agreement that the Forum will be

repeated regularly in the future. In the opening speech of the Forum, the basis of the relations was expressed by Erdoğan in a special reference to the shared Turkic identity:

We think of ourselves not as guests here [in Kazakhstan] but together with our brethren in our Fatherland. The historical and fraternal ties between us grant a special quality to relations between Turkey and Kazakhstan. We are happy to see the deep-seated cooperation – built on the basis of being brethren and relatives – increase in every aspect. (Erdoğan, 2012)

Moreover, the nationalism in the pro-Islamic discourse is reliant on the Turkish-Islamic synthesis of allegiance. Thus, the reference made to the Turkic states and the importance given to those states in this period of policy-making is no coincidence. It was a textbook manifestation of the Turkish-Islamic synthesis when Erdoğan delivered his speech at the opening ceremony of the Culture and Arts Capital of the Turkic World in the Anatolian Turkish city of Eskişehir:

All of us, as single humankind, are children of Adam and Eve. We are single humankind that was created by a single creator with different colours and languages to meet each other, communicate with each other and embrace each other. [Beyond these commonalities] Being children of the same family, the same faith and the same civilizational basin is making us [the Turkic people] even closer. (Erdoğan, 2013)

The Islamic internationalism in the words of Erdoğan is quite apparent even at a ceremonial service dedicated to the 2013 Culture and Arts Capital of the Turkic World. The vision of humanity as a single entity is typical of the Abrahamic religions such as Islam. The remarks made by Erdoğan reflected the Turkish-Islamic synthesis, which stems from Islamic but also Turkic primordialism. The occasion to celebrate the Turkic group ceremony seemed to be influenced by an Islamic internationalism and Turkic ethnonationalism simultaneously.

In May 2012, a visit to Kazakhstan by Erdoğan concluded with the establishment of the High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council (HLSCC), which would gather annually, followed by the first meeting of the HLSCC in October 2012 during the visit of President Nazarbayev to Turkey, and the second meeting held during the visit of President Erdoğan to Kazakhstan in April 2015. According to one Kazakh official from the Finance Ministry of Kazakhstan, who reviewed the establishment of the HLSCC above, the closer interaction in this period was based on the foundation of Turkic fraternity (a junior official from the Ministry of Finance of Kazakhstan, interviewed, 2018).

During the visit of Nazarbayev to Turkey following the establishment of the HLSCC, an agreement was signed regarding credit opportunities for investment by the partnership of the Turkish Eximbank and Kazakhstan Development Bank (Nurgaliyeva, 2016: 101). The HLSCC and the level of other economic relations were sourced by the commonalities of both states and by the HLSCC; the relations had a new impetus, coinciding with the new

orientation in Turkish policy toward concentrating more on Eurasia in general and the Turkic republics in particular. After the establishment of the HLSCC, Kazakhstan rose to become the biggest Turkish trade partner in Central Asia in 2015 (Simsek, Canaltay and Simsek, 2017: 14).

The cooperation between the two states was also increased by the supranational organisations formed among the Turkic republics. The CCTS, for example, organised two meetings to gather together diaspora organisations of the member states, including Kazakhstan, in Baku and Ankara in 2013. In these meetings, diaspora organisations of the member states were encouraged to cooperate to increase collaboration and thus their presence on the international stage (Kuscu, 2015: 91). The efforts to combine the diaspora organisations of the member states reflected the sense of the same nationhood and its transnationalism. Combining diaspora organisation of both states had been a long-term plan and demonstrated the perceptions regarding belonging to the same Turkic nationhood.

A discourse analysis of President Nazarbayev showed that during the presidency of Gül, ‘economy’ and ‘investment’ became the words most frequently used by Nazarbayev rather than ‘fraternity’ or references to the common Turkic identity, in comparison to his discourse during the tenure of Özal (Yilmaz, 2013: 504). This can be seen as greater emphasis added to the strategic partnership for their relations rather than a reliance on rhetoric based on the commonalities between the two states. However, the Foreign Policy Concept of Kazakhstan for 2014–2020 cited the relations between the two on the basis of the “common historical roots and cultural values”, and the common Turkic identity remained an enabler in fostering relations between the two (Kazakhstani Presidency, 2019). Thus, the shared Turkic identity continued to be the basis of cooperation between the two states. With the strategic cooperation and strategic rationality in this period, the shared ties remained the main component of the relations, so much so that the Kazakh ambassador to Turkey, Zhanseit Tuimebayev, reiterated that “the most important part of our relations is the cultural sphere. The ties coming from our historical and cultural background continue to be influential”, after emphasising the role of Kazakhstan in mediating the Turkish-Russian rapprochement between 2015 and 2016 (TRT Avaz, 2016).

4.6.1 Mediating Friendship

In the diplomatic sphere of relations between Turkey and Kazakhstan, Nazarbayev showed his full mediating support when a Russian Sukhoi Su-24 military aircraft was shot down by a

Turkish fighter jet on 24 November 2015 on the grounds of Turkish airspace violation in the Syrian city of Latakia. The incident was the first military crisis between a NATO member country and Russia after the Cold War and damaged the Russo-Turkish relations in the aftermath, leading Moscow to cut off relations with Ankara. Charter flights between the two states were cancelled, and many Turkish businesspeople in Russia were deported or arrested (*Hürriyet*, 2016). The tourism sector and bilateral trade between the two states were affected immensely. This crisis between Turkey and Russia would carry the potential to influence relations between Russia and Kazakhstan as well as NATO. Kara (interviewed, 2018) commented upon his early predictions regarding the Russo-Turkish rapprochement that came after a series of shuttle diplomacies and through a secret mediation of Kazakhstan:

At the outset of the incident that unfolded concerning the shot-down Russian jet, I foretold that a swift reconciliation would occur between Turkey and Russia and President Nazarbayev would be the mediator who would make the rapprochement materialise soon. I reached this predictive conclusion by referring to the economic dependency between Turkey and Russia based on a trade turnover of around \$35 billion. I forecasted that the relations between the two would be normalised soon, but the obstacle would be the charismatic leadership styles of both Putin and Erdoğan and thus the both would never retreat from their stance against each other unless a diplomatically skilled mediator turned up. Therefore, these two leaders needed a mediator. When I reviewed all potential mediator states, I concluded that Nazarbayev – who has a close personal relationship with both Putin and Erdoğan – would make the best candidate to materialise the normalisation process and it occurred so in the scope of a year. This was another indication of friendly and fraternal relations between Turkey and Kazakhstan creating a space of diplomatic solidarity.

Nazarbayev brokered the rapprochement between Turkey and Russia, handing over an apology letter from Turkey to Putin at an SCO meeting in Tashkent, Uzbekistan (*Hürriyet*, 2016). As the deterioration of relations between Turkey and Russia was likely to affect the Russian vector of Kazakhstan's foreign policy, the mediator role of Nazarbayev in the rapprochement can be seen as a pragmatic concern. Nevertheless, the approach of Kazakhstan in backing Turkey on the international stage represents a particular attitude to the relations between Turkey and Kazakhstan.

This was again seen in the efforts of Astana to initiate what is known as the Astana Process. The Astana Process assumed a guarantor role for Turkey, Russia and Iran in the search for a ceasefire and resolution in the Syrian conflict in December 2016. Kazakhstan was the mediator country to secure a long-lasting ceasefire in the Syrian Civil War, thus the process was named 'Astana'. Without any involvement of any Western state in this process, Turkey gained a strong hand against the American-led initiatives in the conflict (which were mainly seen by the Turkish government as being against the interests of Turkey) in the resolution of the Syrian crisis on the border of Turkey. Kazakhstan gained a positive image from this initiative as a peace-brokering, initiative-taking Central Asian country. Moreover, the

conflicting policies of Turkey and Russia in Syria could be resolved, and Kazakhstan would be the benefiting party by making sure that Turkey and Russia had acted correctly in terms of international politics because Kazakhstan is potentially the first country that could be affected negatively by a Russian-Turkish rivalry. As Kazakhstan belongs to both the Turkic and Slavic groupings in its foreign policy and identity, the Syrian crisis became a matter of concern for Astana.

Despite the geographical remoteness, Kazakhstan contributed to Turkish diplomatic efforts in both cases (the Russian jet crisis and the Astana Process). Turkey's gains from Kazakhstan's hyperactivity in the regional politics of Central Asia, and even the Middle East, were in line with the dynamic multi-regional international affairs of Turkey. Eurasia has occupied an important dimension of this policy and Kazakhstan arguably contributed the most to Turkey's regional policies in Central Asia. The Turkic tie shared with Kazakhstan was important in making Turkey one step closer to policy goals in Central Asia. As Hale (2013: 225) put it, "[w]ithout this emotional and cultural dimension, it seems most unlikely that they [the Turkish] would have shown anything like the degree of interest and activity in central Asia". Besides the governmental level of Turkic ethnonational narratives and their outcomes in the foreign policy, the non-governmental and people-to-people contacts are to be examined to find out how Track II diplomacy was shaped in the context of Turkic ethnonational identity between Turkey and Kazakhstan.

4.7 Track II Diplomacy between Turkey and Kazakhstan

As Kazakhstan is a vitally important country in Central Asia due to its strategic location and hydrocarbon resources, it attracts the attention of major players in world politics. In Kazakhstan and in Central Asia at large, there is a rivalry between the USA, Russia, Iran and China. The arrival of the USA in Kazakhstan occurred through its energy companies Chevron, Amaco and Exxon, and the NGOs financed by these energy companies. Russia utilised its shared past with Kazakhstan, Kazakhstan's economic and military dependence on Russia and the large Russian minority in Kazakhstan (Purtas, 2006: 1).

Although third-sector organisations emerged in the Soviet Socialist Republics of the Soviet Union after the Chernobyl disaster in 1986, civil society began to develop in Kazakhstan after independence in 1991. Previously, after the Semipalatinsk nuclear disaster in February 1989, civil society grew through the Kazakh poet Olzhas Suleimenov's social movement against nuclear Soviet testing, called the 'Nevada-Semipalatinsk'. The Nevada-Semipalatinsk

movement may be regarded as the first international civil society organisation in Kazakhstan and played a crucial role in the creation of the national identity of Kazakhstan and denuclearisation of the country. The importance attached to the democratisation of Kazakhstan in the early years of independence laid the groundwork for the development of civil society in the country (Purtas, 2006: 2–3). However, a strong civil society did not materialise in the country, though new social movements calling for more democratic governance have recently emerged, such as the *Men Oyandım* (I am awakened) youth movement, which demands more democratic governance from the government (see Ozcan, 2019).

Islam became an important element of the civil society development of Kazakhstan. After a long period of state atheism under the Soviet Union, an Islamic revival emerged, and Islam took its place as a civil society component of Kazakhstan. After 1998, Islamic opposition groups gained power in Central Asia in general, and attention increased towards religious institutions in Kazakhstan. The state-sponsored gathering of the ‘Congress of the Leaders of World and Traditional Religions’ at Astana’s Palace of Peace and Reconciliation since 2003 may be seen as a reflection of this revival in Kazakhstan.⁴⁸ With the ease of the commonalities stemming from Turkic identity, Turkey capitalised on third-sector initiatives to foster relations with Kazakhstan. In the same way, non-governmental organisations such as the Astana-based Turkish-Kazakh Businessmen Association (TÜKİP), the World Union of Ahıska (Meskhetian) Turks (DATÜP) and the Independent Industrialists and Businessmen’s Association (MÜSİAD) in Kazakhstan, and the Union of Turkish-Kazakh Businessmen became instrumental in fostering relations between the two countries.

Political parties in Turkey such as the MHP remained at the centre of friendly interactions with Kazakhstan. For example, former MP from the MHP Sinan Oğan runs a think-tank concerning international relations and was awarded a medal for developing Kazakhstan-Turkey friendship and cooperation by the Kazakhstani ambassador Zhanseit Tuimebayev in 2011. He was previously given an award by the Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev for his contribution to relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan (Haberiniz, 2011). This indicated that the hard-line nationalist MHP and its grassroots were also an important player in Turkey-Kazakhstan relations, endorsed by the party’s emphasis on Turkey’s Turkic identity.

⁴⁸ In addition, a cultural diplomacy initiative was taken by the government for religious pluralism and Astana was announced to be the “Centre for Interfaith Dialogue” in 2003 (Purtas, 2017: 103).

However, on 6 June 2012, the MHP expressed its displeasure over Turkish relations with the Turkic republics. In a motion of no confidence in the Foreign Affairs Minister Davutoğlu in 2012, MPs from the MHP criticised the government and the ‘Turkish-language Olympiads’ of the Gülen network, then organised annually. The MPs said that they were not necessarily against the Turkish-language Olympiads but found them insufficient. One MP from the MHP stated:

There must be robust relations established with the Turkic world. We have unfortunately witnessed a lack of vigorous policy, and the relations with the Turkic world are not working. We are witnessing a lack of policies seeking not to cut off ties [with the Turkic republics] but to strengthen them. [...] the Turkic world requires more attention; Uzbekistan deserves more attention, Kazakhstan deserves more attention [...] Completely ignoring Central Asia (who will witness struggles of global powers), the decreasing activities of TİKA, and even coming to a standstill in this region is against the strategic interests of our country. (quoted in MHP, 2019)

Turkey-based NGOs contributed to relations between Turkey and Kazakhstan. Turkey, as well as Iran, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, utilised the common Islamic identity with the Kazakhs in the country to exert influence (Purtas, 2006: 4). In Turkey’s case, this commonality was highlighted by the Gülenist network along with Turkey’s Turkicness. The Gülenist schools, which were open between the early 1990s and 15 July 2016, had a major impact on the relations between the two countries.

The educational and social activities of the Gülenist organisation continued with the support of the USA. Kazakhstan became the Gülen network’s most active country in Central Asia. More than 30 Gülenist schools were founded in the country, 29 of them being established within two years of the early Gülenist arrival in the country in 1992 (Timeturk, 2018). Following the attempted coup of 15 July, Kazakhstan revoked the residence permits of the Gülenist businesspeople and the teachers of the schools. The executive class of the organisation in Kazakhstan were extradited to Turkey. Some of the militants of the organisation fled the country to Kyrgyzstan to carry on with their activities. Kyrgyzstan is now the only country in which the network is the most powerful in Central Asia, and it operates freely. The government in Kazakhstan nationalised the schools and arranged for their university to be transferred to Turkey’s newly founded Maarif Foundation to run Turkish schools abroad (Yilmaz, 2019). Nazarbayev was the first leader to pay a visit to Turkey after the failed coup. During his visit, he stated that “anyone hostile to Turkey is hostile to Kazakhstan”, indicating the nature of the presidential-level approach to Turkey and the nationhood perceptions of Kazakhstani statehood.

Aside from the governmental course of relations, it is a fact that there is a lack of people-to-people contact in Turkish-Kazakh relations. Therefore, in the case of Turkey and Kazakhstan, governmental interactions carry more importance than non-governmental relations. In Turkey, there is only a small Kazakh diaspora, which first started moving to Turkey from China in the 1950s (Kara, 2019). Some international Kazakh students' gatherings, and a few civil society organisations that were established by the Kazakhs living in Turkey, such as the Otağ Turkic World Association (established by Elmira Şenduran) and the Köktuğ Association, work as Kazakh civil society organisations. However, these organisations are far from being strong pressure groups that could influence Turkish foreign policy towards Kazakhstan or Central Asia.

4.8 Conclusion

As an ex-Soviet socialist republic, if the Khanate period of the Central Asian Kazakhs and the brief Alash-Orda period are ignored, Kazakhstan joined the world of fully-fledged independent states with no experience of statehood and independence prior to the demise of the Soviet Union. In a balancing approach to sustain social harmony domestically, the leadership of the country embarked on nation-building by placing the emphasis on the Turkic past of the ethnic Kazakhs, simultaneously propagating Eurasianism in the context of Turkic-Slavic solidarity and multicultural polity, as well as the common Soviet past of Kazakhstani society. The balanced policy was not confined to serving the domestic harmony of the country as the foreign policy of Kazakhstan perpetuated its multilateral approach to balancing the USA, Russia and China. In this multifaceted foreign policy of Kazakhstan, the co-ethnic Turkey retained its special place on the bilateral and multilateral level with other Turkic states. The special relationship between the two emanated from the upheld ethnic, cultural and linguistic peculiarities. For Nazarbayev, it has been imperative to emphasise the Turkic roots in order to escape the Russian/Soviet past and influence and to turn a new page as a distinct nation, which was the ultimate goal of the nation-building. For Kazakhstan, as a distinct and independent Central Asian nation, the Turkic world and Turkey were attributed as a political and cultural pivot in its national discourse.

As the largest economy in the Turkic world with old-established ties with the West, Turkey presented potentially the closest ally. As the only Turkic state with no Soviet experience and an array of commonalities, Turkey has been positioned at the centre of the newly independent Kazakhstan. Turkey and the identity-building over the Turkic roots have been serving, since

its independence, the urgent need for a top-down national revival under the Kazakh political leadership on the one hand, and the potential threats to national integrity from the outside on the other.

The common perception of 'nation' on the grounds of the Turkic genesis both in Turkey and Kazakhstan contributed to generating a special relationship between the two states. Since the advent of independence in Kazakhstan, the relations have followed a course based on common ties. The recent period of this ongoing special relationship between the years of 2002 and 2015 was no exception. The AKP period oversaw an increasingly intensifying level of political, economic and cultural interaction.

From 2002 to 2007 in the first governmental term of the AKP, Turkish foreign policy, compared to the subsequent two terms, remained relatively distant. Preoccupied with the domestic political and economic issues, the foreign policy of the country focused more on the EU membership process and the West in general rather than a comprehensive policy towards Central Asia. Though Turkey under the first government of the AKP indicated an interest in Kazakhstan along with the other Turkic states in the CAC, any grand-scale cooperation efforts remained short.

The second term of the AKP and the election of Gül as the new president with significant interest in the Turkic republics, however, transformed the course of relations to put more emphasis on the Turkic republics in the CAC. Kazakhstan fell into the key area of the re-engagement in the foreign policy of Turkey in flux. An increasing eastern drift to Eurasia and Eurasian identity coincided with an intensification of relations with Kazakhstan. The second term saw the establishment of collaborative supranational organisations and took the helm of Turkish foreign policy to amplify cooperation with Kazakhstan. The supranational institutions of the Turkic republics were usually established by proposals by President Nazarbayev.

The third term seemed to be based around the goal of sustaining the outcomes of the second term. Due to the balancing multi-vector foreign policy of Kazakhstan, Turkic cooperation went hand in hand with Eurasian integration of Kazakhstan with collaborative organisations established for the cooperation of the Eurasian states. Kazakhstan, like the diplomatic support in its early days of independence, showed support for more engagement of Turkey in organisations with only Eurasian member states.

For the three terms of Turkish foreign policymaking overall, the relations between the states have been determined in the context of common ties and the embracement of these commonalities as the foundations of the relations. In the same upholding of the perception of the nation, the political and economic relations developed as a result of these commonalities.

Historically, the nation-building processes of both states and the discourse on the Turkic cradle in Central Asia as the Turkic civilizational basin played a pivotal role in shaping the national identities of both Turkey and Kazakhstan. The young Turks and Turkist intellectuals mentioned in Chapter 2 laid the foundations for the Turkic sense of nation traversing the borders of the Turkophone republics. The official state nationalism in Turkey after the declaration of the republic capitalised on the legacy inherited from the late Ottoman period. Similarly to the Turkish experience in the discourse of nation-building, Kazakhstan followed suit in building its national identity after its independence following the fall of the Soviet Union.

In the AKP period after 2002 – contrary to the presumption that political parties in Turkey with Islamic credentials are prone to neglect the Turkic states in the CAC – it became evident that the Turkic origins were an elemental component of the studied period of Turkish foreign policy. With regard to the embracement of Turkic elements in the pro-Islamic political discourse, Islamic internationalism was reconciled with ethnic or cultural sub-elements in the Turkish national identity. Nationalism over the shared Turkic identity served as a driving force in simplifying the relations between the two co-ethnic states. This fashion formed the course of relations after the break-up of the Soviet Union. The period of relations from 2002 to 2015 indicated that the relations improved due to the benefits of the same notion of foreign policymaking.

In turn, Turkey presented Kazakhstan with an alternative to gain leverage against Russia in the transportation of its fossil fuels to the West to reduce its dependency on the Russian routes. Furthermore, Turkey became increasingly important for the nation-building process of Kazakhstan after its independence. The success and sustainability of the Kazakhstani nation-building were somehow attached to the relations between Turkey and Kazakhstan. This was because Turkey was the only Turkic republic without a Soviet experience and established its nation-building on the Turkic past well before any other Turkic republics. The cultural dependence of Kazakhstan on Russia could be reduced by more interaction with Turkey, which retained its Turkicness after the late Ottoman period. The common sense of

nationalism between the two states generated outcomes in favour of both the international and domestic policies of Turkey and Kazakhstan. Nationalism, in this sense, came to the fore as a facilitative force for both states. Thus, the mediating role of Nazarbayev in the thawing of relations between Russia and Turkey can be regarded as one of the outcomes of the special relationship between the two.

In short, it is difficult to explain the relations of the studied period with only material considerations, but measures of evolving identities are more relevant. The impact of the Turkic state identities of Turkey and Kazakhstan contributed positively to their relations. Given the nation-building processes of both states in placing the Turkic origins at the centre of their state identity, Turkish foreign policy towards Kazakhstan was endorsed by the idea of the cross-border sense of nationhood. Central Asia was perceived as the 'Fatherland' of the Turks in the public and political discourses of Turkey. Embraced by both Kazakh and Turkish political and social circles to a substantial extent, the Turkic background of both states reinforced a facilitative form of nationalism for the relations and cooperation between the two states between 2002 and 2015.

CONCLUSION

Summary

This thesis is the result of a search for a better understanding of the shared Turkic identity between Turkey and the Turkic republics of the CAC. To this end, the case study countries of Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan and their place in Turkish foreign policy have been examined through the optic of national identity and nationalism. This thesis sought to reconceptualise the idea of the ‘function’ of nationalism beyond the mainstream accounts, in which it is more usually characterised as a malign influence leading to ethnic conflict, civil or total wars. There have, however, been a growing number of scholars and commentators who are attempting to reinvent nationalism (e.g. multicultural and liberal nationalisms) to meet the needs of the modern societies of nation-states. This thesis, however, handles nationalism differently by focusing on inter-state relations of states and attempts to gauge the impact of nationalism among the nation-states of the same ethnonational and cultural background.

To explore this theme, the thesis set out to examine Turkish foreign policy via the ethnographic lines connecting Turkey with parts of the CAC. Two case studies were selected to examine this in detail, and the role of nationalism in the foreign policy behaviour of Turkey towards Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan in the period 2002–2015 formed the basis of research for this thesis. The results can also be extrapolated to understand more clearly the relationships between Turkey and the other Turkic republics of Central Asia (Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) and the Turkic autonomous republics in Russia, China and Moldova along ethnonational and cultural lines. As a caveat, the relations of the non-state autonomous Turkic republics or communities fall into the field of kin-state nationalism, which is outside of the scope of this thesis.

Chapter 1 presented the literature and identified a research gap in the study of nationalism as an understudied aspect of Turkish foreign policy towards the Turkic republics of the CAC. Examining the essentials of Turkish foreign policy and nationalism, the literature review described mainstream accounts of the impact and history of nationalism in relation to Turkish politics and foreign policy. A brief look at the literature shows that there is a lack of academic research on the impact of nationalism through the lens of Turkic identity on Turkish foreign policy regarding the Turkic republics for the studied period.

This chapter also set out the conceptual and methodological rationale of this thesis and identified the ‘facilitative’ conceptual approach to the impact of nationalism. In this conceptualisation, noteworthy examples of where nationalism played an instrumental role

were discussed. In support of the role of national identity formed by ethnonational and religious or ideational identities, other instances of belonging were comparatively discussed, such as allegiances in Orthodox Slavdom, the Anglosphere and the shared languages or Catholicism in the case of Hispanic countries. The chapter also included a constructivist discussion of how cross-border allegiances shape a country's foreign policy in relation to states that share elements of their state/national identity.

Chapter 2 discussed the advent of nationalism in Turkish political and social discourse through in-depth historical analysis. In this historical account, the beginning and evolution of Turkic ethnonational identity in the late Ottoman period and its legacy for subsequent and contemporary Turkish politics were examined. This chapter presented the conclusion that the opening up of Turkish relations with the Turkic republics of the CAC following the demise of the Soviet Union was made possible by the legacy of the Young Turks and the embrace of Turkic origins by the founding elite of the Turkish Republic.

This chapter also demonstrated that nationalism began in irredentist terms but transformed into a non-irredentist and cooperative form in recent Turkish foreign policymaking. This evolved version of nationalism informed the extension of Turkish diplomatic relations to include the CAC of the former Soviet Union in the early 1990s. As also pointed out by Landau (1995a), Turkey's interest in engaging with the Turkic republics in the two volatile regions of the time was based on collaboration rather than irredentism/chauvinism. Given the pre-national nature of the predecessor Ottoman state, the evolution of state nationalism in the early republican era helped shape Turkish foreign policy and its interest-formation towards the Turkic republics.

Chapter 3 investigated Turkish-Azerbaijani relations from the perspective of shared Turkic identity. As the frequently cited notion of 'one nation, two states' comprises the foundation of relations between the two co-ethnic countries, it was commonly argued the commonalities were of substantial importance for political and economic cooperation, especially in the area of energy resources. Turkey and Azerbaijan's shared ethnonational and cultural peculiarities are usually cursorily mentioned in a few lines or a paragraph in scholarly or popular sources. However, the conclusion of this research is that those affinities have much more impact in reality and in determining the interest perceptions of both countries.

Despite the fragility of relations between these two states based on mutual established expectations, the sense of solidarity arising from their common Turkic identity created an

environment that facilitated political and economic inter-state interaction. Of course, despite the case for bilateral relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan, the commonalities could turn into an impediment in developing relations with third-party countries such as Armenia. It is also important to note, however, that the stalemate between Turkey and Armenia has its own long history, which goes beyond any pro-Azerbaijan policies on Turkey's part.

Chapter 4 analysed the relations between Turkey and Kazakhstan and concluded that the post-Soviet nation-building process in Kazakhstan was based on a shared primordial Turkic past. The multi-vector foreign policy of Kazakhstan followed pragmatic, multi-dimensional international affairs, especially concerning the major powers of Russia, the USA and China. In the versatile foreign policy of Kazakhstan, Turkey has held a special place in its foreign policy agenda. The basis of this special place was the shared Turkic past and similar nation-building processes of the two countries. Commonalities of kinship, linguistics and culture constituted the discourse and provided the convenience of bilateral relations. The role of President Nazarbayev as a mediator between Russia and Turkey after the jet crisis and in the Astana Process was an example of this.

The period from 2002 to 2015 revealed no change in the relations between Turkey and Kazakhstan since the first days of Kazakhstani independence. It was, however, a particularly high point in the history of relations between the two states. Indeed, the post-2007 period showed significant collaboration between the two countries. The greater emphasis put by Turkish policymakers on relations with Kazakhstan in the second term of the AKP appears to be in line with Turkey's more Eurasia-leaning foreign policy in general. The Eurasian drift in Turkish policy in this period drew more attention to common ties with Kazakhstan. The Turkic facet of Kazakhstani national identity also became a salient element not only for foreign policy but was also instrumental for its domestic policy in terms of social cohesion.

Chapter 3 and 4 show, overall, that relations between Turkey and both Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan have to a large extent been shaped by their common Turkicness. Most of these ties seem to be the shared peculiarities of their Turkic past. In the religious sphere, the denominational difference between Turkey and Azerbaijan appeared to be largely inconsequential. The secular governance of Turkey, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan essentially nullified the impact of religion on their tripartite relations. The failure of Iran in the CAC – with the only exception of Tajikistan – demonstrated that Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan's

secular governance and their emphasis on nationality in fact prevented Iranian influence in the political and economic relations of the Turkic republics.

The first term of Turkish relations under the AKP government (2002–2007) with Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan were relatively low-scale compared to the party's subsequent second (2007–2011) and third (2011–2015) terms. Nonetheless, the level of relations became maximal in comparison with a decade prior to 2002. The EU accession process was making no headway and relations with the Middle Eastern states remained unpredictable, so Turkish foreign policy found a new imperative to bring the CAC within the fold of its foreign policy agenda. Above all, as constructivism argues, interest perceptions were defined by identity and the Turkic state identity projected that Turkey's interests should be in line with cooperation with Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, as well as in Eurasia.

The tumultuous past of both Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan with Russia prevented them from engaging closely with their northern neighbour unless a compelling strategic or political imperative arose. Since its independence, Azerbaijan has arguably been the most anti-Russian Turkic republic, whereas Kazakhstan, which has struggled to break away from the Russian legacy and influence in many areas, has maintained more cordial and close relations with Russia. The removal of Kazakhstan from the Russian sphere of influence was understandably not straightforward because of the engrained Russian legacy – politically, economically and socially. However, Turkey remained an important actor in providing strategic manoeuvrability to Kazakhstan in its relations with Russia.

Arguments

The principal topic examined in this thesis is the role of the Turkic facet of Turkish national identity in Turkish relations with Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan. The rationale for this was their common historical, ethnic and cultural ties and the similar official historiography of Turkey, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan on these ties. From the lens of Turkey's foreign policy towards Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, the instrumentality of nationalism was investigated and its impact on the bilateral relations of Turkey was studied with the case studies of Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan. The research questions for this thesis considered whether the shared Turkic identity between Turkey and the two other states was a facilitative driver in the relations between them. The scrutiny regarding the impact of nationalism in Turkish foreign policy was introduced as in terms of 'facilitative nationalism' to imply the course of relations based on the shared component of national identity.

This thesis attempted to address the widely referenced but rarely thoroughly investigated notion of inter-state relations of Turkey with Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan in terms of common ethnonational, linguistic and cultural components. Turkey's bilateral relations with these two countries were suited to the context of the research in the quest to subject the function of Turkic identity in bilateral relations to in-depth scrutiny. The increasing Eurasian-leaning nature of Turkey's foreign policy has meant that Turkish relations with the Turkic republics have been of significant importance compared with the overemphasis put by observers on its relations with the West. The common ties of national identity between Turkey and the two case studies in this thesis make it possible to extrapolate further and understand more broadly the nature of Turkish relations with the other independent Turkic states of Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. Relations between Turkey and Turkic minorities in various parts of Eurasia remain in the scope of kin-state nationalism, but this thesis lays the groundwork for the study of the Turkish approach to other minority Turkic groups based on shared Turkic identity.

The studied period of Turkish foreign policy towards Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan (2002–2015) under three consecutive governmental terms has shown a high level of political and economic interaction. The focused time period represents a viable timeframe for the research in its efforts to enquire about the role of the shared Turkic identity. The research is also an account of the nation-building processes of Turkey, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan and investigates their respective foreign policies in relation to their nation-building. National identity and nationalism are domestically sourced and come to the fore as the core of countries' foreign policy choices. In their tendencies to have the course of domestic politics direct their foreign policies, Turkey and the studied states are no exception.

For the domestic sources of national identity, this thesis discussed the first nation-building attempts, which was begun in the late Ottoman period of modern Turkey by the Young Turks. The pre-national identity of the Ottoman Empire and its emphasis on religious identities up to the Young Turk era was shown in the historical context. The emergence of ethnonational identities at the governmental level during the Young Turk era – following their seizure of power in 1908 – engendered the superiority of ethnonational attachments to those of religion's.

Following the establishment of the Republic of Turkey, nation-building efforts centred on non-religious identities, which differed from the long-held religion-oriented policy prior to

the Young Turks. The Young Turk legacy was embraced by the founding elite of the republic in a non-irredentist fashion for domestic political and social restructuring. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the rejection of the Kemalist pro-status quo foreign policy was encouraged by the fall of the Soviet Union, which led to the Turkish entrance into the epicentre of the political affairs of the CAC, underpinned by the common ties with the Turkic republics and generating two new regions of diplomatic openings.

The changing and evolving identities of Turkey refer to the constructivist school of thought. The importance of state and collective identity, and their impact on deciding what is in the interest of a state, can be seen in the case of Turkish foreign policy in the studied country cases. This suggests that ignoring collective identity could lead one to ‘understate the chances for international cooperation and misrepresent why it occurs’ (Wendt, 1994: 391). From this point of view, the collective Turkic identity between Turkey and the two studied countries is important to represent how Turkish foreign policy developed toward the CAC in the studied period.

The research on the shared national identities of the three studied states is unprecedented in its breadth and methodological approach. At a time of rising nationalism across Europe, the USA and parts of Eurasia, this research brings a fresh and thoroughly investigated approach to the impact of state identity on Turkish foreign policy towards Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, and by extension the rest of the Turkic republics of the CAC.

Methodological Approach

This qualitative research includes additional research methods on the grounds of reliability and validity. The research was by nature interdisciplinary, combining knowledge and methods from multiple disciplines for the study of nationalism and IR. In addition to the already interdisciplinary nature of Nationalism Studies, this thesis combined nationalism and IR in the investigation of the impact of nationalism on Turkish relations with Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan. To narrow the scope of this thesis into a more manageable investigation, the case study method was applied. In-depth interviews were conducted to collect data directly from policymakers and strategy developer experts who focus on Turkey’s bilateral relations with Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan.

For the choice of countries for the case studies – Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan – the proximity and high mobility of relations informed the selection process: Azerbaijan is the only Turkic

state of Transcaucasia and closest geographically of all Turkic republics and the eminent Central Asian state of Kazakhstan has a close relationship with Turkey. The remaining three Turkic republics were assumed to share broadly similar lines of relation-building with Turkey, informed by the common ethnonational, cultural and linguistic ties.

The decision to study the particular time period of 2002 to 2015 was based on the fast-growing relations between the studied countries in this period covering three successive Turkish governments. Although the first-term foreign policy of the AKP was comparatively less inclined to the Turkic states and was rather an extension of the long-standing Western orientation in foreign policy, from the second term to 2015 a significant move towards closer relations with Eurasia in general and the Turkic states in particular took place, owing largely to the election of Abdullah Gül as president in 2007.

The methodology of the research included a diverse set of methods detailed above. The qualitative nature of the topic and the interdisciplinary, case study and in-depth interview methods combined to maximise the depth and breadth of the research. In examining how the Turkic identity of Turkey was involved in facilitating Turkish policy in the CAC, the methods used helped to shed light onto the research topic and to obtain the findings.

To equip the author with the theoretical lens of IR, the topic was examined from the prism of constructivism because the post–Cold War era brought about a change in how states perceive each other. The notions of identity, culture and norms emerged as significant elements that have an impact on how states interact. The power-based arguments of realism or pre-set ideas of neoliberalism on inter-state cooperation became less relevant in this period. Indeed, the two theories remained insufficient to explain the relations between Turkey and the two studied Turkic republics, but constructivism offered a more flexible and convincing explanatory framework.

Research Findings

The key findings of the research confirm the initial conceptual and theoretical approach to the topic. Although caution must be taken before generalising too broadly, this research was successful in determining whether Turkic ethnonational and civilisational identity defined Turkish interests in the region and carried a functional role in building simpler relations between Turkey and the Turkic republics of Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan. It firmly

demonstrated the role of nationalism between states with shared kinship and the importance of this for Turkey in a key area of its foreign policy in the studied period.

Following the fall of the Soviet Union, Turkey gained a new sphere of diplomatic outreach and the core of this outreach was focused on the Turkic republics of the CAC. The five Turkic states in both Central Asia and the Caucasus constituted the main lines of Turkish foreign policy towards the CAC in the post-Cold War world geopolitical landscape. The decreasing geostrategic importance of Turkey after the Cold War provided the Turkic republics with an opportunity to increase Turkey's diplomatic outreach. Although these relations began with widely regarded sentimentality in an unrealistic mode, they became more down-to-earth from the second half of the 1990s onwards.

Relations between Turkey and the Turkic republics of the CAC arguably began to surge in the post-2002 period. The ideational legacy of the Young Turks and Turkist intellectuals, along with the political elite of republican Turkey at the time, were conducive to the ambitious extension of Turkish outreach by Özalıan Turkey. In line with the foreign policy approach of the Özal period, the AKP period in Turkish foreign policy showed a substantial level of interest in cooperation with the Turkic republics of the CAC.

The three consecutive terms of Turkish foreign policy under AKP governments (known for their pro-Islamic credentials or neo-Ottoman policymaking) managed to benefit from 'Turkish-Islamic synthesis' and nation-building on the foundations of the country's Turkic past. Helpfully for Turkey's efforts in its relations with the CAC, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan undertook a similar nation-building process based on the Turkic past in the aftermath of the Soviet breakup. The three Turkic republics thus found themselves with similar national identification and consciousness. The decreasing geostrategic importance of Turkey after the end of the Cold War (due to the disappearance of the Soviet threat) coincided with the new geocultural importance attached to Turkey because of its ties with the Turkic republics.

Returning to their Turkic roots after seven decades of Soviet anti-nationalism and communist internationalism, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan fell in step with Turkish republican accounts of the 'Turkic Fatherland' of Central Asia and a common official history of the origins of their people. The three states follow the same ethnogenesis, which supported and drove Turkey to embrace its Turkic roots after the fall of the pre-national Ottoman Empire and did the same for Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan following the end of the Soviet order. Changing the main state identity from religion to nationality occurred during the nation-building experience.

The nation-building legacy of Turkey endured into the AKP period despite the disassociation from the founding Kemalist principles of the state. The Turkic references in Turkey's national identification remained intact up to the studied period and even increasingly grew. Any argument about the impact of nationalism on Turkey's domestic politics is a different field of study, but the findings of this research suggest that Turkic nationalism was a driving force of Turkish policy towards Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan.

The importance attached to the Turkic origins of Turkey in the studied period was significant in terms of the pro-Islamic stance of the AKP, which refused any divisions over ethnonational identifications and promoted a sense of Islamic internationalism. Indeed, the AKP is widely known for its pro-Islamic politics, but this research found that – besides its Islamic credentials – the politics and foreign policy of Turkey under the AKP put significant emphasis on Turkic nationalism, to such an extent that one could argue that this policy contradicts the party's political posture against the country's Kemalist establishment. It is apparent, however, that the AKP period in Turkish foreign policymaking capitalised on the Turkic component of Turkish national identity in Turkey's relations with Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan.

One of the limitations discovered in the research findings concerns the generalisation of the role of nationalism in Turkic ethnonational identity in the Turkish interaction with Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan. It should be understood that these two case study countries are only samples examining the function of Turkic identity and nationalism in the studied relations. Although the case study method strives to reach a generalisation for similar cases, the course of relations established on the informality and mutual trust emanating from kinship and similar national consciousness has also been shown to expose a certain fragility (see Chapter 3 for the deterioration of Turkish-Azerbaijani relations over the normalisation process between Turkey and Armenia) and involvement of external factors.

The second limitation of this research derives from the assumption that the rest of the Turkic republics have the same nationalism-based relationship with Turkey as the two case study countries. The generalisability of the practical side of nationalism based on Turkic identity may ostensibly be futile for those who focus on Turkey-Uzbekistan relations, for instance. Due to the criticism by Turkey of Uzbekistan over human rights concerns, and Turkey's hosting of Uzbek dissidents, relations between the two countries has long deteriorated, although there was a more recent thaw following the 2016 election of a new president in

Uzbekistan (see Balcer, 2012: 154). However, the return of relations to a more constructive track by the new president of Uzbekistan and the accession of Uzbekistan to the CCTS in September 2019 demonstrate that, even when it faces obstacles, the role of shared Turkic identity is an important and influential force in bringing the two states together for cooperation.

Furthermore, the Turkic connection has become even more salient in Turkish foreign policy, giving Turkey more manoeuvring capacity in policymaking. The Turkic tie also began to be important for Russia, as when, in July 2019, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov expressed Moscow's readiness to join the CCTS (Hasanova, 2019). This was a significant policy change and makes it necessary to consider Russia as a rival against Turkey in the CAC with a policy of obstructing excessive Turkish influence in the Turkic republics. Russia's declaration of intent was justified by its demographic structure, as their Turkic minority is the second-largest ethnonational group after the Russians (Hasanova, 2019).

The motive for this move could be based on Russian fear of the rising Chinese political and economic power in the CAC and the lack of the Russian population and economic power to counter expanding Chinese influence. The instrumentality of Turkicness is also available to Russian foreign policy for strategic manoeuvring. Of course, this does not suggest that the expansion of international Turkic organisations is influential enough to reorient Russian or Turkish foreign policy. Even in the case of Turkish policy, the West seems to be the main future vector, given the concentration of political and economic power in Western countries. However, Turkic identity, which was constructed in the late Ottoman period, is still instrumental in creating a space of international diplomatic activity and benefits for Turkey.

To sum up, this research contends that common ethnonational and cultural ties contribute to foreign policy relations between Turkey, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan. The examples of the two case study countries in Turkish foreign policy from 2002 to 2015 demonstrated that nationalism along the lines of Turkic identity is a functional element in Turkish foreign policy's outreach towards the Turkic states. Ethnonational, linguistic, historical and cultural ties amongst these states can serve a function in these states' political and economic cooperation because, from a constructivist perspective, these ties determine how policies are made in line with perceived interests. Turkish foreign policy towards the ethnically and culturally connected Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan represents a 'facilitative' form of nationalism in the relations of these states. Distinct from inquiries into the ontology and

effects of nationalism, this research delivers a different and original approach using the factual outcomes of the shared embrace of Turkic identity for Turkish foreign policy.

The instrumentality of Turkic identity is facilitative in the following aspects:

- 1) It provided a sphere of influence for Turkey in the CAC for an activist foreign policy and made it more advantageous than its potential rivals (Russia and Iran) after the end of the Cold War. This advantage emerged especially in the energy sphere of Turkey's relations with Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan in the study period.
- 2) Turkic identity helped the nation-building of Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan and allowed them to become distinct post-Soviet nations, while also providing room for strategic manoeuvring not only to Turkey but also to Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan.
- 3) Although the three Turkic states promote multicultural governance and internationalism in their domestic politics, their bilateral and multilateral relations were established based on their Turkic ethnonational identity.
- 4) The shared Turkic identity cemented the relations of the trio, and Turkey mutually benefited from this, even though Turkish foreign policy during the study period was associated with pro-Islamic or neo-Ottoman elements.
- 5) With the help of the Turkic element of Turkish national identity and the support of Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan, Turkey increased its international influence via the new international organisations established in cooperation with the Turkic republics.

Contribution to Knowledge and Literature

The contribution of this thesis to existing academic literature centres on the study of nationalism and Turkish foreign policy. On the side of Nationalism Studies, this thesis is a significant work in the conceptualisation of inter-state relations based on common ethnonational, historical, linguistic and cultural ties. The specific topic of this thesis, the position of Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan in Turkish foreign policy using the framework of nationalism and constructivism, is the first of its sort.

By focusing on the bilateral interactions of Turkey with Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, this thesis also provides an account of Turkish foreign policy behaviour in the CAC. At a time when Turkey's foreign policy agenda is increasingly focusing on Eurasia, such examination is currently lacking elsewhere. Because the states of Central Asia and Transcaucasia are

relatively undiscovered – given their short history of independence in the post-Soviet world – this thesis is topical, relevant and necessary.

Nationalism endured in the post–Cold War period and grew stronger in many respects. Some scholars and commentators have harnessed the phenomenon of nationalism as being channelled towards the common good, whereas others would demonise the idea entirely as a malign force. The idea of capitalising on nationalism side falls into the former camp. Yael Tamir’s newly published book *Why Nationalism* on the comeback and instrumentality of nationalism for the benefit of the liberal world can be seen as a verification of efforts to channel nationalism as an instrument for the domestic or foreign policy of states or as an element of social cohesion.

The analysis in this thesis is in line with this approach. The Turkic element of Turkish state identity, mainly constructed in the early years of the Turkish Republic, has been transformed into a foreign policy instrument for Turkey’s relations with the Turkic states. In the equation of Turkish foreign policymaking towards Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, the Turkic component of Turkish national/state identity was embraced by the three governments in the studied period and led to interest-formation in the CAC.

The present research articulates that nationalism is a reality and that national identity exists as a catalyser in the relations of Turkey with its co-ethnic states of Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan. Capitalisation on the Turkic component in these relations was analytically analysed through the lens of Turkic identity and nationalism in Turkey based on a constructivist interpretation of the relationship between identity and interest. As a phrase that describes the nature of relations between Turkey and the studied states, a conceptual contribution to the literature of nationalism was also made. The analytical approach presented in this thesis can be applied to other states with common ties under the same terms introduced in this thesis.

The thesis also contributes to the knowledge of Turkish foreign policy by its analysis of the main trends and approaches in the country’s foreign policymaking. This thesis is an analytical review of Turkish foreign policy lines towards the Turkic world, and it touches upon the less studied area of the Turkic republics in Turkish foreign policy. This thesis thus provides a comprehensive analysis of Turkey’s relations with the Turkic republics and related communities.

Concluding Remarks

The research presented in this thesis is a conceptual development. The basis of the conceptual presentation resides in the notion of the supposed impact of nationalism in easing the establishment and development of cooperation amongst states with common ties. The specific exploration of relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan is a clear example of the supposed function of nationalism in inter-state political and economic affairs in the context of the shared Turkic ethnonational peculiarities.

Nationalism has made a surprising return, which daunts many in the West and in Europe in particular. The fear of nationalism derives from its potential to damage the unity and integrity of the EU and the rise of far-right political movements across Europe, usually fuelled by chauvinism and xenophobia. At a time of recently increased scholarly and public attention to nationalism, this thesis is significant because it considers a different facet of nationalism and focuses on Turkey's inter-state relations. Concerning the inter-state aspect of nationalism amongst the states with commonalities, nationalism can be a force facilitating relations for greater international affiliation. Nationalism exists in many shades and forms, and the examined impact of nationalism in this thesis explores its widely neglected role in international cooperation. In sum, this thesis shines a light on the role of the international form of nationalism and carries the potential to be a horizon-broadening model for further research into similar cases in different regions.

This thesis is also outside mainstream approaches to Nationalism Studies and demonstrates the reinvention of multi-stranded nationalism in IR without delving into its aggressive forms in domestic and inter-state conflict escalation or the fuelling of enmity amongst social groups or states. The different angle enquiring how and what constructive impact, if any, nationalism can have in the inter-state relations of shared national identity elements constitutes a notable addition to the literature on nationalism, not least because nationalism is perceived and constructed differently in different countries and even in different social groups.

This thesis analysed the common ties amongst Turkey, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan that generate a sense of mutual trust and forms the basis of political and economic relations. Republican Turkey began with an inward-looking policy to the point of becoming pro-status-quo in international politics, with a more pre-eminent focus on domestic politics and nation-building. The Turkic origins of Turkey were used for nation-building by the founding elite in the early years of its republican history. The same Turkic origins were again on the agenda

for foreign policy in the studied period of Turkish policy because they were embedded in the country's identity as a state. By the time the Turkic republics of the CAC emerged from the collapse of the Soviet Union, Turkish diplomatic outreach was ready to reach out in cooperation based on its own Turkic origins. The study period (2002–2015) of relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan was also built on this legacy. The decision of Turkish policymakers to embrace this legacy signals the importance of the Turkic facet of Turkish national identity.

Prospects for Further Research

This thesis carries the potential to generate prospects for further research based on the gap in the literature of nationalism in connection with IR. The endurance of nationalism in various forms is a reality, and its impact on the relations of states is ongoing. From that reality, this thesis creates a crucial space for further research in this area. Future interdisciplinary research on nationalism and IR can materialise in two aspects. The first would include case study work on the other Turkic states: Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and, more importantly, Uzbekistan. The relations with these Turkic states would reveal a clearer perspective that would pave the way for supportive and more conclusive judgements regarding the function of shared components of state/national identity in the inter-state affairs of Turkic republics and Turkey. In addition to studies on kin-state nationalism, further research on the fully independent states with common ties would yield a significant contribution to the study of nationalism, as well as the study of IR.

The second aspect for future research could centre on states other than Turkey and the Turkic states. As can be seen from Chapter 1, there are similar cases in which shared components of national identity are a functional asset for inter-state affairs. The application of an interdisciplinary qualitative research approach would generate satisfactory results for the examination of a different set of states with such affinities.

Further to this approach, Anglophone, Francophone and Slavic countries, as well as the Spanish-speaking states of South America and Spain could be put into the research equation of nationalism and IR. This would require in-depth knowledge on the part of those who delve into specific countries within those groups of states. The ethnonational, religious and cultural background of those states, as components of their national identity, can be examined in light of their impact on the relations with countries sharing common components of national identity.

From the perspective of constructivism, the common ties in these spheres can be embedded into qualitative research by a string of research methods such as those applied in this research; this would yield a thorough investigation of political and economic facts given in the relations of the states in question.

Such efforts should rely on qualitative and interdisciplinary research approaches. The methodological framework applied in this thesis can be used for equivalent research on other states with ethnonational, religious and cultural ties. The affinities do not necessarily have to include ethnonational, religious and cultural together, if such study would be too extensive or limited in detail. It could instead feature one or two of the components of national identity that particular states have in common, as was done in this thesis. This would still generate concrete empirical findings regarding the instrumental impact of nationalism in inter-state relations.

It is important to note the limits of making quick generalisations in such research. One could cite the current relations between Ukraine and Russia, for example: both belong within the sphere of Orthodox Slavdom, but their relationship has deteriorated into one of deep animosity. Although both states have a shared historical and religious background, it was presumably these ties that have enabled Russia to be aggressive towards Ukraine. In this situation, as in others, it appears that ideological divergence and a bitter history of acrimonious relations between the two countries outweigh any more instrumental aspect of their common ties or pan-nationalism that might be at work. This confirms the need for an empirical study to examine the narratives of the affinities and the context and conditions that make facilitative nationalism possible.

This exception and many others prevent a generalisation that states that a shared national identity component innately leads to facilitated relations and increased cooperation, as in the case of Turkey, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan. Instead, it must be accepted that there are many aspects that come into play in the development of relations between states that are not limited to the current political and ideological alignment of a state. The specific scrutiny in this thesis proved that the shared elements of national identity *can* facilitate the formation of relations between Turkey and both Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, but it does not necessarily follow that it must be so in every case. Further research into other examples should test this theory in a broad range of other scenarios via case studies. The next two case study countries, in terms of

Turkic identity, should perhaps be Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan, which are also relatively under-analysed countries in terms of their shared Turkic identity with Turkey.

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In-depth Interviews⁴⁹

A junior official from the Ministry of Finance of Kazakhstan - 17.11.2018.

An academic from Narxoz University in Kazakhstan - 5.8.2018.

Abdulvahap Kara - Professor of history with specific expertise on Kazakhstan - 10.10.2018.

Atila Kaya - Member of the TBMM and TURKPA Turkey Group, 28.02.2018.

⁴⁹ The recordings of the interviews or transcripts are available upon request.

Coşkun Çakır - Member of the TBMM and Deputy Chairman of the Parliamentary Commission on Foreign Affairs of the TBMM - 14.02.2018.

Dinmuhammed Ametbek – Think-tank expert focusing on Kazakhstan - 7.11.2018.

Fazil Mustafa - Member of the National Assembly of Azerbaijan and deputy of Abulfaz Elchibey on legal affairs - 2.4.2018.

Gülzar İbrahimova - Professor of IR at Baku Eurasia University - 3.11.2018.

Haluk İpek - Chairman of Turkey-Azerbaijan and Turkey-Kazakhstan Inter-Parliamentary Friendship Groups, and TURKPA Law Committee - 14.2.2018.

Mevlüt Dudu – Member of the TBMM and the Parliamentary Commission on Foreign Affairs of the TBMM - 20.2.2018.

Musa Qasimli - Member of the National Assembly of Azerbaijan and director of the Institute of the Caucasian Studies at Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences - 24.7.2018.

