

TÜRKİYE'S TRADE DIPLOMACY WITH TURKIC STATES: AZERBAIJAN,  
KAZAKHSTAN AND UZBEKISTAN COMPARED

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **TÜRKİYE’S TRADE DIPLOMACY WITH TURKIC STATES: AZERBAIJAN, KAZAKHSTAN AND UZBEKISTAN COMPARED**

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This doctorate thesis examines Türkiye’s Trade Diplomacy of with Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, which it has the largest trade volume among the five Turkic states that declared their independence after the dissolution of the Soviet Union Trade Diplomacy term is discussed as a concept within the framework of international relations discipline with a view of social constructivism. The term is explained by using the tools Türkiye has been using and it was detailed in comparison with Türkiye’s trade and economic relations with those five Turkic states.

Türkiye has established close relations with the Turkic states since their independence and has kept trade at the forefront in these relations. These relations are based mainly on common historical, cultural and social heritage, which aimed to find common grounds with those ties. Türkiye emphasizes the common identity with those states at the highest level. This emphasis is far from bearing a hegemonic assertion or quest for political influence on the region. Türkiye’s main objective on that emphasize is to reach to a common welfare and to build strong structures which would be jointly benefited by the Turkic states. Joint Economic Commission meetings, private sector

activities such as Business Councils, Business Forums, along with Agreements such as *Mutual Promotion and Protection of Investments*, and *Prevention of Double Taxation* have been the main basis for trade relations. Beyond this, Türkiye has made attempts to sign Preferential Trade Agreements with those countries. It is seen that Türkiye has been using trade diplomacy tools effectively in its developed relations with those states.

**Keywords:** Trade diplomacy, Turkic States, Joint Economic Commission, Preferential Trade Agreements

## ÖZ

### TÜRKİYE’NİN TÜRK CUMHURİYETLERİ İLE TİCARET DİPLOMASİSİ: AZERBAJCAN, KAZAKİSTAN VE ÖZBEKİSTAN’IN KARŞILAŞTIRMASI

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Bu doktora tezi, Türkiye'nin Sovyetler Birliği'nin dağılmasının ardından bağımsızlıklarını ilan eden beş Türk devleti arasında en büyük ticaret hacmine sahip olduğu Azerbaycan, Kazakistan ve Özbekistan ile ilişkilerini uluslararası ilişkiler disiplindeki sosyal inşacılık üzerinden Ticaret Diplomasisi kavramı etrafında incelemektedir. Kavram, Türkiye'nin kullandığı araçlar kullanılarak açıklanmış ve Türkiye'nin bu beş Türk devleti ile olan ticari ve ekonomik ilişkileri karşılaştırmalı olarak detaylı bir şekilde ele alınmıştır.

Türkiye, bağımsızlıklarından bu yana Türk devletleri ile yakın ilişkiler kurmuş ve bu ilişkilerde ticareti ön planda tutmuştur. Bu ilişkiler, temel olarak, ortak tarihi, kültürel ve sosyal mirasa dayanmakta olup, bu temeller üzerinden ortak bir Zemin bulma amacını taşımaktadır. Türkiye bu devletlerle ilişkilerinde ortak kimlik vurgusunu en üst düzeyde dile getirmektedir. Bu vurgu, bölge üzerinde hegemonik bir iddia veya siyasi etki arayışı taşımaktan uzaktır. Türkiye'nin bu vurgudaki temel amacı, Türk devletleri ile birlikte bir refaha ulaşmak ve ortak faydayı temin edecek güçlü yapılar inşa etmektir. Karma Ekonomik Komisyon toplantıları, İş Konseyleri, İş Forumları gibi özel sektör faaliyetleri ile Yatırımların Karşılıklı Teşviki ve Korunması, Çifte Vergilendirmenin Önlenmesi gibi Anlaşmalar ticari ilişkilerin temel dayanağı



olmuştur. Bunun ötesinde Türkiye, bu ülkelerle Tercihli Ticaret Anlaşmaları imzalamak için girişimlerde bulunmuştur. Türkiye'nin bu ülkelerle geliştirdiği ilişkilerde ticari diplomasi araçlarını etkin bir şekilde kullandığı görülmektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Ticaret Diplomasisi, Türk Cumhuriyetleri, Karma Ekonomik Komisyon, Tercihli Ticaret Anlaşması

*To My Dear Mother*

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

CIS: Commonwealth of Independent States

EEU: Eurasian Economic Union

EU: European Union

FTA: Free Trade Agreement

GATT: General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade

JEC: Joint Economic Commission

IMF: International Monetary Fund

IR: International Relations

IPE: International Political Economy

PTA: Preferential Trade Agreement

TRY: Turkish Lira

USA: United States of America

USD: US Dollars

WTO: World Trade Organization

YDSK: High Level Strategic Partnership Council

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The relationship of trade with diplomacy and its impact on foreign policy is becoming more attractive in international relations (IR) studies in recent years. Since the pre-modern states, trade has been one of the most important factors affecting political relations. For example, the Silk Road from China to the West was a trade route on one hand and a route of diplomacy on the other. (Li & Schmerer, 2017, p. 205) In this context, the relationship between trade and institutional structures related to trade and foreign policy, both in terms of actors and methods, has attracted the attention of researchers in academic literature. The functions of diplomatic agents assigned by countries to each other or to multilateral organizations regarding the development of trade are sometimes described as game changing in very early works. (Bishop, 1915, p. 294) The effect of trade on foreign policy making and diplomacy within the scope of the execution of foreign policy, especially after the second world war, became more central with the institutionalization of multilateral trade negotiations. (Bagwell & Staiger, 2004, p. 2) With the end of the cold war since the 1990s, trade has come to the fore more in the agenda of world politics, and with the structuring of the World Trade Organization, it has become constant agenda in bilateral and multilateral diplomacy.

In this regard, effects of trade in diplomacy gained more attraction in IR studies and a newly emerged concept of economic and/or trade diplomacy has found a ground in the literature. (Lee & Hocking, Economic diplomacy., 2010, p. 1216) The activities of commercial agents in the embassies, as well as the technical experts in the World Trade Organization has started to be recognized within this term. British cotton trader and politician, Richard Cobden's "*free trade is God's diplomacy. There is no other certain way of uniting people in the bonds of peace*" phrase is referred by Tussie to indicate

that trade allocates economic resources between private interest by creating winners and losers. (Tussie, 2013, p. 626)

Tussie also states that trade leads to demands and claims for compensation by facing tensions between political authorities and markets. (Tussie, 2013, p. 626) All this process can be explained within the framework of diplomacy. In this regard, effects of trade on the formation and execution of international policy are a subject discussed in the IR literature together with bilateral and multilateral organizations and the regulations shaped through these organizations. The rules created by those mechanisms have not only been the rules regulating the flow of trade but have also been seen as a balancing factor in political relations. (Bagozzi & Landis, 2015, p. 153) It reflects the idea that trade is strictly involved in diplomatic activities. There are many different uses of trade diplomacy, such as economic diplomacy or commercial diplomacy, which have minor differences, however defining the same idea, which aims to show that trade, economy and commercial activities are directly involved with diplomatic framework. Hudson and Lee also point out that as a result of technological and organizational dynamics, modern diplomatic practices have brought rapid communication, less secrecy and increased informal public participation, as well as a marked increase in the participation of officials from other government departments as well as private actors. (Hudson & Lee, 2004, p. 354)

Trade related activities carried out by Türkiye have played an important role in its foreign policy choices, especially after the independence of the Turkic republics since the 1990s. (Gönel, 2001, p. 596) The emphasis on common history and culture in the discourse and policies towards these countries also played an active role in the mechanisms related to trade diplomacy. In the trade and economic relations with these countries, rather than Türkiye's own unilateral interest and efficiency efforts, Türkiye aimed at building a common identity in line with other elements of foreign policy and a total increase in common welfare rather than commercial and economic interests shaped around this identity. It is possible to argue that in this type of relationship, Türkiye has built a common structure by enabling the other party to benefit more than its own unilateral interests. Following the independence of the Turkic republics, the trade and economic cooperation agreements, agreements of mutual protection and promotion of investments and agreements for the prevention of double taxation signed

by Türkiye with these countries and Joint Economic Commission (JEC) mechanisms have been the main tools of trade diplomacy. As examined in the following chapters, the primary goal for Türkiye in setting those mechanisms is that they would provide continuity rather than obtaining concrete economic results for Türkiye itself. The main element in the texts and spirit of the agreements, especially the protocols of the joint economic commission meetings, is the wishes and commitments regarding the contribution to be made by Türkiye to these countries and the mechanisms that Türkiye wishes to establish with these countries. This shows that Türkiye's trade diplomacy with the Turkic republics was established in a social constructivist manner. For this reason, the primary element of this study is that Türkiye's trade diplomacy relations with the Turkic republics should be handled from a social constructivist point of view rather than a realist point of view, contrary to the general acceptance in the literature.

Another side of the subject is the evaluations of the way trade diplomacy is handled in international relations literature. Trade diplomacy tools are discussed in many aspects in the literature, and there are conflicting outcomes within the framework of realism and liberalism. It is one of the aims of this thesis to reveal the studies on this subject, which is discussed in a wide spectrum from trade prevents wars, to the fact that trade itself is the cause of wars, and to bring a different perspective to the way trade diplomacy is handled in the literature, with the social constructivist aspect of trade diplomacy carried out by Türkiye with the Turkic republics.

It is important to see the reference given to trade diplomacy mechanisms in economic and commercial relations in studies dealing with Türkiye's relations with the Turkic Republics from a wider perspective. In this context, the examination of the texts and spirit of the protocols of the joint economic commission and the preferential trade agreements shaped within the framework of this mechanism in terms of text and scope is presented as a new contribution to the existing studies in this field.

States conduct trade diplomacy at two main levels: bilateral trade mechanisms and multilateral platforms. Both levels are more bound to each other especially after the founding of the World Trade Organization (WTO). (Bagwell & Staiger, 2004, p. 2)

Bilateral trade diplomacy mechanisms are carried out through joint mechanisms established by the bilateral business community, as well as official relations between

states. (Murphy & Nelson, 2001, p. 393) Trade diplomacy mechanisms carried out on a bilateral basis can have different effects on countries. For this reason, it is difficult to determine a hierarchical order between those mechanisms. While the Joint Economic Commission mechanism is a basic mechanism that is used in between two countries, the business council mechanisms developed by private sectors emerge as more regular and effective mechanisms in the relations between private sector partners.

The functioning of bilateral trade diplomacy mechanisms seems to have become more dependent on multilateral mechanisms with the establishment of the World Trade Organization (WTO). With the GATT Agreement<sup>1</sup>, countries made tax privileges dependent on each other in the multilateral field. While the necessity to make bilateral concessions multilateral, such as the Most Favored Nation rule<sup>2</sup>, increases the importance of multilateral mechanisms, the exclusion of bilateral and regional trade agreements in line with the provisions of the GATT Agreement, has also left an important ground for bilateral mechanisms and regional formations between countries.<sup>3</sup>.

In multilateral trade diplomacy mechanisms, it is seen that institutional structures come to the fore more, and multilateral international organizations such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) play an active role in this context. (Bagwell & Staiger,

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<sup>1</sup> The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT 1947), [https://www.wto.org/english/docs\\_e/legal\\_e/gatt47\\_01\\_e.htm](https://www.wto.org/english/docs_e/legal_e/gatt47_01_e.htm) , Accessed on June 22, 2021

<sup>2</sup> “Most-favoured-nation (MFN): treating other people equally Under the WTO agreements, countries cannot normally discriminate between their trading partners. Grant someone a special favour (such as a lower customs duty rate for one of their products) and you have to do the same for all other WTO members. It is so important that it is the first article of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), which governs trade in goods. MFN is also a priority in the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) (Article 2) and the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) (Article 4), although in each agreement the principle is handled slightly differently. Together, those three agreements cover all three main areas of trade handled by the WTO.”

[https://www.wto.org/english/thewto\\_e/whatis\\_e/tif\\_e/fact2\\_e.htm#:~:text=Most%2Dfavoured%2Dnation%20\(MFN,discriminate%20between%20their%20trading%20partners.](https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/whatis_e/tif_e/fact2_e.htm#:~:text=Most%2Dfavoured%2Dnation%20(MFN,discriminate%20between%20their%20trading%20partners.) , Accessed on June 22, 2022

<sup>3</sup> The WTO Agreements contain special provisions which give developing countries special rights and which give developed countries the possibility to treat developing countries more favourably than other WTO Members. These special provisions include, for example, longer time periods for implementing Agreements and commitments or measures to increase trading opportunities for developing countries. [https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/devel\\_e/dev\\_special\\_differential\\_provisions\\_e.htm](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/devel_e/dev_special_differential_provisions_e.htm) , Accessed on June 22, 2022.



2004, p. 4) Multilateral trade diplomacy organizations, on the other hand, have an institutional structure, and the level of participation in these mechanisms of the countries shows similar characteristics. They represent a concept that has been used to seek an answer to the question of how countries conduct their international economic relations. (Bayne & Woolcock, 2011, p. 1) As trade related issues have become more technical and multilateral negotiations on trade liberalization more institutionalized, the development of trade-related diplomatic mechanisms followed suit. The World Trade Organization (WTO), which was established as a result of the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT) signed in 1994, is a powerful platform where negotiations that shape world trade are carried out intensively. (Moore, 1996, p. 317) In this regard, it is noteworthy that diplomats participating in WTO negotiations mostly have a trade background in terms of technical knowledge. These diplomats have more intense communication with institutions and organizations specialized in subjects such as trade, economy, and agriculture rather than the foreign ministries in their contacts with their own countries. (Petersmann E.-U. , 2019, p. 503)

Permanent Representatives at the WTO hold the title of Ambassador<sup>4</sup>, but the teams of these Ambassadors consist of expert diplomats from institutions and organizations related to economy and trade. The execution of trade diplomacy at this level also shapes the dynamics of the economy and trade. To explain better this relationship with an example, there are many diplomats appointed from the Ministry of Trade in Türkiye's Permanent Representation to the World Trade Organization along with the diplomats assigned from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs<sup>5</sup>. These diplomats hold the titles of Deputy Permanent Representative, Chief Commercial Counsellor, Commercial Counsellor and Deputy Commercial Counsellor. (T.C. Ticaret Bakanlığı, 2022)

In the World Trade Organization, the members have agreed on common ground to

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<sup>4</sup> For example, Ms Zhanar Aitzhanova, from Kazakhstan, is Permanent Representative of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the UN Office and other International Organizations in Geneva. Prior to this, Ms Aitzhanova served as Chief Negotiator for Kazakhstan's accession to the WTO (2005-2015), [https://www.wto.org/english/thewto\\_e/acc\\_e/t4p21/01\\_zhanar\\_aitzanova.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/acc_e/t4p21/01_zhanar_aitzanova.pdf) ;

<sup>5</sup> Ticaret Bakanlığı Yurtdışı Teşkilatı,  
<https://ticaret.gov.tr/data/5d15e6b713b8760e60fd5283/Uluslararası%20Kuruluşlar%20Nezinde%20Daimi%20Temsilciliklerimiz.pdf>

make certain concessions and decisions of WTO, have legal consequences. (Moore, 1996, p. 317) On the other hand, there some other economy-based organizations such as the OECD, Islamic Cooperation Organization, Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation which are formed by countries with certain common characteristics. By nature of international law, these organizations are formed by legally binding agreements. For example, OECD can "take decisions which, except as otherwise provided, shall be binding on all the Members (Schwartz, 1977, p. 529). However, those institutions do not form a legal basis for regulating international trade as it is in WTO. Those organizations aim to take initiative in certain areas. It is noteworthy that countries are also represented at Ambassador level in those organizations (Turner, 2009, p. 54). There are also diplomats appointed from institutions specialized in economics and trade, including the Permanent Representative level mainly have background of economy and trade bureaucracy<sup>6</sup>.

Actors in bilateral and multilateral trade diplomacy are important elements in the way this diplomatic activity is carried out. On the other hand, the mechanisms that emerge as a result of the activities of these actors constitute the results of commercial diplomacy both legally and politically and have a guiding function for decision makers. In the form of Türkiye's relationship with the Turkic states, sometimes actors and sometimes mechanisms come to the fore, revealing that trade diplomacy is extremely sensitive to factors such as the identity, common history, culture and political relations between countries and structures.

### **1.1. Scope and Objective**

The aim of this thesis is to examine the trade diplomacy activities that Türkiye has been carrying out with the Turkic states since the 1990s, within the framework of a social constructivist approach, which is characterized by unique type of "brotherhood" discourse which has been constructed reciprocally with those states since the beginning of the relations. While doing this, the concept of trade diplomacy will be handled in a conceptual framework and the validity of the theoretical discussions on

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<sup>6</sup> Mustafa Tuzcu, who was serving as Chief Commercial Counsellor of Türkiye at the World Trade Organization until 2021, was appointed as Deputy Minister of Trade during this post. (Official Gazette May 8, 2021)

the role of trade diplomacy in international relations will be questioned by taking Türkiye's relations with the Turkic states as a model. The thesis defends that trade diplomacy prepares a suitable ground for the development of bilateral relations between the countries in question, beyond the aim of increasing trade in these relations by contributing that socially constructed identity.

Türkiye's economic and trade relations with the Turkic states have developed rapidly since the first years when the Turkic states gained their independence. (Ersungur, Kızıltan, & Karabulut, 2007, p. 285) As discussed in detail in the following parts of the thesis, many mechanisms have been established between Türkiye and the countries in question in this process. (Alagöz, Yapar, & Uçtu, 2004, p. 59) Although these mechanisms aim to increase bilateral trade, the existence of these mechanisms themselves has created an important ground for relations between countries. The trade volume that will be created by the preferential trade agreement with Azerbaijan corresponds to a small sum in the current trade volume between the two countries as it is shown in the relevant chapter. The preferential trade agreement signed between Uzbekistan and Türkiye can only be an agreement on agricultural products due to Türkiye's being limited with Customs Union with EU, (Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Trade, 1995) and when the trade in agricultural products between the two countries is evaluated, it is an agreement that can be expected to have a limited effect on increasing trade for two countries with similar production structures. When Türkiye's trade with Kazakhstan and the structure of trade diplomacy mechanisms are analyzed, it is necessary to make an assessment on Türkiye's existing customs union with the European Union and Kazakhstan's customs union with the members of the Eurasian Economic Union. (Konopelko, 2018, p. 5) It is noteworthy that there are technical obstacles to achieving the goals stated in the written texts. Although it is technically difficult to establish a preferential regime between the two countries under current conditions, it is seen that trade diplomacy mechanisms are carried out actively and regularly. This framework provides a new dimension to the studies on the economic effects of trade diplomacy. This thesis shows that, in that relationship, apart from its contribution to trade volume between two countries, trade diplomacy has a role of strengthening the brotherhood discourse of those countries which mainly points out to increase a total welfare of the parties, emerging as a divergence from realist modeling of international relations, which traditionally dwells upon power struggle between the

parties which would be expected to be beneficial for one side.

## **1.2. Theoretical Framework and Literature Review**

International Relations theories basically aim to interpret the events, causes and results in the field of international politics from their own perspectives. (Walt, 1998, p. 29) According to the importance given to the facts and events, their point of view determines what should be considered as a priority. Mainstream theoretical approaches in international relations have been dominant in explaining the relations until the end of cold war. After that, new interpretations which mainly stemmed from criticisms of prevailing theoretical frameworks began to emerge as alternatives.

In this regard, for Türkiye's relations with Turkic states, those mainstream realist and liberalist approaches remains inadequate and in fact, incapable of explaining the relationship with their traditional assumptions of power relations and/or economic benefits. A historical rooted identity-based constructivist policies need a focus which goes beyond that power and economic understanding.

In this respect, it is necessary to conduct a literature review in order to understand the trade diplomacy that Türkiye carries out with the Turkic states within the discipline of international relations and to focus on a few basic elements in determining the theoretical framework. First of all, it is necessary to determine the basic approaches towards the concept of trade diplomacy. Here, it will be determined how trade diplomacy is interpreted around the realist and liberal perspectives. In this framework, Türkiye's trade diplomacy relationship with the Turkic Republics will be conceptualized by considering social constructivism, which is the basis of the approach of this thesis.

On the other hand, the concept of trade diplomacy itself is a secondary research question of this study. The place and weight of trade diplomacy in diplomacy studies within the discipline of international relations has not come to the fore until recently and has not found sufficient area of study. However, especially with the establishment of the multilateral trade system and its becoming a rule maker, the weight of trade diplomacy in diplomacy studies has also increased. In this respect, after drawing the basic framework, discussions on trade diplomacy are also included in this work.

### 1.2.1. Realist and Liberalist Approaches to Trade Diplomacy

The realist approach in international relations theory is mainly based on the assumption that states are the main actors, and it deals with the concept of power in relation to states. (Rana, 2015, p. 290) According to the realist theory, events and facts are determined through power struggle between states and power is determined by material capacities. (Watson, 1992, p. 9) However, especially after the Second World War, the importance of international organizations in the world and the importance of initiatives for trade and economic cooperation increased the tendencies towards a liberal perspective to international relations, particularly after 1970s. (Behrent, 2009, p. 539) With the end of the cold war, it has led to the beginning of new discussions in the theory of international relations. Especially in the post-cold war period, besides the establishment of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)<sup>7</sup>, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)<sup>8</sup> and the World Trade Organization, the importance of international institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank has gradually increased. This situation brought neoliberal approaches to the fore more in the interpretation of the period in question. (Burchill, et al., 2013, p. 75)

Explaining the reasons for the end of the cold war has been one the most important research topics in international relations discipline. (Suri, 2002, p. 61) Besides, the effects of the 40-year cold war and the effects of the east-west struggle on western democracies have emerged as new fields of study. (Hart & Spero, 2013) This was not only intended as an analysis of history, but also to understand the future behavior of

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<sup>7</sup> The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which was enacted in 1994 and created a free trade zone for Mexico, Canada, and the United States, is the most important feature in the U.S.-Mexico bilateral commercial relationship. As of January 1, 2008, all tariffs and quotas were eliminated on U.S. exports to Mexico and Canada under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). This agreement has been converted to USMCA (The United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement) and in force as of July 1, 2020. <https://www.trade.gov/north-american-free-trade-agreement-nafta> Accessed on July 2, 2022 and <https://ustr.gov/trade-agreements/free-trade-agreements/united-states-mexico-canada-agreement> Accessed on December 12, 2022.

<sup>8</sup> 12 Asia-Pacific economies met in Canberra to establish APEC. In 1989 The founding members were Australia; Brunei Darussalam; Canada; Indonesia; Japan; Korea; Malaysia; New Zealand; the Philippines; Singapore; Thailand; and the United States. China; Hong Kong, China; and Chinese Taipei joined in 1991. Mexico and Papua New Guinea followed in 1993. Chile acceded in 1994. And in 1998, Peru; Russia; and Viet Nam joined, taking the full membership to 21. Source: <https://www.apec.org/about-us/about-apec/history> Accessed on July 2, 2022

actors after the Cold War. (Suri, 2002, p. 61) In this context, the future structure of western institutions, whether they could be resolved and what kind of cooperation they would develop have come to the fore. While realist theory gives pessimistic answers to these questions, neorealist theory explains it with balance of power and hegemony and argues that western institutions are institutions that will encourage western countries to cooperate in order to balance the “Soviet threat”. (Ikenberry, 1998-1999, p. 43) Liberal approaches that have developed with the criticisms of realist theory take into account that non-state actors are active actors in foreign policy formation as well as states. (Walter, 2001, p. 153)

Liberal theories do not solely focus on security issues, while structural liberalism aims to understand the web of relations in the political order of the west. (Deudney & Ikenberry, 1999, p. 180) According to the liberal understanding, the international legal system aims to reduce conflicts and increase cooperation through law. (Alvarez, 2001, p. 184) Accordingly, the source of conflicts between states is not the power struggle, but the conflict of interests. (Geuss, 2002, p. 328) Beyond that, liberal theory argues that these interests vary from state to state, and that this is due to the different preferences of individuals and groups in each state, and states are approached as agents that defend individual and community interests. (Slaughter, 1994, p. 729)

Deudney and Ikenberry argue that, although the institutions created within the framework of liberal theory are institutions belonging to the western world, and the order created by the western world, at the point reached today, institutions related to trade have a global impact. (Deudney & Ikenberry, 1999, p. 180) Especially with China's increasing place in world trade, it is no longer possible to interpret liberal institutions as institutions belonging only to the “western world”. China is very actively participating in WTO negotiations and it is used to be a party either as complainant or as a respondent in WTO's dispute settlement mechanism. (WTO, 2021) As of 2021, China has been complainant in 24 cases in the dispute settlement mechanism, where it has been subject to 47 cases as respondent, which makes China one of the most active parties in the system. (WTO, 2021) The Bretton-Woods organization, which was used to represent western order of the World is now adopted by the Eastern World as well. Countries use the same structures in conducting their economic diplomacy.

On the other hand, the post-Cold War period was not only a period of economic cooperation, but also witnessed bloody wars in certain parts of the world. Immediately after the end of the Cold War, a genocide took place in the middle of Europe, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, (Bećirević, 2010, p. 497) and at the same time, it was seen that the United States of America started the Gulf War, which made an important contribution to the instability in Iraq that would last for decades. (Sirkeci, 2005, p. 199) Post-Soviet Russia suppressed the separatist movements in Chechnya very violently which resulted with a war. (Tanrıseven, 2000, p. 66) In this regard, Chechen war raised theoretical attention in IR discipline. For example, Morrissette explains why neorealism, is not adequate for explaining rationale on decision making and pursuit of the goals during Chechen War and why it is necessary to make an assessment how decision makers tend to be risk averse or risk taking in various scenarios, within the framework of cognitive realism. (Morrissette, 2010, p. 187) Iraq war also became an area of interest for international relations theory to be discuss the decision-making process, war and the aftermath. Schmidt and Williams made an assessment on Iraq war, within the framework of comparison between realist and neoconservative approaches, taking the Bush doctrine at the center. (Schmidt & Williams, 2008, p. 191) Lieberfeld made a comprehensive analysis on the war from the perspective of international relations theories in general. (Lieberfeld, 2005, p. 1) Deudney and Ikenberry took the liberalism/realism dichotomy at the epicenter. (Deudney & Ikenberry, 2017, p. 7) Mearsheimer made a very unique analysis on Iraq war by asking, if Morgenthau was there, he would have opposed to Iraq war as he did in Vietnam, taking the realism/neo-conservatism competition at the center. (Mearsheimer J. J., 2005, p. 1)

As it is stated above, although liberal arguments may seem to be insufficient in explaining those conflicts after the end of the cold war, the mechanisms of international cooperation in the field of trade have been handled by liberal approaches and this dimension of international relations still provide a more suitable ground to be explained within the framework of liberal theory. Chorev argues that WTO directly makes contribution to trade liberalization and international organizations can shape global policy outcomes and illustrates the indispensable role of political bodies in the current process of globalization, by offering a view of globalization as a political

project of advancing “neo-liberal globalism” by establishing new institutional arrangements. (Chorev, 2005, p. 318)

Tilzey states that the World Trade Organization is an important element for reorganizing the management style in favor of neo-liberalism. (Tilzey, 2006, p. 1) Shell evaluates the WTO and its dispute settlement mechanism within the framework of normative approaches in international relations, economic and legal theory, in which finds useful to explain the system with Regime Management Model, deriving from regime theory in international organizations theory. (Shell, 1994, p. 927)

Petersman, on the other hand, considers the fact that the US has locked the system by not appointing to the WTO appeal body, as a "conflict between liberalisms", considering Europe's "ordo-liberalism", the US's "hegemonic neoliberal exploitation" and "China's state capitalism" as conflicting paradigms around this issue. (Petersmann E. U., 2019, p. 515) The solution to the crisis according to Petersman, on the other hand, is the re-activation of a more harmonious competitiveness, which will prevent the market from locking up and ensure social justice, with a European-style liberal (ordo-liberal by definition) approach by activating the institutional structure of the system itself. (Petersmann E. U., 2019, p. 525)

Liberalism emerges as the main theory that is used not only in relation to multilateral institutions (Keohane R. O., 2012, p. 125), but also in explaining preferential regimes, especially in the free trade agreements that emerged after the cold war but is also the most controversial. Lobeda and Spencer focuses on the question of how effective free trade agreements created as a result of liberalism are in reducing poverty and ensuring income distribution justice. (Moe-Lobeda & Spencer, 2009), Koo, on the other hand, states that South Korea made a faster transition from the mercantilist development model to the liberal development model by focusing on Free Trade Agreements, especially after the 2008 Asian crisis, and explains the new economic route with liberalism. (Koo, 2010) While Önis explains the economic transformation of Türkiye after 1980, he evaluates it within the framework of a neo-liberal economic transformation, and also deals with the international engagements entered in this context within the same framework. (Öniş, 2004)



It may not be very possible to make sharp choices between international relations theories when evaluating trade diplomacy. Because here, essentially, the approach will depend on which element is included at the center of the analysis. When it is aimed at examining the development of trade and the determination of partners or competitors as a result of diplomatic activities, it seems that it is possible to talk about a realistic instrumentality in a sense. Watson directly associates diplomatic activity with the ability of states to wage war and argues that war and diplomacy come together inextricably under the same title, and underlines that, states gather their forces in pursuit of their interests and essentially identify their commercial partners and rivals. (Watson, 1982, p. 52) In this respect, trade is evaluated as a means of power struggle from a realist point of view, and as a result of the power element called diplomacy.

On the other hand, when we consider trade as a tool rather than a result in trade diplomacy, this time trade is at the center. Here, using trade as an element to develop diplomacy and make blocked relations viable deserves a liberal interpretation. In this sense, the liberal approach can consider trade diplomacy within the framework of the assumption that commercial cooperation between democratic societies contributes to lasting peace in terms of international relations. (Pagden, 2005, p. 55)

Liberalism lacks explaining Türkiye's trade diplomacy relations with Turkic states from the perspective of actors. Liberal IR theories mainly dwell on the roles of actors in foreign policy other than states, but private actors, NGOs, social groups etc. The liberal theory puts individuals and private groups at the center of analysis who are considered on the average rational and risk-averse and who organize exchange and collective action to promote differentiated interests under constraints imposed by material scarcity, conflicting values, and variations in societal influence. (Reus-Smit, 2001, p. 583) In this regard, those actors are seeking for interest maximization without any ideational motivations. However, in our case, there is a cooperative interest between the partners who have a common identity and seek joint welfare. In this type of relationship, Türkiye's motivation is mainly constructing common identity and strengthening the others in many cases, before its own interest.

As is stated with examples in the following chapters of this thesis, Türkiye's trade diplomacy activities with its trading partners are used as a routine element and a

driving force of diplomacy in normal times, but also serve as a lever for diplomacy to come to life in times of crisis. After Uzbek President Karimov passed away, a rapid move was observed in trade diplomacy with signing 22 agreements, 10 of which directly or indirectly related with economic and trade relations in the first presidential level visit between the two countries on October 2017. (Birgun.net, 2017)

Economic and trade relations also played an effective role in resolving the crisis between Russia and Türkiye after Türkiye downed a Russian fighter jet on November 24, 2015. (Taylor & Roth, 2015) After this incident, by the decree No. 669 on December 28, 2015, Russia declared many sanctions including economic and political ones against Türkiye. (Mahfoud, 2015) However, after Türkiye's President Erdogan's letter to Mr. Putin regarding his regrets on the event, a rapprochement was initiated and as a result of this reconciliation, Ankara and Moscow have strengthened economic cooperation through largescale investment projects, including building Akkuyu nuclear power plant in Türkiye by Russia and the vitalization of Turkish Stream natural gas pipeline. (Erşen E. , 2017, p. 98) In fact, Joint Economic Commission has been one of the three main pillars of the institutional structure of the high-level cooperation council in Türkiye-Russia relations. (Öniş & Yılmaz, 2016, p. 79) One of the agreements signed after the jet crisis was the Joint Economic Commission meeting which was held on October 2016 and signed by the two ministers. (Sputnik, 2016)

When it comes to explain Türkiye's relations with Turkic states with trade diplomacy mechanisms, things get more complicated and neither realism, nor liberalism can explain that unique relationship with their power or economic benefit arguments. There is a need to see a more complex structure, which includes a common identity and non-interest based constructivist understanding, with agreements and practices which cannot be measured by power struggle or economic rationality. This is why we need to understand the social constructivist approaches in international relations and apply it to Türkiye's trade diplomacy relations with Turkic states.

### **1.2.2. Social Constructivist Approaches**

International Relations discipline has been approached from diverse fractions as it is in most social sciences, especially in 20th century when the world witnessed two grand wars which shaped human history in a very deep manner. In this regard, International

Relations scholarship had been shaped by four generally accepted main debates, which are mainly between rationalists/idealists, traditionalists/modernizers, inter-paradigm debates of realists, pluralists and Marxists and finally, the fourth debate which emerged in 1980s and continued after the end of the Cold War, focusing on the issue of science in the disciplinary history of IR. (Kurki & Wight, 2013, p. 16)

After those mainstream debates, 1980s opened new debates in the IR literature, where first debate was between neo-realists and neo-liberals. In fact, both were applying logic of the rationalist economy theory into international relations, however, they were reaching to mainly separated results in terms of a potential international cooperation. The second debate was between rationalists and critical theorists. Critical theorists were challenging neo-realism and its epistemological, ontological, methodological, and normative assumptions. Rationalists were blaming critical theorists with having few words on the real world of international relations. Those debates' axis was changed by new two debates since the end of the cold war: first one was between rationalists and constructivists, and the second one was between constructivists and critical theorists. The driving force of this gradual change in international relations can be explained by the rise of a new type of constructivist approach. This understanding was challenging neo-realism and neo-liberalism which were shaped by rationalist and positivist approaches. On the other hand, constructivism placed itself at a separate stance from critical theorists with its meta-theoretical and empirical analysis for the political developments of the world. (Reus-Smit, 2005, p. 188)

Interdependence between states, role of non-state actors in multinational organizations and companies had been a main focus of liberals like Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye in the 1970s, which challenged the classical realism of Claude, Carr, Morgenthau, Niebuhr and others by arguing that international relations can be conceived as a cobweb of political, economic and social relations binding sub-national, national, transnational, international and supranational actors. (Reus-Smit, 2005, p. 188) Within this framework, states were accepted as the main actors in world politics, however, mutual interdependence were thought to have a changing role of states' power, nature and effectiveness, which were in contrary with realists' main assumptions of power relations. (Reus-Smit, 2005, p. 188) On the other hand, realists, such as Kenneth Waltz responded that challenge with showing that the interdependence and that increasing

role of various actors have not made a profound change in international politics. Democracy may contribute to peace with other democracies; however, the structure of international politics would remain anarchic and in the absence of an external authority, a state cannot be sure that today's friend will not be tomorrow's enemy. Therefore, any internal change cannot have the capability of changing that anarchical order. (Waltz, 2000, p. 10) According to Waltz, the revolution in Soviet affairs and the end of the Cold War were not brought by democracy, interdependence, or international institutions as it is argued by neo-liberals. Instead, Waltz argues, the Cold War ended exactly as structural realism led one to expect. In this regard, his explanation on the end of Cold War is the disappearance of the bipolar structure of the world. (Waltz, 2000, p. 39) The main debate between neo-realists and neo-liberals can be summarized as a debate between those who think that the states deal with relative gains and those who think that the states are more interested in absolute gains. According to realists, states tend to measure their power in comparison with other states. This is why neorealists doubt about international cooperation: if the states are curious about their relative gains, they would refrain from cooperation.

Even if a trading agreement brings to net State A \$100 million in profit, if that same agreement will provide State B \$200 million, State A may refrain from cooperation, since the promise of absolute gains may not be sufficient to encourage states to cooperate, as they are primarily interested in relative gains. Neo-liberals deny that relative gains calculations pose such an obstacle to international cooperation. (Waltz, 2000, p. 10)

Despite all this, the concept of social constructivism, which was developed by Alexander Wendt in the discipline of International relations especially after the 1990s, has emerged as an alternative to existing theoretical explanations. (Ertem, 2012, p. 181) Wendt, referring to the works by postmodernists (Ashley, Walker), constructivists (Adler, Kratochwil, Ruggie, and now Katzenstein), neo-Marxists (Cox, Gill), feminists (Peterson, Sylvester), and others, and arguing that these all are united on a concern of how world politics is socially constructed. He explains that there are two basic claims on that concern; fundamental structures of international politics are social rather than strictly material (a claim that opposes materialism), and that these structures shape actors' identities and interests, rather than just their behavior (a claim

that opposes rationalism). (Wendt, 1995, pp. 71-72) In fact, the institutional infrastructure of social constructivism began before Wendt and finally it was adapted to international relations discipline by Onuf, who used the term constructivism in international relations. In this regard, Onuf refers Giddens' Structuration Theory as the basis of this constructivist approach (Kiraz, 2014, p. 211) Giddens begins his theory *The Constitution of Society* by placing practice right at the heart of his concerns by arguing that the basic domain of the social sciences, is neither the experience of the individual actor, nor any form of societal totality, but social practices ordered through time and space' (Whittington, 2010, p. 146) With the theory of structuration, which he derived from sociology, Giddens has been involved in the positivist and post-positivist debate within the social sciences from a third point of view. Based on this, Constructivism, which defines itself as the third way, has also become a new party by joining the discussion by emphasizing ontology. (Kiraz, 2014, p. 211). Onuf, taking the source of constructivism from the theory of "structuration", explained that framework in international relations by emphasizing that it is not obligatory to make a choice between the constructor and the constructed as to which one produces or determines the other. Because, according to Onuf, each types of social relations, including international relations are process, in which the constructors and the world they live in mutually construct each other in for all the times being. (Ateş, 2008, p. 215)

Although constructivist theoretical approaches are a new phenomenon, it is a fact that constructivist thought has existed in international theory since early times. In this context, 18th century Italian thinker Giambattista Vico can be said to be one of the first thinkers who became the basis of constructivism. According to Vico, while the natural world was created by God, the historical world is a phenomenon created by man, not by himself, and is not far from human influence. People create their own history and accordingly they form the state with a historical construction process. People create their own history and accordingly they form the state with a historical construction process. However, the state and state systems are artificial entities and people can modify these entities or recreate them in various ways. (Kiraz, 2014, p. 212)

The concept of "duality of structure", which defines the interdependence of actors and structure, is at the center of constructivism and plays an important role in explaining the continuity and change in life. The actor-structure relationship is dialectical and constantly interacts with each other in attempts to drive social change. Structure is both a result and a means of the reproduction of practices. (Whittington, 2010, p. 146) Structure and actor mutually constitute each other and are intermediaries of each other. The shaping of actors and structures are not binary phenomena that can be independent of each other, but represent the duality in human life. (Ateş, 2008, p. 215)

Immanuel Kant also contributed to the idea of constructivism with his well-known argument on the knowledge by saying that the knowledge we know is not a certain and given knowledge and it is only useful when it gets filtered by human consciousness. (Dağ, 2017, p. 3) Similarly, Max Weber also emphasizes the term social world, which means a world set up with human relations, and he completely separates this world from natural world. (Kiraz, 2014, p. 212) On the other hand, most of the constructivists have adopted the Weberian concept of *Understanding* which refers to that, action must always be understood from within, and, as a result, social meaning is a function of 'what is in people's heads' (Adler, 1997, p. 326)

Idealism, which has an important place in the development of international relations as a discipline, influenced constructivist perspective in international theory, due to the emphasis on the common values and norms it contains to contribute to peace. According to Herz, political idealism is inspired by rationalism by its assumption that a harmony exists, or may eventually be realized, between the individual concern and the general good, between interests, rights, and duties of men and groups in society; further, that power is something easily to be channeled, diffused, utilized for the common good, and that it can ultimately be eliminated altogether from political relationships. (Herz, 1950, p. 158)

The introduction of the constructivist approach to literature in the form of "Social Constructivism Approach" in the discipline of international relations was with the works of Alexander Wendt. As a theory focused on the construction of knowledge from an epistemological point of view and social reality from an ontological point of view, the most basic claim of constructivism about international relations is that the

nature of international life is social rather than material. (Wendt, 1999, p. 2) Onuf argues that constructivism is not a theory but a way of studying social relations. (Onuf, 2014, p. 2) On the other hand, Alexander Wendt's book, *Social Theory of International Politics* (1999), builds a constructivist theory, which accepts certain tenets of mainstream methodology, although his is a modified commitment to positivism within a scientific realist framework. (Fierke, 2010, p. 194)

Constructivism in international relations passed two main phases in 1990s, until it was shaped as social constructivism as it is named by Wendt. While the first period was the period until the mid-1990s, when constructivism was under the influence of Giddens' structuring theories and was handled in a reflexive framework, the second period from this period to the present is the period in which positivism is approached and conceptualized as a middle way approach. (Kiraz, 2014, p. 212)

The postpositivist or reflexive period led by Onuf, which is seen as the first period, has largely continued in the orbit of meta-theoretical discussions. The post-1990 period, which can be seen as the second period of constructivism, started with the abandonment of this attitude under the leadership of Wendt. (Kiraz, 2014, p. 212) Wendt, who directs his studies to build the social theory of international politics, has put forward his own theory by making a kind of synthesis of positivist and post-positivist approaches. While making changes in epistemology, he took his ontology from post-positivism. While starting with the neo–neo debates, Wendt addressed the neorealist claim that in the absence of a global authority states were left with little choice but to compete with one another in order to maximize their interests. Both the identity and interests of states are considered as given in Wendt's explanations, as they are defined by an environment of anarchy. Wendt provides a framework for thinking about identity and interests as constructed and subject to processes of transformation by setting out a connection between rationalist and reflectivist (or positivist and postpositivist) traditions by developing a constructivist argument, derived from structurationist and symbolic interactionist sociology. (Fierke, 2010, p. 194) Wendt argues that science should be based on questions, not on methods, that it is possible to establish knowledge thanks to these questions, and that hermeneutic methods can emerge. This approach is the main determinant of the theory-building model that Wendt envisions to support the middle-passenger stance. (Kiraz, 2014, p. 214)

This epistemological shift has made constructivism a more considerate approach, it has also brought it to a position that presents new ideas and explanations for the current issues of international politics. Wendt, who determined concepts such as thoughts, rules, norms, institutions and identities as the basic concepts of empirical research, put forward a theoretical approach that examines social construction and intersubjective construction processes referring to an institutional structure such as the European Union. (Wendt, 1992, p. 417) The social constructivism approach has found its place in the theories of international relations that can be discussed with empirical events, after the meta-theoretical discussions when it first emerged in 1990s.

In constructivist logic, the structure is not seen as something fixed and unchangeable, unlike the dominant theories; Change is possible on a conditional basis. As such, structure can, in a sense, be defined as understandings, expectations or knowledge shared among actors. (Kaya, 2008, p. 101) Wendt also criticizes the claim that the structure consists only of material capacities and presents social relations as a part of the structure. According to him, the structure; it consists of shared knowledge / understanding / expectations, material resources and practices. (Kiraz, 2014, p. 219)

One of the most important points that distinguish the constructivist approaches from the dominant theories of the discipline is the way they deal with the concepts of identity and interest. Constructivism's emphasis on sociality is also valid for the way it handles the relationship between identity and interest. Neorealism and neoliberalism treat the identities and interests of actors as externally given and Some neorealists claim to “derive” state interests from the condition of anarchy but, as Helen Milner has argued persuasively, anarchy is an exceedingly slippery concept, and the propositions one can derive from it are almost entirely indeterminate. (Ruggie, 1998, p. 862) Wendt is of the opinion that these theories take the identity and interests of agents as externally given and focus only on the consequences of agent behavior, where rationalism proposes a purely behavioral theorizing for both processes and institutions. Accordingly, behaviors may change; but identity and interests do not change. (Wendt, 1992, p. 392)

The claim that the social constructivist approach is mostly criticized in the issue of constructor is that the role of agency is attributed to the states. Wendt responds to the



criticisms made by post-positivist writers for the fact that constructivism resembles state-centered mainstream theories, with the fact that the main issue of international politics is still violence and dealing with that, which can only be resolved by the state. (Kiraz, 2014, p. 222)

Traditional realist approaches in the discipline of international relations began to lose their dominance in the new world order that emerged after the end of the cold war and the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the concepts of identity, interest and anarchy were reconsidered with the influence of sociology, and relations began to be discussed on a new level in an interdisciplinary way. While the role of states in the international system and the forms of cooperation in particular reveal the need for new expansions in epistemological and ontological assumptions within the discipline, many new theories have brought up new perspectives whose theoretical source has shifted from positivism to post-positivism.

In this process, the theory of structuralism, which was fed from sociology and adapted to international relations, enabled constructivism to be included in these discussions. Constructivism, which remained on the post-positivist front in the aforementioned epistemology and ontology debate, directed all its energies to meta-theoretical discussions as of the first period of its emergence, but remained as a marginal approach due to its inability to reveal new perspectives in the face of empirical events. A new form of constructivism emerged with Wendt's efforts to create a social theory of international politics, although he himself took a similar stance in the first period of his work. (Kiraz, 2014, p. 222) Neoconstructivism has become a social constructivist approach by blending social/post-positivist ontology with a rational/positivist epistemology that allows methodological testability, with its emphasis on sociality and intersubjective construction processes at the point of ontological position. (Kiraz, 2014, p. 222)

While this new approach brought a new perspective to the existing theoretical debates, it also reinterpreted the relations of factor-structure and identity-interest, which are very important in understanding international relations. This school, which started under the leadership of Wendt, while revealing the importance of construction processes under the influence of social dynamics, accepted the effectiveness and

decisiveness of social elements on material structures as the main reference point. This framework of analysis has been the most important claim of this new approach, which fundamentally challenges mainstream theories.

As a result, it is seen that the "socially constructed" processes, which also guide the approach in the social constructionist approach, take place in all kinds of relations related to international relations. This point of view, in its most general form, tries to prove that change is possible, and shows that it is unrealistic for the system predicted by the structure to determine the relationship types and behavior patterns.

The use of the social constructivist approach in the analysis of empirical events was largely due to the work of Wendt's followers. According to Wendt, positivist theories of international politics tend to favor seemingly more objective material factors like military and economic capabilities, and only bring in ideas as a last resort which provides positivist epistemology shaping international ontology. However, 'post-positivists' argue that it is simply a mistake to think that ideas can or should be studied in the same way we study physical objects. In this regard, ontology should determine epistemology, not vice versa. (Wendt, 2000, p. 165) Stating that his approach is not a foreign policy theory, Wendt drew more of a perspective at this point. (Wendt, 2000, p. 174) Adaptations on this subject have been made by writers such as Katzenstein, Guzzini, Ruggie, Neack, who generally analyze foreign policy through concepts such as culture and norm. In this way, a significant amount of constructivist literature began to emerge within the discipline. (Kiraz, 2014, p. 227)

Today, the social constructivism approach has become an accepted approach globally. The basic element underlying this wide-scale acceptance is considering the change phenomenon as possible and that this change can be achieved through mental operations without resorting to violence. Unlike realist paradigm's model for the change of hegemony, the social constructionist approach, shows change as possible under peaceful conditions, and found to be extremely sympathetic, especially for the actors who want to make new initiatives on a global and regional scale.

One of the main arguments of this thesis is that the relationship model developed by Türkiye with the Turkic states after their independence can be largely evaluated as a reflection of this perspective on international relations. After the collapse of the Soviet

Union, the mutually prominent issue in the relations developed with Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, which emerged in the South Caucasus and Central Asia region, was the emphasis on the common cultural and historical heritage. As can be seen in the relevant sections, the relationship between Türkiye and Azerbaijan has been a sui generis relationship model. The Preferential Trade Agreements that Türkiye signed with this country and with Uzbekistan in 2020 and 2021 appear as an indicator of mutual “brotherhood”, as it is seen in the discourse of the politicians, rather than mutual interests. These Agreements, have minimum effect on trade relations and where broad concessions were made basically unilaterally by Türkiye, show that trade diplomacy among these countries is also available to be evaluated from a constructivist point of view. In this type of relationship, it is possible to talk about a type of relationship that is built mutually and develops with reference to common values, rather than the existence of a hegemonic struggle for supremacy, as envisaged by the realist approach, or a relationship created by trade, as envisaged by liberal approaches. Türkiye’s approach to these countries from the very beginning has been shaped as providing development aid to these countries, deepening cultural and social relations by bringing students from these countries to Türkiye, and providing educational contribution through exchange programs by opening partner universities. The economic and commercial agenda has been a developing agenda within this framework constructed with these countries, and Türkiye has become the natural trade and investment partner of these countries.

In this thesis, a constructivist perspective is taken as dominant approach in the formation and execution of the trade diplomacy mechanisms that was developed between Türkiye and the Turkic states. This relationship, the main actors are states, as it is well defined by Wendt that, states are not hegemonic actors which seek for a power struggle with each other, or structures that aim to achieve peace through trade with rational choices. States are actors that focus on cooperation in this type of relationship and build various international structures with the discourse of friendship and brotherhood at the highest level. In this process, states created an identity of "Turkic World" and deepened relations with various structures (Organization of Turkic States, TÜRKSOY, TÜRKPA, etc.) shaped around this identity. Each of these structures is the structures created under the identity of the Turkic states and creates a suitable climate to be evaluated from a constructivist perspective.

Considering such developments, it is obvious that the social constructivist approach has very important results within the discipline. However, the approach is open to discussion and articulation of new perspectives, with its not very clear boundaries. This dynamic structure of constructivism is the reason why different constructivist authors differ from each other in the theoretical point of their works. In this way, constructionism has become an approach that is frequently used in various regions and academies today. (Kiraz, 2014, p. 227) The inclusion of peaceful elements in the development and development processes in particular softens the belief that realism's doomsday scenarios are the inevitable, and shows the existence of other possibilities.

As a result, social constructivism dwells on constructing social identity to build foreign policy relationship with an ideational network, which seeks for common interests and joint structuring, as Türkiye does in its relations with Turkic States. In some cases, international trade networks and institutions are interpreted as a framework for social constructivist collective intentionality, as Ruggie mentions. (Ruggie, 1998, p. 870) In this regard, as the main argument of this thesis proposes, trade diplomacy is one of the main tools for that understanding.

### **1.2.3. Trade Diplomacy in Diplomacy studies**

Economic relations' role in transformation of diplomacy has a general acceptance in the literature on IR studies. (Sharp, 2009) Lee and Hudson approach to trade diplomacy within the framework of transformation of diplomacy in general terms. Within this framework, they argue that states are transforming their diplomatic mechanisms which also includes trade relations while stating that trade diplomacy has become a foreign policy priority for many states in North America, Europa, South Africa and Asia. They also mention that Canada, Australia and Belgium have combined trade departments with ministries for foreign affairs. In addition to this, having mentioned that states like United Kingdom and Czech Republic have established new divisions to coordinate trade and foreign affairs, they argue that those structures take the officially conducted public private sector relations at centre. (Lee & Hudson, 2004, p. 343). This determination is also referred by Donelan in his work on transformation of diplomatic institutions in United Kingdom. (Donelan, 1969, p. 605)

On the other hand, Lee and Hudson underline that those official business connections and increasing public spending to defend the interests of business circles have become main features of trade diplomacy. Within this framework they mention that a transformation to a diplomatic practice where commercial activities are more centralized and commercial roles of diplomats are enlarged is getting more common with putting interests of business circles are being more centric. (Lee & Hudson, 2004, p. 344) While expressing this framework, Lee and Hudson state that it has become impossible to explain diplomatic practice within the discipline of international relations with orthodox and traditional approaches. In other words, they argue that since the formation of institutions such as World Trade Forum, Transatlantic Business Dialogue, International Chamber of Commerce and especially World Trade Organization system, traditional state centric balance of power approaches remain inadequate in explaining trade diplomacy. (Lee & Hudson, 2004, p. 346)

Similarly, Lee and Hocking underlines traditional realist and neorealist approaches in IR discipline continue to be powerful in explaining interstate relations, however, non state actors' role in trade diplomacy are coming to the fore and therefore, there is a need for another framework. (Lee & Hocking, 2010, p. 1217) Modern diplomacy has taken on a form in which the relations of multi-faceted studies such as trade are more intertwined. This versatile aspect of diplomacy has increased the need for diplomats to represent their countries in the fields of economy, trade and investments. In fact, these versatile activities of diplomats are not new. Since the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, for example, in 1582, agents of the Levant company worked as British diplomats and undertook all the expenses of diplomatic services in the company's operating area until the British government took over the company in 1805. (Hudson & Lee, 2004, p. 349) These diplomats carried out royal representation and commercial diplomacy activities together. British ship captains were also authorized to conduct diplomatic negotiations. This compound structure has also shown its effect in the formation of the diplomacy of the USA and it is seen that the diplomacy of the USA, which was established as a mercantilist state, is the development of free trade rather than expanding its territory. (Hudson & Lee, 2004, p. 349)

The economic relations system brought by the Bretton Woods system, which was established after the Second World War, did not aim to encroach on the economic

autonomy of the states whilst regulating the economic relations between them, but it also aimed that the regulations for international trade would not create advantage for one side over others. The relationship of interdependence that has emerged in the past period has made it difficult to distinguish what is local and what is international in the economic order. The development of globalization, especially after 1990, has deepened this situation. At this point, it is seen that not only states but also non-state actors are involved in the process and their importance is gradually increasing. (Bayne, 2007, p. 5)

In the evaluation of trade diplomacy within the framework of international relations theories, the most prominent issue in the literature is the discussions on the role of actors in the formation and maintenance of trade diplomacy. There is again an uncovered tension between liberalism and realism (Lebow R. N., 2004, p. 339) which makes it difficult to adopt one approach alone without taking the other into consideration. According to liberal approaches the private sector is the main determining actor in trade diplomacy and that commercial diplomacy relations are carried out in a private sector-centered manner. On the other hand, it is the realist approach that trade diplomacy develops centered on interstate relations and that states are the driving force of private sector activities.

International politics is always subject to both change and development. It is strongly affected and shaped by human innovation and this innovation is always provoked by international circumstances (Jackson, 1996, p. 204). The fluctuating structure of the international relations is defined by Axelrod and Keohane within the framework of cooperation by underlining that in international politics, there is no common government to enforce rules or standards as it is implemented in domestic society, the international institutions are weak which creates a climate where cheating and deception are endemic. (Axelrod & Keohane, 1985, p. 226) .

In this atmosphere, anarchy has always been one of the main questions and elements of the international relations theory. (Milner, 1991, p. 67) Realist theory is based on power relations, which is measured by material capacity as the main factor in international relations and realists put power maximization against the other actors, namely states, at the core of their conceptualization. (Walt, 1998, p. 31) Realists

believe that politics is the constant struggle among states in order to reach power and security in environment of scarcity and therefore argue that anarchy is the main cause of struggle. (Wendt, 1992, p. 391)

Classical realists do not separate domestic politics from international politics; all politics is an expression of human drives and subject to the same pathologies (Lebow, 2007, p. 61). Morgenthau conceives the social world as chaos reduced to a limited set of social choices because of the irrationality of actors and the inherent complexity of the social world (Lebow, 2007, p. 71). It gives a clear answer to the question of why states seek power; it is because of human nature (Mearsheimer J. J., 2005, p. 82). Therefore, we understand that the classical realists see anarchy as the nature of international politics; even there can be friendships or alliances. The system is based on anarchy and at the end human nature will always surrender on the basis of balance of power. Neo-classical realism differs from classical realism with its international level of analysis and concept of anarchy. What differ neo-classical realists from other versions of realism is their emphasis on subjective and non-structural factors such as leaders' attitudes beside structural ones; whereas Classical realists put anarchy at the core, where neo-classical theorists take anarchy as an opposite phenomenon with security, which would be overcome to reach to the main goal of increasing power. (Firoozabadi & Ashkezari, 2016, p. 96).

In the studies on transformation of diplomacy, the dominant viewpoint in the literature is that the main driving force in transformation of public diplomacy are states and the actors which represent states. Although there are approaches that deal with the participation of non-state actors in the process, it is accepted that states have the most priority role in the transformation of diplomacy in the institutional sense. (Cooper & Cornut, 2019, p. 303)

As the international trade has been more involved in international relations, some new approaches began to evolve within the realist understanding in IR theory. Woolcock, for example dwells upon Hegemonic stability theory which seeks to apply realist views on the influence of power to develop a predictive theory of international relations and international political economy. According to the hegemonic stability theory, hegemonic power is defined as the power which has the ability of shaping the outputs,

which is always necessary to build an international economic partnership and therefore, it is not possible to establish an efficient and effective order in any way without the coercive power of the hegemon. (MacDonald & Woolcock, 2007, p. 23) This approach, which was originally used to explain the Bretton Woods system established under the leadership of the USA after World War II, claims that the GATT system was created thanks to the hegemony of the USA. (MacDonald & Woolcock, 2007, p. 23) Woolcock claims that within the framework of this approach, the USA would explain its move away from multilateralism by understanding that it could not shape its results. While the USA aims to benefit from asymmetric power relations by signing bilateral free trade agreements, at the same time shows the underestimation of the importance of international organizations and local factors as the main weakness of the realist approach. (MacDonald & Woolcock, 2007, p. 23) In this context, Woolcock also acknowledges that power relations have a strong side in explaining trade diplomacy. As a result, he states that the negotiation power and tools of the country with a large market share in trade negotiations will also be strong, but he describes it as a weakness when he leaves other elements other than states out of the equation. (MacDonald & Woolcock, 2007, p. 23) The WTO system is also challenged by Du with the example of Saudi Arabia's accession to WTO as a member, within the framework of being a realistic preference for WTO countries. Du argues that, even Saudi Arabia does not comply with main principles of WTO in terms of free trade and trade liberalization, WTO accepted it as a member due to political intentions, which shows the main belief in realism, which is anarchy and the status of the sovereign country as the international institution, WTO cannot fully regulate and control the nation. (Du, 2022, p. 10)

One of the mainstream terms which explain trade policies in realist perspective is 'commercial realism'. This concept was adapted by Szabo, (Szabo, 2014) mainly derived from the concept of "realpolitik"<sup>9</sup> referred to by Rawi Abdelal (Abdelal, 2013)

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<sup>9</sup> The term is mostly used to define German statesman Bismarck's political attitude in international relations theory to identify the political behavior of any statesman who in his dealings allows himself to be influenced only by existing circumstances and needs, in contrast to doctrinaire and phrase-making politicians. The first use of the term dates back to a work published in 1853, entitled *Grundsätze der Realpolitik, angewendet auf die staatlichen Zustände Deutschlands* published anonymously, was written by A. L. von Rochau, a well-known publicist of the time. (Emery, H. C. (1915). What is realpolitik?. *The International Journal of Ethics*, 25(4), 448-468. p.451)



to explain to the commercial aspect in Europe's energy geopolitics. The concept was used to explain the relationship model that Germany developed with Russia after the Ukraine crisis, which resulted in Russia's invasion of Crimea in 2014. (Szabo, 2014) It was later developed by Meissner to explain the trade policies of the European Union. (Meissner, 2018) Szabo states that 90% of Germany's relations with Russia are based on trade, and in this context, since Germany, whose economy is based on industrial production, is dependent on Russia in terms of energy, trade diplomacy between the two countries is shaped through realist needs. At this point, Szabo claims that for Germany, relations are not carried out on normative values, but on national interests. (Szabo, 2014, p. 119)

Liberal approaches may offer a conceptual approach to economic relations and particularly institutionalization with the aim of free trade. The liberal paradigm has strong arguments for explaining international economic relations, as it emphasizes cooperation mechanisms created by a complex interdependence relationship as well as power relations. (Smith, Law, Wilson, Bohr, & Allworth, 1998, p. 26) Moreover, Institutional Liberals believe that power should be used in the interests of liberal values but with caution and restraint and in order to render this, building cooperative institutions play an important role to facilitate better lives for human beings. (Keohane R. O., 2012, p. 127) Therefore, at the initiation level for the institutions such as World Trade Organization, those liberal explanations seem to prevail. However, there is still a big rivalry, blocs, debates, obstructed negotiations among the states within those liberal institutions which is suitable for being interpreted with power relations, make realists still have some word over the issue. After Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014, the world has changed for international trade as well. The paradigm of *realpolitik* and change in liberal understanding even in the liberal institutions such as EU have faced with a profound change. As liberalism covers not only free trade but also the fundamental understanding of mutual interdependence, the changing world politics affect those ideas and make states move towards national interests, together with their private sector. (Szabo, 2014, p. 121)

Recently, new debates have emerged beyond the traditional liberal approaches to the trade policies of the European Union, challenging them with realist approaches. (Postnikov, 2020) A common approach in the literature regarding the trade policy of

the European Union is that Europe, as the world's largest market, aims to develop trade as well as to establish normative values such as trade liberalization and the creation of an international identity.(Manners, 2002, p. 243) However, recently, studies on the necessity of dealing with the European Union's trade policies on a realist level have also found their place in the literature. While Meissner (2018) claims that the European Union has moved from an interregional trade model to a bilateral trade model in trade relations, explaining this with the basic principles of realism and introduces the concept of 'commercial realism'. (Meissner, 2018)

On the other hand, it is seen that approaches based on the power model of realism instead of traditional liberal approaches for transnational corporations have recently appeared in the literature on international trade. Tan states that it is vital for transnational corporations to play a supporting role for a powerful transnational corporation such as the US, because today the political power, technology and capital reside in the northern states and the transnational corporations formed by the northern states. (Tan, 2015, p. 223)

In addition to all these, as a result of the negative effects of global climate change, there are also expectations and determinations in the literature that international trade and especially the trade mechanisms dominated by the US will change again in a realistic framework with a focus on the state and power. (Heatley, 2017, p. 14)

As a result, the literature on trade diplomacy in international relations mainly diverts in two mainstream theoretical frameworks of IR theory, one is realism and the other is liberalism. WTO and international organizations are both explained with realist power relations and hegemony of great powers over the other using the international institutions, on the other hand, they are also explained with liberal ideas of bringing peace by maximizing liberal trade interests.

### **1.3. Argument**

Contrary to the views of some scholars, who argue that Türkiye's trade diplomacy towards Turkic states have been guided by economic and political concerns as realist and liberals argue, this thesis argues that Türkiye's trade diplomacy has been framed in an ideational socio-cultural concern of Türkiye's solidarity with the Turkic states. This argument is based on social constructivist perspective. That ideational concerns

found its ground at the top-level government officials' discourse, as well as official texts signed by governments, as the shape of "brotherhood".

Türkiye has adopted an approach that builds institutional structures following the formation of an identity carried out jointly with the Turkic states. It is not appropriate to argue that there is a hegemonic structure as envisaged by realism. Similarly, it is not the case that Türkiye has established this relationship with purely economic expectations, as suggested by liberal theory. On the contrary, the relationship Türkiye developed with Turkic states aimed at increasing mutual benefits through institutions and structures which are established for that purpose.

The common structures created were shaped on the basis of the determined common identity, and institutional relations were established with the Turkic states around the idea of a Turkic World, with structures such as the International Organization of Turkic Culture (TÜRKSÖY), the Organization of Turkic States (*Türk Keneşi*), Parliamentary Assembly of the Turkic States (TÜRKPA). The operation of the Trade diplomacy institutions that Türkiye carries out with these countries is focused on the goal of strengthening the multidimensional aspect of the relations, rather than a strong unity of interests. Türkiye's largest trading partners are blocs and countries such as the European Union, the United States of America, and the Russian Federation, where Turkic states are not very big trading partners for Türkiye in this equation. On the other hand, trade and trade-related institutions were not the triggering factors for the beginning of Türkiye's relations with these countries, relations were formed on a socio-cultural basis and were built on it. Commercial relations have been an important complement to relations. For this reason, it is not appropriate to consider a relationship with the aim of developing trade as presented by the liberal proposition. In this sense, evaluating Türkiye's relations with the Turkic states from a social constructivist perspective is more accurate.

Realism presents strong arguments in terms of balance of power and rational and interest-oriented stance of countries in explaining international trade. However, within the framework of Türkiye's relations with the Turkic state realism cannot address that relationship. In this type of relationship, cooperation is at the point where superiority and interests agree at the highest level, but at the end of this cooperation, it is seen that a constructivist understanding in which mutual cooperation is built through institutions

together with identity, rather than a structure in which the superiority of one side over the other is observed. Trade diplomacy mechanisms developed by Türkiye with the Turkic states are carried out with a constructivist approach in the form of strengthening the cooperation existing in various fields in terms of its economic dimension, rather than profit maximization and power struggle paradigms as in the World Trade Organization.

Secondary argument of this thesis is that since the 1990s Türkiye has been exercising its trade diplomacy activities with the Turkic states as an avenue towards expanding the diplomatic base of the bilateral relations, independent of trade volume aspirations. Türkiye conducts those activities even though there are minimum levels of economic gains in terms of trade volume with Turkic states than it should be expected from the density of process. This shows that, trade diplomacy is being used as a tool which provides Türkiye a wider window in the agenda of its relations with those partners than trade itself. Contrary to the general acceptance of trade diplomacy in the literature, this type of relationship is not a process that goes from private sector and non-state actors to states, but is a process directed by states in this relationship.

This argument contributes to the literature within the framework of that, contrary to the general acceptance in the literature on considering the increase in trade as main objectives and outputs of trade diplomacy can be used as an element in the execution of foreign policy itself. The concept of trade diplomacy and the bilateral and multilateral agreements adopted around this concept, containing private sector mechanisms such as the business council and interstate mechanisms such as the Joint Economic Commission provide an important opportunity to explain the relations that Türkiye has developed with the Turkic states since the 1990s. In this context, Türkiye's relations with the three selected Turkic states after their independence are evaluated in this thesis through the concept of Trade Diplomacy with a social constructivist viewpoint. It has been observed in the literature that the elements included in the concept of Trade Diplomacy represent the economic and trade aspects of bilateral relations in the historical context in the relationship model Türkiye has developed with these countries. However, unlike the general literature, in the thesis, the concept of Trade Diplomacy is placed in the center and the mechanisms established by Türkiye through the agreements signed with these countries and the activities of the diplomatic

representations operating in these countries are systematically explained. By touching on the conceptual discussions of trade diplomacy within the discipline of international political economy and IR, it is shown that the effective use of trade diplomacy tools in this conceptual framework has emerged as a useful tool which is mainly carried out by state actors for building mutually beneficial and supporting structures in explaining Türkiye's relations with the Turkic states.

The explanation of Türkiye's relations with the Turkic states around the concept of Trade Diplomacy primarily provides important data in terms of revealing that there is a direct relationship between the development of trade, which is an important part of diplomatic relations, and the development of bilateral relations. In this sense, the basic agreement texts evaluated within the concept of trade diplomacy and the operability of the mechanisms created by these agreements provide the opportunity to observe the formation of bilateral relations within a certain calendar. There is a chronological overlap between the concrete results of the mechanisms carried out with Azerbaijan with a Preferential Trade Agreement and the ending of Armenia's occupation of Azerbaijani lands by acting closely in the Azerbaijan-Türkiye relations in the Karabakh conflict, and it should be considered that this cannot be evaluated independently of each other. Similarly, the support of the rapidly developing relations between Uzbekistan and Türkiye after Kerimov's passing away with a Preferential Trade Agreement in a short time clearly shows the relationship between the course of Trade Diplomacy mechanisms and foreign policy making. While this relationship is a relationship that can be shown in the historical course and there are various explanation methods for this relationship in the literature, systematically handling the mechanisms within the concept of Trade Diplomacy provides a basis for researchers who are interested in dealing with Türkiye-Turkic states relations.

It is observed that the main defect seen in studies that only refer to commercial and economic agreements in the historical process, but do not deal with these agreements through a systematic concept, as in the literature, is the inability to fully determine the place of the mechanisms of economic relations in the formation of foreign policy. It is possible to discuss Türkiye's relations with the Turkic states from many aspects. Energy is an important geopolitical topic between these countries and Türkiye. Cultural relations and TİKA's activities have a special place in Türkiye's relations with

these countries. Although it is possible to evaluate each of these from different aspects, it has been seen that the mechanisms evaluated within the concept of Trade Diplomacy are a wide area covering these areas, and trade diplomacy has given a more appropriate and more systematic perspective to the evaluation of Türkiye's relations with these countries.

#### **1.4. Method**

In this thesis, bilateral trade diplomacy mechanisms are discussed in details in the context of Türkiye's mechanisms with Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. Trade diplomacy activities carried out by non-state actors is also explained.

In order to achieve the goals of this thesis, it is necessary to determine the boundaries of the geography to determine the level of analysis of the thesis, before going into details in trade diplomacy. In this regard, while evaluating the trade and economic relations of Türkiye with Central Asian countries, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan are discussed as “Turkic States”. Those states are mainly in Central Asia, with exception of Azerbaijan. Although Azerbaijan is considered within the South Caucasus region both in the literature and in the classifications of official institutions and organizations (for example, on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye), since it is one of the five independent Turkic States established in the post-Soviet period, it has developed a similar form of relationship with other states in terms of Turkish foreign policy. The emphasis on common cultural and historical ties in the speeches of high-level officials has same similar voice for these five countries, and this closeness also felt in multilateral platforms. Türkiye, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan became the founding countries of the Turkic Council (Organization of Turkic States by 2021), which was established with the "Nakhchivan Agreement on the Establishment of the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States" signed on October 3, 2009, Uzbekistan joined in 2020 as a member and Turkmenistan joined as an observer in 2021. (Organization of Turkic States, 2009). On the other hand, the Organization of Turkic States also includes Hungary as a member. (Organization of Turkic States, 2022) However, Türkiye’s relations with post-Soviet Turkic states after their independence in the first years of 1990s have been shaped in a certain formation, which is different from its relations with Hungary. Hungary can be discussed in a work which

focuses on that particular organization, however, it is compelling to frame it in Türkiye's relations with Turkic states.

In this context, analysis of bilateral trade volumes and structure of trade between the countries were examined using empirical data from open sources. In this regard, Trademap, World Bank, IMF and OECD data were used as main resources for data.

On the other hand, general economic outlook of the examined countries, their regional and global trade, and the change in their trade with Türkiye are discussed. For data regarding bilateral trade between Central Asia countries and Türkiye, Trademap data is mainly used and it is observed that this data accurately reflects the data of Türkiye Statistics Institution (TÜİK). Therefore, it created a chance for verification of bilateral trade data. The main purpose here is to determine the effect of the mechanisms established with Türkiye in bilateral relations.

Legal text analysis is also used as a method in this thesis. Türkiye constitutes a successful example for academic studies on trade diplomacy. Most of the legally signed texts of Joint Economic Commission meeting protocols are published in Türkiye's official gazette. JEC Protocols with Central Asia countries are comprehensive agreements which refer to many areas directly or indirectly related to economic and trade relations. This proves that the JEC mechanism has been an effective trade diplomacy tool for Türkiye in its relations with Central Asia. This comprehensiveness and significance in legal level makes Türkiye a suitable working path to understand dynamics of trade diplomacy.

It is noteworthy that Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan have become exceptions in Türkiye's trade diplomacy relations with Turkic states as they have signed Preferential Trade Agreements with Türkiye. Türkiye has become the first country for those states to be engaged in binding economic concessions apart from CIS free trade agreement. For Azerbaijan, it can be considered to be an indication of its strategic ties with Türkiye especially after its military success in Nagorno-Karabakh against Armenia, with support of Türkiye (Khan M. A., 2021, p. 27). For Uzbekistan, the transformative effect of trade diplomacy in the relations between Uzbekistan and Türkiye especially after the leadership change in 2017 became visible. (Mukhammedova & Shakarboyev, 2021, p. 470) In this regard, the political transformation of Uzbekistan after

independence are evaluated together with the economic transformation.

In this thesis, literature on trade diplomacy has been reviewed and complex relationship between international political economy and trade diplomacy was discussed. By doing this, it is aimed to limit the framework of the discussion within the discipline of international relations and avoid going deep into economic analysis which might have a potential risk of carrying the issue to the realm of discipline of economics. The resources and data are frequently used mainly to understand the basis of making of foreign policy. Official data of international organizations and data from open sources have been relied upon in order to analyze the economic transition of Central Asian Republics and Türkiye's trade relations with them. Since the statistical information in Central Asian Countries were once at a very preliminary stage, Türkiye's official statistics were taken as main resource for analyzing bilateral trade, along with data from international organizations such as UN, World Bank and OECD.

On the other hand, academic literature over the issue was explored and anything to understand the role of trade diplomacy on making foreign policy has been applied to support the analysis. In this regard, academic literature which deals with examples from geographies other than Central Asia were also benefited to deepen and expand the analysis on conceptualizing trade diplomacy. However, to keep the focus, Türkiye's efforts on developing trade diplomacy tools on the region is considered as the main point of movement. In order to do this, Türkiye's agreements and legal texts are deeply analyzed to understand the use of tools. This provided tracing the legal framework of trade diplomacy of Türkiye with Central Asian countries.

In this thesis, the main body of Türkiye's trade and economic mechanisms with Central Asia is shaped within the term of "trade diplomacy". In Chapter 2, the conceptual framework of trade diplomacy is evaluated in details in comparison with similarly used terms in literature like "economic diplomacy" or "commercial diplomacy" and the reason why "trade diplomacy" is selected to elaborate the issue. In brief, it is noteworthy to mention that, this thesis draws a framework for Türkiye's relations with Turkic states, therefore, it is preferred to keep stick on the terminology of official institutions of Türkiye, such as Foreign Economic Relations Board (DEIK). Since the term "trade diplomacy" is mainly used by Türkiye, and as it is seen in the relevant



section, there is not a significant conceptual difference between those similar uses.

### **1.5. Structure of the thesis**

As it is discussed in the further chapters, three of the five Turkic States is taken as the main focus of this study, based on their economic ties with Türkiye after independence, which is detailed in the relevant sections.

In conceptual framework of the thesis which is discussed in Chapter 2, trade diplomacy is explained within the framework of international relations discipline. It is discussed with analogy between International Political Economy and International Relations disciplines and the argument why it should be a subject of exploration for international relations instead of economy or political economy is detailed. In this regard, realism and liberalism are evaluated in their approach to trade diplomacy, where they are found to be inadequate to explain Türkiye's relations with Turkic states. Within this framework, social constructivism in international relations is explained and taken at the center in the analysis.

While creating this argument, the tools of trade diplomacy are primarily addressed in and at this point, states, non-state factors and diplomatic trade representations assigned by states are regarded as the main actors in trade diplomacy.

Bilateral mechanisms of Türkiye with mainly three Turkic states are discussed. Preferential trade agreements, economic cooperation agreements, joint economic commissions, business councils and similar private sector structures are explained. In multilateral trade diplomacy, the WTO is also mentioned as the tangible trade diplomacy platform in global basis.

In Chapter 3, Türkiye's trade diplomacy mechanisms are discussed in details with actors, tools and legal framework. In this regard, government institutions, non-governmental actors and Türkiye's foreign trade missions in foreign countries is evaluated as actors. For non-governmental actors, Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges (TOBB), Foreign Economic Relations Board, Turkish Exporters Assembly (TİM), and Turkish Contractors Association are mentioned and evaluated as main actors. The non-governmental actors are not limited with those institutions, however, especially for Türkiye, those actors are considered to be the most prominent actors in

Türkiye's relations with the Turkic States.

In Chapter 4, Türkiye's trade and economic relations with Central Asia and trade diplomacy is discussed for Turkic States in general in order to draw the picture of Türkiye's meaning for those countries, along with political relations. On the other hand, the Central Asia's importance for Türkiye to conduct detailed trade diplomacy mechanisms is drawn in this chapter. In doing this, geopolitical developments of Central Asian states after the collapse of the Soviet Union are analyzed. In connection with this, Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the free trade area established within this umbrella are discussed as economic integration models for Turkic states. On the other hand, along with other economic integration efforts in Central Asia, the last established structure, Eurasian Economic Union is discussed as the ongoing integration body for Turkic States.

In Chapters 5, 6 and 7, trade and economic mechanisms in Türkiye's relations with Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan are discussed in details. Türkiye, as an important actor in the region, after the collapse of the Soviet Union is discussed on case by case basis. Chapter 8 is the conclusion part of the thesis, where, Türkiye's trade diplomacy mechanisms with Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan are also discussed separately from the other 3 countries, due to their limited institutionalized structure compared with the others.

## CHAPTER 2

### CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR TRADE DIPLOMACY

Diplomacy studies mainly focus on states as a process and policy tool, and interstate relations are the subject matter of these studies. It is known that trade and diplomacy have been intertwined since the first diplomats. While the traders represented their countries politically, they also established their own business contacts. (Sharp, 2009) The main source of distinguishing trade diplomacy from traditional focuses of diplomacy studies is the increase in the activities of non-state actors, as well as the representatives of institutions other than foreign ministries in diplomatic missions. However, the fields of environmental diplomacy, public diplomacy and trade diplomacy cannot find a place in mainstream diplomacy studies. (Hudson & Lee, 2004, p. 353) Hudson and Lee also point out to factors such as higher levels of public oversight of diplomacy and increased involvement by government actors other than State Ministries and Diplomatic Services. As a result of technological and organizational dynamics, modern diplomatic practices have brought rapid communication, less secrecy and increased informal public participation, as well as a marked increase in the participation of officials from other government departments as well as private actors. (Hudson & Lee, 2004, p. 354)

The effect of trade on the formation and execution of international policy is a subject discussed in the IR literature together with multilateral organizations and the regulations shaped through these organizations have not only been the rules regulating the flow of trade but have also been seen as a balancing factor in political relations. (Bagozzi & Landis, 2015, p. 153) The main function of the World Trade Organization, which was established with the GATT Agreement signed in 1994 is defined as “The World Trade Organization (WTO) is the only global international organization dealing with the rules of trade between nations. At its heart are the WTO agreements,

negotiated and signed by the bulk of the world's trading nations and ratified in their parliaments.

The goal is to help producers of goods and services, exporters, and importers conduct their business.” (WTO, 2021) The basic elements in the execution of this system are the basic agreement texts regulating the trade of goods, trade of services, intellectual property rights, dispute settlement mechanisms. It is aimed to achieve the objectives of not placing an obstacle other than taxes in the flow of trade, preventing discrimination, operating the national treatment rule, and ensuring transparency. (WTO, 2021) It is seen that these basic principles, which are essentially trade-specific, also overlap with the purposes established within the framework of the United Nations. On 25 September 2015, at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, 193 world leaders committed to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (or Global Goals). (UN, 2021)

Economic diplomacy can be summarized as a decision-making and negotiation process. The focus is on the process, and what the interests are, their nature, and outputs are of interest to political economy rather than economic diplomacy. For this reason, the process emerges as the main study area of trade diplomacy. The process itself also makes the actors prominent. More integration, especially in the economy, enables more actors to take the stage in trade diplomacy. Especially after the World Trade Organization, negotiations have become more complex, and tariff reduction in one sector leads to more concessions for another sector. Thus, more complex processes come into play in terms of local and international interests. This makes the system more heterogeneous and prevents a single dominant actor from dominating trade diplomacy. This, in turn, creates groupings between countries and causes a new field of struggle between developed countries, developing countries and underdeveloped countries. According to Keohane and Nye, the sub-expansions of this "club model" are the inputs of legitimacy in terms of process and accountability, and also affect the legitimacy of outputs in terms of effectiveness and cooperation in organizations such as WTO. (Keohane & Nye Jr., 2001, p. 11)

This complex structure of trade diplomacy also complicates the cooperation mechanisms between groups and countries. In the balance established with the World

Trade Organization, it has brought about the development of different cooperation mechanisms in bilateral and multilateral relations. Various methods of developing relations among states such as free trade agreements and preferential trade agreements, which also keep the states within the WTO system have gained weight in this context.

Diplomatic mechanisms have been in transformation in many countries in order to include trade related activities into the ordinary duties of diplomats. States are increasing the number of specialized diplomats in their foreign missions. By the establishment of World Trade Organization, this transformation gained more importance and trade has become more focus in diplomatic relations. In this regard, state structures are renovated to create more cooperation between trade and diplomacy side of relevant ministries and institutions.

Lee and Hudson criticize literature for relatively neglecting trade side of diplomacy in scholarly works on diplomatic relations. (Lee & Hudson, 2004, p. 343) They identify three dichotomies, which operate to reproduce the orthodox rendering of IR and diplomacy the international/domestic, political/economic, and public/private. They argue that IR and diplomacy are the study of the international realm of states (public, political power) and, the three dichotomies 'work' in a mutually supportive manner. Where the study of the domestic, economic and private is simply not the stuff to help resolve the problems of anarchy. A key point amongst critics of this particular constitution of IR and diplomacy is that these conceptual oppositions are unsustainable, artificial constructions of an otherwise contingent whole and they render a partial account of origins and required practices while silencing alternatives. (Lee & Hudson, 2004, p. 352) According to Lee and Hudson, statist approach sees diplomacy as the study of the international realm of sovereign states and public political power, with the purpose of diplomacy being to overcome anarchy and facilitate peaceful relations. (Lee & Hudson, 2004, p. 352) However, they also emphasize that this approach has begun to be inadequate after when private sector actors have got into scheme with trade diplomacy.

On the other hand, international political economy has emerged as a contemporary discipline in 1970s under the shadow of important events happened in the world in those years. (Frieden & Martin, 2002, p. 118) The discipline has developed as an

interdisciplinary field under the impact of increasing interdependence between states, the rise of international corporations and the oil shock happened in emerging markets. (Clapp & Helleiner, 2012, p. 486) World economy had become more politicized and this paved the way for the developmental economists to bring out more systematic approaches to the political structures which was created by international markets. (Murphy & Nelson, 2001, p. 393) In this regard, international political economy was shaped as a discipline which seeks answers to questions such as how politics and economy were related to each other in world affairs, how do states align themselves with markets, in which ways power and welfare competition were held. (Clapp & Helleiner, 2012, p. 486)

IPE examines structural issues, in this context, the comparative power of countries or the mechanisms of influence on the economies of other countries and their outputs are discussed in international political economy studies. (Odell, 2001, p. 12) Susan Strange explains development of trade diplomacy with structural changes in the world economy and politics, along with globalization by mentioning two sides of diplomacy: state-firm diplomacy and firm-firm diplomacy as results of global supply chain and structural changes, accompanied with technological developments. (Strange, 1992, p. 6) Hart and Spero state that the turbulence in the world economy has highlighted the political dimension of international economic relations, fluctuations international currencies, trade disputes, crises in oil markets, and financial crises forced scholars to make a reevaluation which separated the disciplines of economies and political science. (Hart & Spero, 2013, p. xi) On the other hand, Kejin states that economic diplomacy can be seen as *“the peaceful activities conducted by the state or a union of states for resolving frictions and disputes among nations in economic matters when implementing specific foreign policies”*. (Chohan, 2021, p. 3)

IPE mainly focuses on the effects of the political decision makers over the economy in general and the decisions of companies. (Frieden & Martin, 2002, p. 121) Decision-making processes in the conduct of economic relations are mostly covered within the framework of economic diplomacy studies, which deal with international economic issues that are evaluated within the mainstream models of international relations theory, such as foreign policy formation, negotiation, conducting of policy decisions, decision-making processes for creation of a bilateral mechanism, impact mechanisms,

actors, rather than financial relations, structural approaches and theoretical discussions, which are the field of study of international political economy. (Bayne & Woolcock, 2011, p. 4) Economic diplomacy therefore mainly focuses on what governments do and how non-governmental actors engage in economic diplomacy to shape the government policies. (Bayne & Woolcock, 2011, p. 3)

In the current diplomatic system, economic activities are at the center of bilateral relations. This includes a structural transformation in diplomatic functioning, including the separation of economics and politics, and the transformation of diplomacy into a separate political process and a general approach to the international political center. Within the scope of this structural transformation, trade has become the main element of diplomacy in North America, Europe, South Africa and Asia. (Lee & Hudson, 2004, p. 345) In this context, basically, governments reorganize their diplomatic systems, and thus, commercial activities become more centralized and the commercial activities of diplomats expand. (Lee & Hudson, 2004, p. 345)

Economic diplomacy is a function that state and non-state actors carry out together, which deals with both international and domestic economic issues due to economic interdependence developed after globalization. (Bayne & Woolcock, 2011, p. 3) Therefore, IPE and research on trade diplomacy are focusing on two different time zones: while IPE deals with the results and effects of political decisions over economy, trade diplomacy emerges at an earlier stage, the time when an actor decides to contact with the other using the tools of trade diplomacy, sometimes before taking the economic outputs into consideration. (Bayne & Woolcock, 2011, p. 3) In trade diplomacy, the main objective may be something other than creating a comparative advantage for the one side over the other. (Strange, 1992, p. 9) The outcome may not be trade creation or causing a labor movement or taking more protectionist steps. (Tussie, 2013, p. 7) Therefore, the main focus is the role of trade within the process of foreign policy. Addressing the theoretical approaches to trade diplomacy, Woolcock confirms that this field is a new study, and states that any theory produced in this field cannot alone answer how states produce policies under certain conditions. (Bayne & Woolcock, 2011, p. 5)

Diplomacy regarding international trade issues was used to be viewed as technical and

secondary part of diplomacy, which is directed by and contributes to international security issues. (Pigman, 2016, p. 1) According to Pigman, Trade diplomacy, which makes international trade possible and profitable as it has evolved to this day is much more than being just about nation-state governments, bilateral trade liberalization treaties, multilateral trade organizations or Free Trade Areas. (Pigman, 2016, p. 1) Trade diplomacy is in fact mainly concerned with the management of trade regimes and the market factors affected by the regime through involvement in the conduction of diplomatic efforts, either at the forefront or the rear guard, secretly or openly. (Tussie, 2013, p. 626) By doing this, these diplomatic process faces tensions between political authorities and markets where interests will drive diplomacy but political considerations can also outweigh trade interests. (Tussie, 2013, p. 626)

For theoretical analysis of economic diplomacy, Woolcock dwells upon the decision making and negotiation which can be analyzed through systemic and domestic theories such as hegemonic stability theory, which mainly argues that the GATT and the open multilateral trading system it reflected was established thanks to US hegemony. (Woolcock, 2007, p. 23) For the domestic theories, societal and state centered domestic factors are explained as other mainstream theories for economic diplomacy. (Woolcock, 2007, p. 27) Gilpin explains international political economy within the framework of three main theories of international relations; the theory of the "dual" economy derived principally from economic liberalism, which sees the evolution of the market as a response to the universal desire for increased efficiency and the maximization of wealth; the theory of the modern world system, strongly influenced by Marxism, arguing that world market is essentially a mechanism for the economic exploitation of the less developed countries by the advanced capitalist economics, and the third as hegemonic stability. (Gilpin, 1987, p. 67)

When the recent contributions to the literature on trade diplomacy and economic diplomacy are examined, it is seen that there is a consensus that this field has become an area that has increasing attention within the discipline of international relations. van Bergeijk and Moons point out that economic diplomacy is increasingly seen as a tool to overcome these obstacles, stating that despite the increasing communication opportunities, the ease of access to goods thanks to logistics facilities, and the easing of legal barriers to trade, the barriers to trade still remain effective. They also



acknowledge that economic diplomacy is receiving increasing attention in all three disciplines, confirming that it is an interdisciplinary subject between the fields of international economics, international political economy and international relations. (van Bergeijk & Moons, 2017, p. 367)

In this thesis, Trade Diplomacy is dealt with as a subject matter within the discipline of international relations and is considered as a constituent element in formulation of bilateral and multilateral relations between countries. Trade diplomacy, along with political and cultural structures, contributes to the shaping of relations as an important element. This role is central, especially in the form of the relationship Türkiye has developed with the Turkic States since 1992. Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan signed preferential trade agreements with Türkiye, where Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan signed joint action plans. Turkmenistan organizes Turkish Export Products fair regularly in the last ten years. (T.C. Ticaret Bakanlığı, 2022) And finally, as it is discussed in the relevant chapter, in rebuilding of Türkiye's relations with Uzbekistan following the change of leader in the latter in 2017, trade diplomacy tools were used very effectively and foreign policy formulation was accelerated through these mechanisms, which resulted with signing a Preferential Trade Agreement in March 2022. (Anadolu Ajansı, 2022)

On the other hand, in the recent contributions to the literature, it is noteworthy that trade diplomacy is approached from various perspectives, from economic, international relations and management perspectives. Here in this thesis, it is shown that trade diplomacy of Türkiye towards Turkic states reflect those aspects, however, for that particular relationships, the prominent expectation for Türkiye from trade diplomacy is seen to be a ground for discussing various dimensions of relations, along with economic perspective. Therefore, among the other discussions in the literature on definitions of trade or economic diplomacy, or its level of analysis on being multilateral or bilateral levels, two different perspectives are determined to be analyzed in terms of purpose and structure of trade diplomacy.

In this regard, the first of these is the approach that the main function of trade diplomacy is to increase exports, develop trade volume and promote investments, solely from economic perspective including import and investment promotion

activities. The common feature in these approaches is the presupposition that trade diplomacy is mainly conducted to achieve tangible outputs and has a purpose focused on increasing exports and investments in an empirically observable way.

The other approach reflects the views that the position of trade diplomacy is essentially within the institutional structure in the execution of foreign policy and represents the trade and economic relations side of foreign policy. This approach also includes a need for institutional reorganization of diplomatic institutions to adapt themselves into the transformation of diplomacy with the increasing weight of trade negotiations.

### **2.1. Trade diplomacy for export and investment promotion**

Opinions on the purpose of trade diplomacy to increase exports are basically based on evaluations made on empirically measurable data. Reuvers defines commercial diplomacy as the use of diplomatic means to support commercial activities between countries aiming at a national competitive advantage, including export, investment, and technological transfer promotion. (Reuvers & Ruël, 2012, p. 1).

Some scholars calculated the effect of opening trade missions in foreign countries on increase in trade. Bagozzi, and Landis take diplomatic relations and alliances as stabilizing factors in foreign trade which independently reduce trade volatility. (Bagozzi & Landis, 2015, p. 2) In their findings, diplomatic missions can reduce a country's bilateral export volatility by up to 16% over a 25-year period, while having alliance ties with a trading partner reduces a country's export volatility over a comparable period by as much as 12% (Bagozzi & Landis, 2015, p. 2)

Coolsaet, mentioning economic diplomacy with linked to military diplomacy in a way which they alternately gain prominence against other, dwells upon the economic diplomacy being prominent when an acceleration in globalization is accompanied by an absence of agreed rules of conduct and the emergence of new items on the trade agenda as a result of industrial revolution and argues that economic diplomacy is a result of strengthening the role of state with the help of globalization and industrialization. He also connects economic diplomacy with nineteenth and early twentieth centuries' commercial diplomacy. (Coolsaet, 2004, p. 61) Coolsaet's explanation regarding the role of commercial diplomats and embassies on economic diplomacy is within the framework of export promotion, representing private sector,

gathering information for trade opportunities. In his example, the Belgian case, most part of trade diplomacy has been transferred to the European Union, therefore, the export promotion is mainly conducted by the EU itself. (Coolsaet, 2004, p. 61)

According to van Bergeijk and Moons, economic diplomacy includes the activities of states and state representations in other countries and can be defined as the use and use of interstate relations in order to increase international trade and investments. Typically, states communicate with other states through diplomatic representations and activities of a diplomatic nature, such as high-level bilateral visits and trade delegations. (van Bergeijk & Moons, 2017, p. 336) Bergeijk and Moon's work count the export support mechanisms of the states among the tools of economic diplomacy on one hand, on the other hand, they also underline that economists have hesitations about the benefits of these tools. Referring to the studies conducted in this area, the authors touched upon the debates on whether export support mechanisms have a sufficient effect in providing the expected benefit. (van Bergeijk & Moons, 2017, p. 337) While the authors aim to determine the economic benefit of economic diplomacy, they also state that economic diplomacy is important for political decision makers for some reasons. It is understood that, former centrally planned economies' share in world trade has increased. Government is still regarded as a natural partner in the economy in these countries. Public-private sector partnership with companies which operate in international markets requires entrepreneurs cooperate with their governments in order to create a balance in economy between them and states. Moreover, to avoid political uncertainty on international transactions in order to give a correct signal that a transaction will not raise political resistance.

In their study, van Bergeijk and Moons examined the effect of economic diplomacy on the flow of trade in the light of empirically measurable data, especially export support mechanisms, and they stated that there is a diversity of resources that showed the existence of a positive effect of economic diplomacy on the flow of trade. The existence of positive coefficients that will be statistically significant and economically significant for economic diplomacy does not mean that this tool is effective. This will provide deeper information so that costs and benefits can be analyzed. Moreover, from this perspective, existing data needs to be improved in order to arrive at key findings and analysis.. (van Bergeijk & Moons, 2017, p. 365)

The most comprehensive study on the effect of diplomatic representations of countries, which is one of the tools of trade diplomacy, on increasing trade and exports is the study by Andrew Rose. (Rose A. K., 2007) In his study, Rose reveals that although maintaining foreign missions is quite costly considering today's technology and communication speed, governments continue to assign trade attachés to the missions to carry out export promotion activities. He finds a correlation between the number of foreign missions and exports, given the other factors as constant. (Rose A. K., 2007, p. 23) In this study, instead of diplomatic activities, high-level visits and international agreements, which are in the field of international relations discipline, it is seen that the relationship between the number of trade representations and the increase in exports is examined through quantitative data with a direct numerical comparison using the gravity model<sup>10</sup>, and all other data are considered fixed. It is calculated that each mission opened contributes 10% to exports. (Rose A. K., 2007, p. 23) Visser, on the other hand, compares Trade diplomacy with export promotion activities in his study examining the relationship of Trade diplomacy with international Trade and argues that export support activities are not completely related to Trade diplomacy, but only partially, because Trade diplomacy aims to remove the barriers to trade. (Visser, 2017, p. 19)

Gertz, in his article on the political risk aspect of trade diplomacy, argues that the modern investor state model makes Trade diplomacy a mechanism that protects investors, and he claims that business diplomacy has become an important tool for protecting the rights of investors, especially in countries where the rule of law is weak. (Gertz, 2018, p. 62) Gertz, in his article on the political risk aspect of trade diplomacy, argues that the modern investor state model makes Trade diplomacy a mechanism that protects investors, and he claims that business diplomacy has become an important tool for protecting the rights of investors, especially in countries where the rule of law

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<sup>10</sup> The gravity model of international trade states that the volume of trade between two countries is proportional to their economic mass and a measure of their relative trade frictions. <https://oxfordre.com/economics/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190625979.001.0001/acrefore-9780190625979-e-327#:~:text=The%20gravity%20model%20of%20international,for%20more%20than%2050%20years>. Accessed on August 1, 2022. "Gravity has long been one of the most successful empirical models in economics, ordering remarkably well the enormous observed variation in economic interaction across space in both trade and factor movements." (Anderson, 2011, p. 133)

is weak. In saying this, he states that US companies trust their ability to reach American diplomats to seek unofficial solutions to conflicts they have in the countries they invest in. In this context, diplomats support companies in the resolution of disputes, first as a conciliator, and then by bringing individual conflicts to the level of bilateral diplomatic relations on a broader level. (Gertz, 2018, p. 94) According to Gertz, business diplomacy is particularly effective in countries where the rule of law is weak and politicians and bureaucrats are unable to enforce the rules. In this regard, Gertz takes trade diplomacy in the focus of investments as a whole and he argues that it is more effective in an asymmetric relationship. It is seen that the back door diplomacy is considered as the main tool in trade diplomacy. (Gertz, 2018, p. 62) Gertz looks at trade diplomacy entirely from the investment side and states that back door diplomacy is more valid where the rules and procedures for foreign investors are not clear, and claims that trade diplomacy is an informal process.

Naray and Bezençon reviews the literature of commercial diplomacy during the period 1960–2014 from a management angle within the framework of four major themes: (1) government's export/trade promotion function; (2) institutional/organizational arrangements; (3) managerial roles and activities; and (4) interaction between commercial diplomats and businesses. (Naray & Bezençon, 2017, p. 332)

Moreover, Naray explains commercial diplomacy as an activity conducted by state representatives with diplomatic status in view of business promotion between a home and a host country. (Naray, 2008) On the other hand, Naray also defines the Commercial diplomats as state representatives with diplomatic status who are working for business promotion. In this regard, according to Naray, Commercial diplomacy aims at encouraging bilateral business through a series of roles that commercial diplomats perform in various activity areas with emphasis on trade promotion, investment promotion. (Naray, 2011, p. 122)

Ruel argues that in the coming decade, doing international business in the global economy will be more a matter of understanding and being able to deal with the nature of the international economy and international relations, and thus of international business and diplomacy by bringing diplomacy as a concept to the field of international business. He approaches the commercial and business diplomacy in the view of

gaining foreign market access and expansion, to get foreign firms investing in the come country and to deal with foreign market environments, something that is crucial for survival in today's global business environment. (Ruël, 2013, p. 14)

According to those approaches in the literature, commercial diplomacy mainly refers to use of diplomatic means to support commercial activities, either in bilateral level or in multilateral level. These literature on commercial diplomacy is so focused on diplomatic mechanisms and its actors, such as trade representatives, commercial attaches, business actors and private sector NGOs.

## **2.2. Trade diplomacy as a tool for foreign policy**

To determine the role and functioning of trade diplomacy, there are also institutional approaches to trade diplomacy in the literature, which more focuses on the role of trade in conducting foreign relations. Georgiadou's work on Greece's institutional transformation for trade diplomacy gives an overall perspective to understand the role of trade diplomacy as a useful tool for conducting international relations. She agrees that national diplomatic systems are in a process of transformation as a response to the increased need for more commercial diplomacy by institutional arrangements, however, literature on commercial diplomacy mainly on developed countries in diplomatic studies lack of smaller country-based studies. She puts the commercial diplomacy into the center of transformation of contemporary diplomacy structures. (Georgiadou, 2018, p. 26) Georgiadou defines commercial diplomacy as a value adding activity and this adding value feature has been realized by governments and has become the axis in their way of national foreign policy and diplomacy. In this regard, states, business actors, companies, small end medium enterprises are actors of trade diplomacy. (Georgiadou, 2018, p. 26)

On the other hand, according to Okano-Heijmans, a reconfiguration of the international order explains gaining importance of economic diplomacy, referring to China's increased challenges to the United States and the world order created by the US and the west and as a result, states with different ideas on public-private sector relationship follow an approach to foreign policy that emphasizes economic tools as well as political tools for economic purposes. (Okano-Heijmans M. , 2011, p. 14) In this regard, Bayne's solution is that economic diplomacy is a useful means by which

to pursue national interests through peaceful means. (Bayne, 2007) It is understood that Okano-Heijmans conceptualizes the relations between Trade and diplomacy as the use of political means as leverage in international negotiations, with the aim of enhancing national economic prosperity, and the use of economic leverage to increase the political stability of the nation. In this regard, the essence of economic diplomacy is framed, as Gilpin argues, to interrupt, employ and direct commercial and political intercourse. (Okano-Heijmans M. , 2011, p. 16) For the objectives of the economic diplomacy, there are both economic and political goals which strengthens the industry one hand, and political outcomes on the other.

These activities are connected by linkages, which occur when the way in which one activity is performed affects the cost or effectiveness of other activities. It follows that linkages create trade-offs in performing different activities that must be optimized. For example, imposing an embargo or suspending aid reduces opportunities for trade and investment, while granting a country membership to an international financial institution may increase commercial opportunities in/with the target country. To be successful in economic diplomacy, any government must resolve such trade-offs in accordance with the balance of national interests and its foreign policy strategy at large. Careful management of linkages and continuous investigation of existing and potential economic diplomacy activities are thus of utmost importance. (Okano-Heijmans M. , 2011, pp. 19-20)

Frontini, on the other hand, deals with EU and commercial diplomacy and argues that Commercial diplomacy has become the main motivation for most EU member states, shaping the political narrative at home and influencing the substance of diplomatic practice overseas supported by creating newly mechanisms with 'BRICS' (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), but also small and medium-sized countries in the Persian Gulf, Latin America and South-Eastern Asia. (Frontini, 2013, p. 1)

Saner and Yiu, on the other hand, states that traditional diplomatic relations between states have undergone a transformation due to globalization with a post-modernist approach, and argue that in this transformation, an institutional transformation is needed especially in commercial diplomacy and economic diplomacy activities. (Saner & Yiu, 2003, p. 11) In this context, they underline that the institutional capacities of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs should be expanded in line with this transformation in order for non-state actors to be more involved in these diplomatic activities within the supraterritorial relations. In this context, the authors state that the

definition of diplomacy has also undergone a transformation, defining the diplomatic functions and roles of state and non-state actors, and in this context, by giving more weight to non-state actors within the scope of economic diplomacy, they also reveal a definitional difference between business diplomacy and economic diplomacy. (Saner & Yiu, 2003, p. 11) Accordingly, they evaluate economic diplomacy in multilateral platforms such as the WTO in relation to economic policy issues, and considers economic diplomats as responsible for sanctions and rewards in accordance with their foreign policy objectives. They consider trade diplomacy as diplomatic activities aimed at the economic success of the country's business and financial sectors and the general development of the country. (Saner & Yiu, 2003, p. 11)

On the other hand, the literature on economic and trade diplomacy mainly focus on its effects on trade and conflicts. There is an increasing interest on the link between trade diplomacy mechanisms like preferential trade agreements (PTAs) and peace. Paterson argues that, PTAs promote member versus nonmember conflict when they reduce the exports of nonmembers, leading these states to perceive a threat to their economic security. (Peterson, 2015, p. 699)

There is a debate on economic and commercial diplomacy on being a love/hate relationship, depending on the viewpoint of an observer/researcher on the basis of explaining current crisis as a result of the interferences of economic and commercial diplomacy in the free market from one point of view and, while others declare that the crisis is a result of the inactivity of economic and commercial diplomacy, as Udovič points out. (Udovič, 2011, p. 358) The latter suggests that after the end of the current crisis, states should intervene with regulating financial transactions in the world. Based on the definition made by Bayne and Woolcock, (Bayne & Woolcock, 2011) he discusses the concept of economic diplomacy as being merged together two separate theoretical concepts: diplomacy and economy, both complementary means of foreign policy, defining economic diplomacy as more specific than diplomacy/or economic means as a whole, since it focuses mostly on obtaining economic and non-political gains. (Udovič, 2011, p. 358) Therefore, his argument on main focus of economic diplomacy is to strengthen the advantages of economic cooperation between states and enhancing the economic welfare.



Udovic makes a classification within the foreign economic policy tools by dividing them into two categories. (Udovič, 2011, p. 359) The first category is tools for achieving economic benefits and the second is tools used for other foreign policy goals, such as political, military, cultural and others. He describes the tools for economic benefits as 'positive tools,' for example, economic diplomacy as it is defined in the abovementioned literature as they aim to support positive effects of foreign economic policy outputs, such as cooperation, international trade, growth and development. The second category, according to Udovic, uses foreign economic policy means in a 'negative way', to reach abandonment of a certain, sometimes hostile, behavior, like, economic sanctions. In this classification, commercial diplomacy is strictly separated from other foreign policy goals. Like Saner and Yiu, Udovic argues that the policy tools which are related to economy are considered as negative way of policies, such as sanctions. Therefore, Udovic does not see commercial diplomacy as a tool to gain advantage for other policy objectives. (Udovič, 2011, p. 359)

Udovic mainly aims to present activities of Slovene commercial diplomacy in the Western Balkan markets. (Udovič, 2011, p. 359) He articulates his assessment on commercial diplomacy of Slovene with ex-Yugoslavian countries which it was a part of that before its independence within the framework of increasing its market access efforts to these partners and conducting of trade diplomacy with trade diplomats. He puts Slovene's EU membership as a game changer both in positive and negative manners. This articulation is consistent with his definition of commercial diplomacy.

It is observed in the literature that the tools and actors of commercial diplomacy are generally limited with diplomatic agents (Villanueva, 2017, p. 381) on the state side, and business organizations, NGOs and other private sector components on the other side. (Naray & Bezençon, 2017, p. 340) As a result, state is mentioned as a whole in identifying commercial diplomatic activities.

Pigman, in his study examining the transformation of trade diplomacy, states that basically three important transformations have been experienced from the beginning. (Pigman, 2015, p. 11) He defines the first stage of trade diplomacy as a matter of power, where trade is in diplomacy and diplomats are made up of traders, the main purpose can be defined as the use of trade as a tool for the power of states. According

to Pigman, the first transformation was achieved in the nineteenth century with the introduction of mutual tariff reductions through bilateral agreements on trade liberalization. He claims that this promotes peace and political stability by increasing trade. (Pigman, 2015, p. 15) He states that the second transformation occurred with the conclusion of multilateral and regional agreements in the early twentieth century, which resulted in the introduction of multilateral trade rules and multilateral liberalization with wider participation. According to Pigman, the last stage of the transformation was realized with the establishment of the dispute settlement mechanism in international trade with the GATT Agreement signed in 1947. Pigman evaluates international trade diplomacy within the theory of diplomacy in a broad sense, and claims that international trade has been the basic form of human relations since the first encounters of human societies. By doing this, Pigman defines Trade negotiations as the first form of negotiations and points out that political disagreements are ultimately resolved through answers to the question of who gets what. (Pigman, 2015, p. 15) This model of Pigman creates a suitable ground for the purposes of this thesis. Pigman claims that trade diplomacy is as old as diplomacy itself, and that negotiating the exchange of goods and services is itself a diplomatic activity. While claiming this, diplomacy has changed its shape, especially in the process of building nation-states, and trade has withdrawn from its role of establishing diplomacy and has become a part of diplomatic relations; On the other hand, he states that the importance of trade has increased again in parallel with the development of capitalism. On the contrary, although Cooper claimed that the institutional structures created especially after the second world war, brought the place of trade into the background in diplomacy, (Cooper, 1972, p. 19) Pigman states that the transformation of trade diplomacy is realized through the implementation of legal mechanisms such as institutionalized liberal structures and settlement of disputes. In this context, he states that trade diplomacy continues through bilateral free trade agreements and preferential trade agreements. (Pigman, 2015, p. 129) Pigman approaches trade diplomacy from a corporate and global perspective. On the other hand, his evaluations on the fact that trade is an element that shapes diplomacy, as stated in this thesis, contributes to the argument that trade diplomacy is a prominent element in Türkiye's relations with the Turkic states.

Researches on different fields, with some exceptions, mostly focus on certain

dimensions and branches of economic diplomacy, and to support this argument, a literature review is presented in here. It is not surprising that there are obvious different viewpoints to trade diplomacy, since it covers an interdisciplinary area of interest. IR scholars are interested in power relations built via trade diplomacy, whereas economists count for the outcomes. Where all those different approaches meet is that the trade diplomacy is gaining importance.

As it is articulated by Okano-Heijmans, the literature on the trade and economic side of diplomacy is categorized often with a focus on a particular country, group of countries or region(s). (Okano-Heijmans M. , 2011, p. 24) Therefore, trade diplomacy's role, objectives, methods, tools and actors in each case has a potential to vary based on political or economic needs. There are unique histories of countries, sui generis structures in international relations.

### **2.3. Türkiye's trade diplomacy and IR Theory**

Türkiye's bilateral political, economic and trade relations with Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan have always attracted scholars in their studies on Türkiye. In the academic literature on the effects of economic and trade factors on foreign policy, it is seen that mechanisms related to trade and economy, logistics, energy and energy security are examined. (Toprak N. G., 2020, p. 19)

It is also seen that the realist perspective is the dominant approach in the evaluations made within the framework of the basic theories of the discipline of international relations. It is a general acceptance in the literature that the relations between Türkiye and the Turkic states are shaped as a top-down relationship and that the states are basically evaluated as the main actors. In this regard, realism plays an important role in defining Türkiye's relations with Central Asia among Turkish scholars. Economic and trade perspective is used as a tool in defining that relationship, again with Türkiye's intentions to increase its influence in the region. There are also some structural arguments, which mainly dwell upon Türkiye's institutional structuring towards Turkic world, and also includes international organizations that Türkiye played central role in establishment. In the academic studies, it is observed that an economic and political integration idea has found an important ground in the literature. Another aspect of those works are the criticism over Türkiye's foreign policy on

Central Asia from the beginning of the collapse of the Soviet Union, arguing that Türkiye could not gain a strong position in the region due to its inadequate political actions or its “panturkism” idea towards those countries to gain and maintain more influence. All those arguments mainly take Türkiye as an actor who is willing to gain advantage in the region, but they mainly ignore the idea that Türkiye is constructing a cultural and economic identity and structure, which will be beneficial for all the parties.

From the beginning of the relations, Türkiye adopted a “brotherhood” discourse at all levels on its relations with Turkic states. Turgut Ozal, 8th President of Türkiye initiated this “brotherhood” discourse as the President of Türkiye during the times when Turkic states war declaring their independence.<sup>11</sup> His emphasize on the “brotherhood” shaped Türkiye’s foreign policy rhetoric in the following years. This discourse can be seen at most of the speeches of 9<sup>th</sup> President of Türkiye, Mr. Süleyman Demirel on his addressing to his counterparts in Turkic States. His use of “my precious brother” for the Presidents of those states has become a tradition for his successors.<sup>12</sup> 10<sup>th</sup> President of Türkiye, Mr. Ahmet Necdet Sezer preferred using that brotherhood discourse as well.<sup>13</sup> Mr. Abdullah Gul, the 11<sup>th</sup> President of Türkiye also used “brotherhood” and “brotherly relations” terminology in his official statements.<sup>14</sup> Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdogan, incumbent President of Türkiye to date also adopted that rhetoric overwhelmingly in his statements and speeches.<sup>15</sup> The Ministers also followed the discourse of Presidents. It can be seen at Türkiye’s Minister of Trade, Mr. Mehmet Muş’s speech at Türkiye-Turkic states economy and trade conference on November 11<sup>th</sup>, 2021: “Türkiye welcomed independent Turkic states’ emerging in history scene

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<sup>11</sup> [https://tasam.org/tr-TR/Icerik/70108/turgut\\_ozalin\\_orta\\_asya\\_turkistan\\_politikasi](https://tasam.org/tr-TR/Icerik/70108/turgut_ozalin_orta_asya_turkistan_politikasi) Accessed on November 13, 2022.

<sup>12</sup> <https://tccb.gov.tr/konusmalari-suleyman-demirel/1718/4127/cumhurbaskani-sayin-suleyman-demirelin-turkce-konusan-ulkeler-devlet-baskanlari-vi-zirve-toplantisinde-yaptiklari-konusma> Accessed on November 13, 2022.

<sup>13</sup> Ex. <http://arsiv.ntv.com.tr/news/37385.asp> Accessed on November 20, 2021.

<sup>14</sup> Ex: <http://www.abdullahgul.gen.tr/haberler/170/78016/turkiyeturkmenistan-iliskilerini-her-alanda-gelistiren-iki-kardes-ulke.html> Accessed on November 13, 2022.

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.tccb.gov.tr/basin-aciklamalari/365/1626/azerbaycan-cumhurbaskani-aliyev-ile-ortak-basin-toplantisinde-yaptiklari-aciklama> Accessed on November 13, 2022

with a great excitement, by doing this, it was the first state which recognized “brother” states’ independence.”<sup>16</sup> This rhetoric has not only been an element of the speeches for Turkish Presidents and Ministers; it also become as a shaping discourse for Turkish foreign policy towards Turkic states, which stands at the center of this thesis. Türkiye aimed to establish an identity with those countries, based on its cultural closeness and historical ties. All the institutional structures were mainly based on these ties, such as Organization of Turkic States, International Organization of Turkic Culture. Türkiye also led establishment of regional organizations such as Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization with the participation of Turkic states. Türkiye also develops its bilateral relations with those countries on the basis of that constructivist approach. Türkiye opened joint state universities in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, developed student exchange programs with each of them, established an institution named TİKA (Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency) to contribute the transition process of those countries<sup>17</sup>. On the other hand, within the framework of this thesis, Türkiye led establishing business council mechanisms with each of those countries. Moreover, it is still exerting its efforts to build a more structured economic cooperation model by signing bilateral preferential trade agreements.

In this regard, it is necessary to see the recent literature on Türkiye’s relations with Turkic states, to make an analysis on how it was approached by the scholars. Starting with integration efforts of Türkiye with Turkic states, Geybullayev and Kurubaş are of the opinion that this integration may be based on an economic basis, or it may turn into a political integration if the conditions require it. (Geybullayev & Kurubaş, 2002, p. 20) They evaluate Türkiye’s economic and trade relations with the Turkic states within the scope of the processes these countries followed after their independence and make their assessment within the framework of integration. In this context, although the solution they propose is steps that can be taken to further institutionalize integration, they mainly mention on an institutionalization beyond a realist perspective. However, while proposing this institutionalization, they do not refer to the role of the "brotherhood" discourse, which has been expressed at the highest level

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<sup>16</sup> <https://ticaret.gov.tr/haberler/bakan-mus-turkiye-turk-cumhuriyetleri-ekonomi-ve-ticaret-konferansinda-konustu> Translation by the author, Accessed on November 13, 2022.

<sup>17</sup> [https://www.tika.gov.tr/en/page/about\\_us-14650](https://www.tika.gov.tr/en/page/about_us-14650) Accessed on November 27th, 2022

between Türkiye and these countries since 1992, which the realist perspective fails to explain, in shaping the relations, and they approach the issue with an economic and geopolitical-based perspective for integration.

However, one of the main issues that cannot be ignored in this form of relationship is the cooperation model between these countries based on the definition of identity with institutions established is far from being able to be analyzed with a realist perspective. Geybullayev and Kurubaş, on the other hand, propose a geography-based integration form based on a multicultural basis by abandoning the "panturkist" understanding in the integration model they propose. (Geybullayev & Kurubaş, 2002, p. 42) Similarly, it is expressed that the search for regional cooperation for Türkiye should be a regional integration effort rather than a cooperation between the Turkic states. In this case, the institutional structures established between Türkiye and the Turkic states based on the understanding of common identity are proposed to be ignored, and the relations are handled with a realist perspective based entirely on mutual interest. However, as it is mentioned in the relevant sections, the main issue in that relationship is not based on a mutual interest, rather, the interest is also built by the sides, as it is proposed by constructivist approaches. If we take regionalism as the main concern for Türkiye's policies towards the Turkic states, then this analysis has to ignore the abovementioned brotherhood rhetoric, which has been adopted not only by Türkiye, but also by the Turkic states in their relations. This rhetoric covers an identity constructed by common history, language and other factors, which is centric in that special type of relationship.

Addressing Türkiye's relations with the Turkic states with a Post-Structuralist approach, Yıldız emphasizes the importance of institutions in bilateral relations, deals with bilateral relations at the level of national, bilateral, regional and global institutions, and in this context, focuses on a perspective that keeps inter-institutional relations at the center. (Yıldız, 2018, p. 21) Here, Yıldız adopts a new institutionalist approach and evaluates international organizations such as the Turkic Council and TURKSOY, which were established jointly with these countries, as well as institutions such as TİKA, which Türkiye established within its own structure after independence to establish relations with the Turkic states, from a post-structuralist framework. Yıldız also evaluates the international organizations of which Türkiye and the Turkic states are members together, within this framework. Regarding the institutionalist

theory, as it is stated by Mearsheimer, liberal institutionalist approach to states as rational egoists and in this context, mutual agreements cannot be evaluated hierarchically. (Keohane & Martin, 1995, p. 39) In addition, he states that interstate cooperation can only happen when both parties have a strong common interest, and Keohane classifies the institutionalist theory among rational theories in this context and evaluates it as close to realism. (Keohane & Martin, 1995, p. 39) As a matter of fact, Yaldız, in the article in question, states that the institutionalist approach is a theory influenced by the realist paradigm's view of the international system as anarchic (and therefore a structure devoid of effective institutions) and places its evaluation in that framework. From this assumption, it is understood that both Türkiye's institutionalization within itself and the cooperation in bilateral, multilateral and global structures in Türkiye-Turkic states relations are shaped around a strong common interest of the parties with a realistic perspective. However, in the trade diplomacy mechanisms covered in this thesis, it is seen that the states show a will to build the common interest together with a constructivist understanding, rather than maximizing their interests in an egoistic way. In addition, it is seen that identity formed through common history and cultural heritage in this construction process is the most important epistemological structure in shaping relations. Therefore, it is seen that realist and institutionalist approaches are not sufficient to explain Türkiye's trade diplomacy relations with the Turkic states. Türkiye has not made a preferential trade agreement with Azerbaijan in line with a strong common interest. It cannot be said that there is a strong interest for both sides in the preferential trade agreement with Uzbekistan. However, these Agreements are seen as important steps in the building of relations.

In the study, which examines Türkiye's relations with Kazakhstan from the same neoclassical realist perspective as China's relations with Kazakhstan, Aydın also evaluates the process of establishing Türkiye's relations with Kazakhstan from a geopolitical and economic point of view. (Aydın, 2022, p. 3) While Aydın evaluates the fact that Türkiye and Kazakhstan have a common language, religion and culture as a parameter, he considers this only as a factor that facilitates Türkiye's establishment of relations with Kazakhstan. Aydın also states that the idea of creating a common geopolitical/regional space created by the social closeness brought about by this common history is remarkable by the Turkish leaders because of the possibility of it turning into a policy of influence over time. (Aydın F. , 2022, p. 5) Aydın states that

Türkiye's Kazakhstan foreign policy was shaped in the 1990s by the fact that the two countries, whose relations were severed in the historical context, were able to establish contact as two states after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and he evaluates the impact of geopolitical factors together with the perception of the leader. According to Aydın, geopolitics, identified with the perception of leader, has matured with the idea of creating a common regional space. Türkiye wanted to establish positive political relations in the whole region through Kazakhstan. Aydın evaluates with the assumption that Kazakhstan being the largest country in Central Asia in terms of politics and economy affects Türkiye's relations with Kazakhstan and emphasizes that the new market opportunities brought by the disintegration of the Soviet Union have driven Türkiye's foreign policy to the region on the grounds of economic and natural resources. On the other hand, the abundance of Kazakhstan's natural resources coincides with Türkiye's needs. According to Aydın, Kazakhstan's stable policy and successful completion of nation-building, its moderate foreign policy preferences and its openness to communication enabled Türkiye to develop cooperation with Kazakhstan much more easily. Aydın evaluates Kazakhstan's successful profile in the international system and the smooth continuation of its relations with its border neighbors as independent variables within the parameters determined while examining Türkiye's Kazakhstan foreign policy within the neoclassical realist framework. Here, elements such as cultural proximity and shared history, which constitute an important infrastructure for the construction of identity and bilateral relations from a constructivist point of view, are considered as factors that are beneficial only for the beginning and execution of relations from a neoclassical point of view. It is certain that Kazakhstan is one of the leading countries in the region in terms of natural resources, however, it is open to debate how effective this energy factor is in the relationship model Türkiye has developed with Kazakhstan. On the other hand, the importance of the fact that Kazakhstan is a moderate actor in its region, in terms of the relations developed by Türkiye in that region. As a country that has a common history and cultural elements with Kazakhstan and the countries in its region, Türkiye is not in a position to need Kazakhstan to strengthen its relations with these countries. In this respect, neoclassical realism does not provide a sufficient scope to draw the framework of Türkiye's relations with Kazakhstan, and it seems that it would be a more correct approach to evaluate this type of relationship from a constructivist perspective.



In fact, the emphasis on “brotherhood” between Türkiye and the Turkic states is a form of expression that has found its place not only in the discourse of high level government officials, but also among the Turkish scholars. It is possible to see that the brotherly ties between Türkiye and the Turkic states are mentioned in academic publications published in Türkiye at various times. Erdoğan and Çolakoğlu state that after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Türkiye took important steps not only to establish diplomatic relations with these "brother" republics, but also to develop these relations in a friendly way. (Erdoğan & Çolakoğlu, 2015, p. 704) While doing this, they claim that Türkiye’s approach to these countries remains on emotional ground and that Türkiye has not been able to establish strong political and economic ties with these countries, thus presenting a realistic perspective and reflecting the quest for tangible gains for Türkiye. However, in this thesis, it is claimed that Türkiye has developed a self-renewing relationship with the Turkic states under the umbrella of "brotherhood" with a constructivist approach, and in this context, it is explained that a relationship with the target of mutually built interests has emerged rather than maximizing mutual interest.

On the other hand, apart from that theoretical perspective, there is also another aspect in the level of analysis on Türkiye’s trade diplomacy with Turkic states. In most of the scholarly works, tools of trade diplomacy such as Joint Economic Commission meetings, high level official visits, bilateral visits of businesspeople are considered as effective on foreign relations and those mechanisms are evaluated within the framework of historical progress between Türkiye and those countries. (Durmuş & Yılmaz, Türk Dilli Halklar - Türkiye ile İlişkiler, p. 498) On the other hand, in those works, trade diplomacy mechanisms are observed not to be considered as foreign policy factors in systematical order, instead those are evaluated as parts of historical progress with other factors under the title of economic and trade relations. (Serinkan & Güney, 2019) Budak, for instance, evaluates Türkiye-Central Asia relations within the framework of geo-economics, where she covers Türkiye's policies on allocating Eximbank credits for the region along with TİKA's role in bilateral relations with this perspective. (Budak, 2013, p. 137)

Trade diplomacy mechanisms are seemed to be increasingly emphasized in academic literature on Türkiye-Azerbaijan relations in recent years. While Aslanlı (2018, p. 19)

states that the economic relations between the two countries are affected by the political relations, he states that the tension experienced during the rapprochement between Armenia and Türkiye, especially between 2008-2010, also partially affected the economic relations, but that this tension ended with the deepening of the strategic quality of the relations. In addition, Aslanlı refers to the agreements that form the infrastructure of the economic relations between the two countries and the protocols of the Joint Economic Commission meeting. (Aslanlı, 2018, p. 19)

Bağırzade and Muradov, in their studies examining the economic relations between Türkiye and Azerbaijan, deal with the historical development of bilateral relations in a historical framework, and similarly, they also emphasize the importance of economic and commercial cooperation agreements within the scope of the general analysis of bilateral economic relations. (Bağırzade & Muradov, 2015, p. 4) While doing this, it is mentioned that the aforementioned bilateral economic and commercial cooperation mechanisms, which are mentioned among the trade diplomacy mechanisms in this thesis, are the documents that form the legal infrastructure of the economic dimension of the relations between the two countries, rather than the tools used in the execution of foreign policy.

Similarly, İncekara and İncekara dwells upon the contribution of Avoidance of Double Taxation agreements, Mutually Promotion and Protection of Investments agreements, Trade and Economic Cooperation agreements and similar documents on bilateral trade and economic cooperation. (İncekara & İncekara, 2015, p. 147) Mentioning the agreements in question as an important dimension in the explanation of Türkiye-Kazakhstan relations in the historical process and as the main elements shaping the bilateral relations, the importance of the mechanisms is also emphasized.

The recent transformation of Türkiye's relations with Uzbekistan has begun to find its place in the literature. Mentioning the importance of trade and investments in Türkiye and Uzbekistan after Karimov, Budulgan emphasizes that agreements signed during High Level Strategic Cooperation Council meetings strengthen the role of those mechanisms. (Budulgan S. A., 2020, p. 179) Reference to those trade diplomacy mechanisms can be found on various studies regarding Türkiye and Uzbekistan relations. (Keskin Köylü, 2018, p. 87) Mazıcı indicates that there is a direct correlation between Joint Economic Commission meetings and increase in trade volume in

transformation of relations after 2017. (Mazııcı N. , 2019, p. 8) On the other hand, Uzbek scholars also refer to those documents which establish legal infrastructure on economic and trade mechanisms and investment relations to indicate their contribution on development of relations. (Mukhammedova & Shakarboyuev, 2021, p. 469)

In their studies where Türkiye's relations with Central Asian countries are evaluated in terms of its strategic dimension, Serinkan and Güney, while telling about bilateral mechanisms, also mentioned the Joint Economic Commission meetings, which are considered as tools of trade diplomacy in this thesis. (Serinkan & Güney, 2019, p. 13) Yılmaz also emphasizes the importance of economic and trade cooperation mechanisms in Türkiye-Kazakhstan relations. (Yılmaz S. , Türkiye-Kazakistan ilişkilerinin son durumu: Hedeflere ulaşıldı mı?, 2022, p. 72) On the other hand, the important role of trade diplomacy mechanisms in the development of Türkiye's relations with the Turkic states of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan after their independence was also included in the work of Tanınmış Yücememiş Arıcan and Alkan. (2017, p. 166)

Similarly, Aydın focuses on the opportunities that emerged for Türkiye with the Turkic states gaining their independence. In this context, Aydın states that Türkiye's close cooperation with these countries provides him with significant economic gains and that these countries create significant opportunities for Türkiye's industry. In his evaluation, Aydın talks about unilateral gains for Türkiye, and discusses the support given to these countries by Türkiye from the perspective of regional power gain. (Aydın M. , 2004, p. 5) While doing this, Aydın criticizes Türkiye's policies regarding the region in terms of being in the "big brother" approach, and states that the Pan-Turkism policies are met with reaction from other regional actors. (Aydın M. , 2004, p. 5) Although he refers to these countries and the international organizations established under the leadership of Türkiye in his evaluation, Aydın's analysis is mostly based on an evaluation centered on Türkiye's efforts for regional superiority. Although he refers to these countries and the international organizations established under the leadership of Türkiye in his evaluation, Aydın's analysis is mostly based on an evaluation centered on Türkiye's efforts for regional superiority. In this context, when Türkiye's relationship with these countries is evaluated with a social

constructivist approach, it will be seen that this identity-building process is not a one-sided but a reciprocal one.

Duarte, in his study examining Türkiye's relations with Central Asia, takes Türkiye's approach from a completely realistic perspective and claims that Türkiye has taken China as an example in shaping these policies and has set a political target based on Ankara, Tehran, Central Asia and China. (Duarte, 2014, p. 33) As a basis for this claim, Duarte shows that Türkiye did not have any policy towards Central Asia during the Soviet Union period, and explains this as a necessity of the security policy it determined during the cold war period. As Duarte emphasizes, it would be a realistic approach to state that Türkiye's determination of a new strategy regarding these countries, which open up significant opportunities in terms of energy resources, aims to diversify energy resources and increase their efficiency. (Duarte, 2014, p. 36) However, while doing this, considering the "Turkic World" discourse, as Duarte expresses it, only at the level of a discourse adopted to realize these aims is far from being an adequate approach to explain the relations between Türkiye and the Turkic states. The mutually constructed identity and the relationship built with it cannot be explained by Türkiye's unilateral higher interests and security needs. Duarte acknowledges that Türkiye has historical and cultural ties with Central Asian countries and that this is an important factor in the development of relations. However, he underlines that the basis of his approach is a realistic framework. As a matter of fact, Duarte's approach to this type of relationship from a realist and pragmatist framework, without mentioning the structures established between Türkiye and the Turkic states, especially the institutions that form the infrastructure of commercial and economic relations, shows the inadequacy of the approach. (Duarte, 2014, p. 36)

As a result, The relations that Türkiye developed with the Turkic states after the collapse of the Soviet Union were mainly discussed from a realist framework in the IR literature. Trade diplomacy activities of Türkiye is not considered in a different perspective from that approaches. According to that method of analysis, Türkiye conducts its trade with Turkic states within the framework of increasing its influence over the region. Although pragmatist and realist approaches constitute the general weight, the point that draws attention in studies in this direction is that it is a general acceptance that Türkiye establishes relations with these countries through the concept

of "brotherhood relations". Brotherhood relations between Türkiye and Turkic states opens another dimension for evaluation of trade diplomacy relations between Türkiye and those countries, which does not basically constructed on unilateral interests. As a result, in this thesis, trade diplomacy is evaluated as a concept itself to understand Türkiye's relations with selected Turkic states, within the framework of social constructivism. The theoretical perspectives to understand the mechanisms of trade diplomacy have a path to be controversial and this thesis may contribute to open new dimensions by presenting how trade diplomacy affected Türkiye's process with its partners.

As it is seen in the relevant chapters, Türkiye's trade diplomacy mechanisms with Turkic states are mainly shaped and conducted by state institutions and/or state oriented or state driven private sector activities. Increasing the trade volume between the countries is main purpose of trade diplomacy, as it is everywhere else in the world. This purpose is shaped in bilateral or multilateral levels. In some cases, such as in World Trade Organization system, one can argue that the diplomacy is conducted by the states, but is shaped by non state actors, on the basis of their interests. Similarly we can pick some other examples from EU members which private sector might be the driving force. However, as it is seen in the literature on Türkiye-Turkic states relations, the relationship type is generally shaped by state actors. This does not show a big difference in trade diplomacy area. The progress of business circles mechanisms, such as business council meetings are highly dependent on political relations or high-level official visits. They're mostly scheduled in parallel with that kind of visits and designed as complementary element of a visit. The decisions of establishment of business councils or organization of business forums are decided in Joint Economic Commission meetings, which are signed by ministers. This actor-based approach paves way to evaluate that relationship type within the framework of realist approaches.

#### **2.4. Conceptual Clarification for Trade Diplomacy**

Diplomacy is defined as "the conduct of relations between sovereign states through the medium of officials based at home or abroad, the latter being either members of their state's diplomatic service or temporary diplomats." At McMillan' Diplomacy dictionary. (Berridge & Lloyd, 2012, p. 69 and 70) In other words, diplomacy can be

considered to be the “engine room” of international relations (Cohen, 1998, p. 1).

In this definition, diplomacy also includes the assignment of representatives in international organizations, but it is emphasized that for five centuries, diplomacy is basically based on having diplomatic missions in foreign countries and this is still the main body. (Geraud & Pertinax, 1945, p. 12) In the definition, diplomacy has been considered as the main tool for ensuring the communication of states with each other and maintaining their regular relations, as well as a skill to conduct it. (Berridge & Lloyd, 2012, p. 69 and 70) Edmund Burke was the first to name the concept of diplomacy in 1796. (Geraud & Pertinax, 1945)

Diplomacy is also used as a counterpart to foreign policy. (Hocking, 2016) Diplomat, on the other hand, defined as a person professionally engaged in the craft of diplomacy as a member of a diplomatic service, whether any attitude for the craft is displayed or not, namely, in this context, a diplomat may also be a "diplomatic agent" in a diplomatic mission or may be limited to officials working in the Ministries of Foreign Affairs. (Berridge & Lloyd, 2012, p. 70)

McMillan dictionary defines Economics Diplomacy as a separate title. In this context, economic diplomacy is defined as diplomacy dealing with economic policy issues, and the work of delegations in conferences supported by organizations such as the World Trade Organization is also discussed within this framework. (Berridge & Lloyd, 2012, p. 91) On the other hand, commercial diplomacy is defined in the same source as the work of diplomatic missions in support of the home country’s business and finance sectors. (Berridge & Lloyd, 2012, p. 42)

It is noteworthy that the concepts of economic diplomacy and trade diplomacy are also used interchangeably in the literature. Coolsaet uses both terms in the work named Trade Diplomacy: Belgian Case, trade diplomacy at the title, but economic diplomacy in the body. (Coolsaet, 2004, p. 61) Badel preferred using commercial diplomacy for determining a new dimension in France’s foreign policy in 1960s, (Badel, 2012, p. 61) Frontini summarizes commercial diplomacy as promoting commercial interests abroad, notably through diplomatic channels, (Frontini, 2013, p. 1) where Elbl preferred using trade diplomacy in the work on Portuguese relations with west Africa in 15<sup>th</sup> century for a similar framework (Elbl, 1992, s. 165) Georgiadou uses the term

commercial diplomacy to explain diplomacy's transformation for promoting commercial interests in Greece and underlines that the terms economic and commercial diplomacy are used interchangeably. (Georgiadou, 2018, p. 26 and 27) Haaf prefers using commercial diplomacy term to explain embassies' role in diplomacy. (Haaf, 2010, p. 4) Heron uses Trade Diplomacy to explain EU-China trade agreements and negotiations. (Heron, 2007, s. 192) Huntington takes economic diplomacy as a tool in his realist understanding of foreign policy making between US and Soviet Union. (Huntington, et al., 1978, p. 79)

It is seen that all the concepts of trade diplomacy, commercial diplomacy and economic diplomacy are used in the literature. While economic and commercial diplomacy terms are used interchangeably in literature without any emphasize on a significant difference. (Reuvers & Ruël, 2012, p. 11) On the other hand, commercial diplomacy is classified under economic diplomacy in one work (Okano-Heijmans & Ruël, 2011, p. 463), on the other hand, in another work, those two terms considered to be intertwined in other. (Potter, 2004, p. 55) Those terms are referred as "distinct [but] obviously closely related" in another work. (Berridge, Keens-Soper, & Otte, 2001, p. 128) . However, no explanatory difference was observed in the literature between the two concepts. On the other hand, both terms refer to different concepts.

There are approaches that define trade diplomacy as a public diplomacy activity carried out to increase exports at the firm, industry or national level. (Seringhaus, 1986). In addition, there are approaches that move the issue beyond the focus of increasing exports and define it as activities carried out by public officials with diplomatic status to support business activities in general. Naray, in his article "Commercial Diplomacy: A Conceptual Overview" defines commercial diplomacy as,

an activity conducted by state representatives with diplomatic status in view of business promotion between a home and a host country. It aims at encouraging business development through a series of business promotion and facilitation activities. The spectrum of actors in CDC ranges from (i) the high-policy level (head of state, prime minister, minister or a member of parliament) to (ii) ambassador and the lower level of specialized diplomatic envoy. (Naray, 2008, p. 2)

It is observed that trade diplomacy, which is considered as the purpose of developing business networks of countries, mainly to create employment, increase tax revenues

and contribute to economic growth, has taken on a more intense form especially after the end of the cold war after the 1990s. (Koktabe & Czinkota, 1992, p. 637) In the case of Türkiye, especially in the period following the disintegration of the Soviet Union, after the Central Asian Republics declared their independence, it is seen that bilateral trade and economic mechanisms were quickly established and Commercial Consulates or Attaché offices were opened in these countries. (T.C. Ticaret Bakanlığı, 2022) In this regard, not only the trade representatives in diplomatic missions, but also business councils consisting of businesspeople were quickly formed and a structure was formed in which the private sector was included. (DEİK, 2021)

However, it is seen that trade diplomacy does not receive as much attention as diplomacy in International Relations studies. According to Hudson, there is a more informative relationship that needs to be uncovered between IR and diplomatic studies. (Hudson & Lee, 2004, p. 351) This scientific marginalization of business diplomacy stems from much deeper and more structural reasons than an arbitrary decision about what to study and what not, in this regard, Hudson argues that the sources of this disregard lie in the way that both diplomatic studies and International Relations more generally understand their own fields of study and the paradox of the simultaneous presence-but-invisibility of commercial diplomacy can be explained within the dominant discourses about what, who and how to work. (Hudson & Lee, 2004, p. 351)

In Türkiye, it is seen that institutions such as the Foreign Economic Relations Board, (DEİK, 2021) Independent Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association (MÜSİAD, 2018) have preferred to use the concept of trade diplomacy instead of economic diplomacy in the annual reports and other publications published, and in some publications, it is claimed that the two concepts are different from each other. (Köse, 2020, p. 1)

Based on the definitions above, in summary, Trade diplomacy, which differs from economic diplomacy in this use, is generally the business world of the public or public service providers, chambers of commerce, industrialists, etc. and to develop the international trade and investment environment in favor of their countries in a mutual understanding. It is seen that most of the activities related to trade diplomacy are carried out through representations, chambers, embassies, consulates, companies and



similar formations in foreign countries, and commercial diplomats and companies appear as the most important factor in trade diplomacy. It is stated that trade diplomats can be commercial attachés of countries, as well as individuals or organizations such as commercial consultants, commercial representatives, elected lobby companies, agencies, non-governmental organizations. (MÜSIAD, 2018, p. 105). Although it is stated that the main distinction here is that the concept of trade diplomacy is more concerned with the dimension of trade in goods and investments, and that economic diplomacy draws a broader framework, it is seen that no important explanation has been made to support this difference in the literature.

As a matter of fact, it is noteworthy that this distinction is not made in the literature that uses the concept of "economic diplomacy". For example, in his article on France's reorientation towards Commercial Diplomacy in the 1960s, Badel, while taking trade diplomacy as the main subject, mainly dwells upon France's EU membership and the orientation of the economic and commercial relations developed within this framework, considering trade diplomacy a tool of French foreign policy as a "soft power". He expresses the transformation of the economy and uses the concept of "economic diplomacy" in many parts of the article. (Badel, 2012, p. 62)

Similarly, Coolsaet, in the 2004 article in which the relationship between Commerce and Diplomacy was examined in the example of Belgium, did not push an emphasis on a difference between business diplomacy and economic diplomacy, and used the terms interchangeably. (Coolsaet, 2004, p. 61) In Coolsaet's article, the increasing importance of economic diplomacy in the 1990s includes a comparison in terms of intensity and scope with trade diplomacy in the late 19th century and early 20th century. Coolsaet stated that the concentration in economic diplomacy brought about by the intensification of globalization increased the role of the states in this issue and resulted in more support for the private sector, but while doing this, he did not mention a conceptual difference between business diplomacy and economic diplomacy. (Coolsaet, 2004, p. 61)

In his 2020 article, which examines how multinational companies use joint diplomacy as a trigger in their political, social and cultural influences in foreign markets, Egea chose the institutions involved in trade diplomacy in Spain as a focus group. While

doing this, they chose to use the concept of trade diplomacy, emphasizing that trade diplomacy is a type of diplomacy alongside state and public diplomacy without making any reference to economic diplomacy. (Egea, Parra-Meroño, & Wandosell, 2020, p. 55) Frontini also used the concept of "commercial diplomacy" in 2013 article examining the EU's place in the developing multi-level European Trade Diplomacy, and it is seen that this concept covers all trade-related fields including investments, intellectual property and services. (Frontini, 2013, p. 1) In this context, he states that especially after the Lisbon Treaty came into force, EU delegations started to hold regular consultation meetings with the trade and economic attachés of EU countries in third countries, and these meetings turned into an informal intra-EU discussion platform on commercially sensitive issues. In this context, Frontini also evaluates economic counsellors and commercial counsellors within the framework of the same function and uses the concept interchangeably, describing the meetings in question as an activity of trade diplomacy. (Frontini, 2013, p. 1)

Georgiadou, on the other hand, in his article (Georgiadou, 2018) in which he dealt with Greece's trade diplomacy institutionally, stated that although the concepts of economic and commercial diplomacy are not new, few studies have emerged recently, especially in the field of commercial diplomacy, and in this context, diplomatic missions consider economic interests as a key priority. He states that the economy settled at the heart of diplomatic relations, especially after the 1970s, and that trade diplomacy came to the fore in the 1990s. (Georgiadou, 2018, p. 126) Although it can be understood that Georgiadou has separated the two concepts from each other, in the continuation of the article, Georgiadou states that the main subject of the economy has shifted to the focus of trade and export-oriented value chains with globalization. Therefore, in Georgiadou's approach, economy and trade are not considered as alternatives to each other, and it is understood that the new transformation of economic diplomacy has evolved into a trade-oriented understanding. (Georgiadou, 2018, p. 26)

In the 2004 article examining the transformation in Canada's trade diplomacy, Potter claims that there is a large literature on trade and economic diplomacy, but there is not enough work solely focused on trade diplomacy. (Potter, 2004, p. 55) Potter defines trade diplomacy as the use of the tools of diplomacy for specific commercial purposes by increasing exports, attracting investments and developing foreign investment

opportunities and providing technology transfer, while stating that there is no distinction between trade diplomacy and economic diplomacy. Potter states that the two activities are “irrevocably intertwined” and aim to reveal the comparative advantage of international opportunities created by the evolution of business diplomacy, economic diplomacy and markets and turn them into benefits. (Potter, 2004, p. 55) While doing this, Potter claims that trade diplomacy is a new type of diplomacy and that it is a more advanced version of public diplomacy and shows that developed and developing countries are starting to devote more and more time to this issue in their foreign policies. (Potter, 2004, p. 55)

The point to be cleared out in theorizing the diplomatic activities which aim to foster trade is to identify the term whether it should be *trade* diplomacy or *commercial* diplomacy. Balkin states that, Contemporary originalist readings have identified "commerce" with the trade of commodities, while originalists defend a more broad identification for "commerce" with all gainful economic activity. (Balkin, 2010, p. 1) In Merriam-Webster’s online dictionary, Commerce is defined as “1. social intercourse : interchange of ideas, opinions, or sentiments, 2. the exchange or buying and selling of commodities on a large scale involving transportation from place to place” (Merriam-Webster, 2021) On the other hand, in the same dictionary, trade is defined as “the business of buying and selling or bartering commodities”

In this regard, it is understood that, in English language, commerce covers trade, since trade looks to be a one part of the term which only deals with the exchange of tangible commodities. As a result, it might be useful to prefer the use of “commercial diplomacy” instead of “trade diplomacy”.

However, the process does not confirm this strict identification. The World Trade Organization has named the agreement regarding the exchange of services as “General Agreement on Trade in Services”. There is a reason why WTO preferred the use of the word “Trade” in its literature which goes beyond any discussion on the language and etymology. The services trade has been increasingly becoming a subject of international transactions. This trend created a need for an internationally agreed regulation within the framework of a world trade system. In 1994 when GATT was transformed into the World Trade Organization, the General Agreement of Trade in

Services (GATS) was created as an Annex (Annex I) of the Marrakesh Agreement of 1994 (WTO, 2021). The scope of the GATS agreement is summarized as

basic agreement defines its scope — specifically, services supplied from the territory of one party to the territory of another; services supplied in the territory of one party to the consumers of any other (for example, tourism); services provided through the presence of service providing entities of one party in the territory of any other (for example, banking); and services provided by nationals of one party in the territory of any other (for example, construction projects or consultancies) (WTO, 2021)

It is understood from this summary that the services are considered as kind of goods which are subject to trade like commodities. Therefore, the classical distinction between commercial and trade has been shifted to be an intertwined structure and the main difference that the main dictionary resources put between the two terms make little sense in that use.

Since the WTO documents adopt the term “trade” both for the exchange of commodities, in this thesis it is adopted to use the same language with the WTO and is discussing trade diplomacy, rather than commercial diplomacy.

## **2.5. Trade diplomacy and Foreign Policy**

Trade’s role in international conflicts has attracted interest of IR scholars. Liberal perspective generally suggests a direct correlation between trade and conflict by arguing that trade reduces conflicts. (Stein, 2003, p. 111) On the other hand, there are studies which challenges liberals’ pessimistic ideas by arguing that trade can be a reason for conflict based on the expectations. (Li & Reuveny, 2011) This connection between trade and conflict is relatively an emerging area of study in international relations. On the other hand, trade diplomacy itself attracted less in the literature. One of the main objectives of this thesis is to make a contribution to this less touched area within the framework of Türkiye’s position with selected countries.

By the rise of trade in international relations within the framework of the dynamics mentioned in the previous sections, diplomacy studies go beyond research of the activities carried out by diplomats in the ministries of Foreign Affairs. (MacDonald & Woolcock, 2007, p. 5) There are different actors involved in diplomatic activity in this process; commercial diplomats, non-state actors, companies, business organizations

and so on.

Commercial interests play a central role in shaping the foreign policies of countries that have the largest share of world trade, such as China, Japan, US and Germany, as well as France's relations with Eastern European markets and the Third World since the 1950s. (Badel, 2012, p. 61) In the United States, foreign trade began to become increasingly important in the economy, especially at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. The foreign trade volume, which was 829 million dollars in 1870, increased to 4.2 billion dollars in 1913, of which 2.46 billion dollars was exported. (Bishop, 1915, p. 292) The decrease in the share of agricultural products in exports in the US during this period and the prominence of manufacturing industry products created the need for US exporters to compete with strong actors such as the United Kingdom and Germany in European markets, which were two strong rivals in Europe at that time, especially in the manufacturing industry. (Bishop, 1915, p. 292) Evaluating the contribution of the strong organizational capacity that brings together the private sector, commercial organizations and government activities in the export markets of these countries, the US decided to open trade attachés within the Ministry of Trade in July 1915. (Bishop, 1915, p. 293)

French diplomats, and mainly European diplomats, do not show as much interest in economic issues as political issues, and their education is not an education that focuses on economics. (Badel, 2012, p. 66) Although some exceptional examples, such as Paul Cambon, the French Ambassador to Istanbul in 1914, had a special interest in trade and business, it is understood that the diplomatic structure of France did not include a goal of increasing exports at that time. Even in the 1960s, it is seen that the activities of the Commercial Attachés are still referred to as "the grocery trade" as an indication that France does not have an export-oriented culture, and that exports are not referred to as "noble activity" for France. (Badel, 2012, p. 66). France's interest in exports has progressed in parallel with the rapid industrialization after the 1960s and the decisiveness of trade in the process leading to the establishment of the European Union. French ministers' international visits were full with export agenda in those years. (Badel, 2012, p. 67)

World Trade Organization system has been the leading system in regulating international trade (Lloyd, 2012, p. 6). The World Trade Organization, with its 164 members<sup>18</sup> as of July 2022, has mechanisms in which rules and jurisprudence regarding world trade are formed. The Dispute Settlement Mechanism within it functions as a judicial body that aims to implement the agreements signed within the framework of GATT and to resolve disputes.<sup>19</sup> Since non-state actors in international trade have been getting more involved in the state-based issues, this developed a need for experienced public officers taking role in WTO bodies. WTO Director-General: Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala is a former Finance Minister of Nigeria<sup>20</sup>, the previous Director-General Roberto Azevedo was Vice-Minister at Foreign Ministry in Brazil and an experienced diplomat<sup>21</sup>. The technical personnel of WTO has been working as consultants to the states especially on WTO dispute settlement procedures, most of which are used to be government officials previously being recruited by the WTO. Some governments encourage their officers to work at WTO while keeping their post in their respective government's institution. As a result, under the WTO, trade is being negotiated within the framework of diplomacy, and by the diplomats themselves, along with technical staff. This is one of the indicators why the term "trade diplomacy" is having an increasingly wide use in the literature.

There are other bilateral and multilateral mechanisms regulating international trade which are carried out within the framework of regional trade agreements in multilateral platforms, free trade agreements and preferential trade agreements in bilateral

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<sup>18</sup> 164 members since 29 July 2016, with dates of WTO membership. [https://www.wto.org/english/thewto\\_e/whatis\\_e/tif\\_e/org6\\_e.htm](https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/whatis_e/tif_e/org6_e.htm) Accessed on July 2, 2022

<sup>19</sup> A central objective of the (WTO) dispute settlement system is to provide security and predictability to the multilateral trading system (Article 3.2 of the DSU). Although international trade is understood in the WTO as the flow of goods and services between Members, such trade is typically not conducted by States, but rather by private economic operators. These market participants need stability and predictability in the government laws, rules and regulations applying to their commercial activity, especially when they conduct trade on the basis of long-term transactions. In light of this, the DSU aims to provide a fast, efficient, dependable and rule-oriented system to resolve disputes about the application of the provisions of the WTO Agreement. [https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/dispu\\_e/dispu\\_settlement\\_cbt\\_e/c1s3p1\\_e.htm](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/dispu_e/dispu_settlement_cbt_e/c1s3p1_e.htm) Accessed on July 2, 2022

<sup>20</sup> [https://www.wto.org/english/thewto\\_e/dg\\_e/dg\\_e.htm](https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/dg_e/dg_e.htm) Accessed on November 12, 2021

<sup>21</sup> [https://www.wto.org/english/thewto\\_e/dg\\_e/ra\\_e.htm](https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/dg_e/ra_e.htm) Accessed on November 12, 2021

platforms. For example, Türkiye has customs union with the European Union; and it also has free trade agreements with 24 countries. (T.C. Ticaret Bakanlığı, 2021) Apart from these, it has a Preferential Trade Agreement with Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan (T.C. Ticaret Bakanlığı, 2021)

Trade diplomats continue their activities on the basis of 1961<sup>22</sup> and 1963<sup>23</sup> Vienna Conventions which regulate diplomatic relations. In this context, there may be Commercial Counselors / Attachés assigned for commercial matters from diplomatic representatives operating in this framework, as well as Counselors and Deputy Counselors operating in the diplomatic mission may be responsible for commercial matters. (Haaf, 2010, p. 21)

## **2.6. Actors of Trade Diplomacy**

### **2.6.1. States**

In the theories and literature of international relations, there is a clear alliance on the central role of the state and the legitimacy of this role. (Barkin & Cronin, 1994, p. 107) In general, states have a central role in the conduct of economic diplomacy and they have wide range of activities through implementation of that. Although the effectiveness and legitimacy of these roles increase with the increase of globalization and the deep integration between economic actors, the importance of non-state actors also gradually increases. However, states are still at the epicenter, since they have the capability of making decision on tax rates, privileges and incentives that direct trade. As will be mentioned in the related title, non-state actors conduct lobbying activities in order to affect these decisions and influence the states in line with their own interests.

The main actors in the trade diplomacy of the states can be defined with mentioning a wide range of officials, starting from the top, from heads of state and government to expert bureaucrats. The overseas organizations of the states also appear as

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<sup>22</sup> Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, 1961  
[https://legal.un.org/ilc/texts/instruments/english/conventions/9\\_1\\_1961.pdf](https://legal.un.org/ilc/texts/instruments/english/conventions/9_1_1961.pdf) Accessed on June 12, 2021

<sup>23</sup> Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, 1963  
[https://legal.un.org/ilc/texts/instruments/english/conventions/9\\_2\\_1963.pdf](https://legal.un.org/ilc/texts/instruments/english/conventions/9_2_1963.pdf) Accessed on June 12, 2021

Ambassadors, Permanent Representatives, Deputy Permanent Representatives, Chief Commercial Counselors and Counselors, and Commercial Attachés. (T.C. Ticaret Bakanlığı, 2021)

Issues related to economy and trade are seen as one of the main agenda items of interstate relations. In high-level visits, besides the special agenda items, the trade agenda certainly takes place. The increasing inclusion of trade issues on the visiting agendas of the heads of governments brings the trade diplomacy activities to this level at an increasing frequency. In fact, it has been seen that trade issues are handled at the highest level, even on a product-based basis. In the crisis between Türkiye and the Russian Federation after the downing of a Russian air force plane in Syria, it was seen that besides the political issues, commercial products, especially tomatoes, were on the negotiation table. (İzgi, 2017) The tomato ban imposed by Russia after the plane crisis was implemented on August 9, 2016 in St. Petersburg Summit, was one of the most important issues discussed at the summit meeting held during and after the summit. (Erşen, 2017, p. 98)

It is considered to be routine business for the President and Prime Ministers, in other words Heads of State and Government, to be involved in commercial matters as well as Ministers of Commerce or Ministers of Foreign Affairs. At this point, there are some differences in practices of countries. The United States of America presents a unique structure in this field. While the US Department of State was used to be responsible for the US trade and investment diplomacy until the 1960s, with the regulation enacted in 1962, the Congress called the President to appoint a special representative for trade. (Winniger, 2002, p. 43) After that, USTR was appointed as the official responsible for conducting Trade negotiations on behalf of the USA bearing the title of Ambassador from the moment he or she takes office. (United States Trade Representative, 2021)

Trade diplomacy in Türkiye is basically carried out by the Ministry of Trade. Although the concept of "Trade Diplomacy" is not included while counting the duties of the Ministry in the website of the Ministry or in the Presidential Decree No. 1, which is the establishment legislation, the relevant legislation has authorized the Ministry with activities related to Trade Diplomacy theoretically. (*Presidential Decree No. 1, Art. 441/u: To ensure that the products subject to foreign trade are safe and in compliance*



*with the legislation and standards, to carry out inspections in imports and exports and to carry out studies for the prevention of technical barriers in trade,)* (Resmi Gazete, 2018)

Ministry of Trade's organization in foreign carry out trade diplomacy activities with 186 Commercial Counselors and Attachés working in 108 postings in 106 countries. (T.C. Ticaret Bakanlığı, 2021) Along with these, representatives of the Ministry of Trade also work in international organizations, including the European Union in Brussels, the World Trade Organization in Geneva and the OECD in Paris. (T.C. Ticaret Bakanlığı, 2022)

To make a comparison of Türkiye's foreign missions for trade, the U.S. Commercial Service as a part of the U.S. Department of Commerce's International Trade Administration, indicates on its website that it has 100 U.S. Commercial Service offices nationwide and in more than 70 international offices. (U.S. Department of International Trade Administration, 2021) At this point, it is noteworthy that Türkiye has a relatively more extensive trade representation in more covering higher number of countries even more than the US.

On the website of the US Department of State, trade diplomacy activities of the department is described as follows: *“Working closely with the Department's regional bureaus, other U.S. Government agencies, and Congress to promote support for U.S. businesses abroad, the Commercial and Business Affairs division provides assistance to U.S. firms seeking help with business problems abroad by coordinating the Department's advocacy efforts on behalf of U.S. companies, connecting American firms to resources at U.S. embassies, and identifying commercial information and market opportunities for the U.S. business community.”* (U.S. Department of International Trade Administration, 2021) Similarly, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye defines trade diplomacy as an activity carried out together with all relevant institutions and organizations. (T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı, 2021)

States have two main functions in carrying out trade diplomacy activities; developing trade networks and conducting trade negotiations in bilateral and multilateral levels. For the first function, state performs functions such as the implementation of government incentives to increase exports, the promotion of legislation aimed at

attracting investors, and the promotion of exporter and investor companies in the addressee countries.<sup>24</sup>

The second function of the states is to go beyond promotional activities, to carry out trade negotiations for the purpose of public interest and to establish the legal basis by making agreements with partner countries.<sup>25</sup> This function is the most complex in terms of conducting business diplomacy. It is an activity carried out by states to confront the interlocutor countries in a way that balances the conflicting interests of various interest groups. These activities are carried out through bilateral and multilateral trade agreements, Joint Economic Commission meetings, bilateral trade agreements and similar mechanisms. This is a duty that belongs exclusively to the states, and each conductor of the negotiations can act within the framework of its authority.

Heads of States and Governments can basically negotiate international agreements mostly without the need for an authorization, although at times it varies depending on the systems of the countries involved. (Lipson, 1991) Ministers derive their powers from the Council of Ministers or the President, and other public officials who are authorized to negotiate and sign agreements are also authorized by going through similar processes.

Although the ratification processes of signed international agreements may differ according to the legal system to which the countries are subject, commercial agreements follow the same processes as political agreements in terms of their legal consequences. Considering the example of Türkiye, Article 90 of the Constitution of

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<sup>24</sup> Article 444/f: To carry out studies in order to determine the principles of substance and country policies regarding export credits and other State incentives and to convey them to the relevant departments and organizations. Official Gazette, July 10, 2018. Source: <https://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/19.5.1.pdf> Accessed on July 2, 2022.

<sup>25</sup> Article 448/b defines the main duties of Ministry of Trade in terms of conducting international bilateral and multilateral economic and trade cooperation activities using Joint Economic Commission, Joint Committee, Partnership Council and similar platforms, in coordination with relevant institutions. Official Gazette, July 10, 2018. Source: <https://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/19.5.1.pdf> Accessed on July 2, 2022

the Republic of Türkiye includes the position of the Agreements in the legal system and the approval processes.<sup>26</sup>

This aspect of trade diplomacy is essentially the result of all processes. The functions carried out by the states, the outputs that non-state actors hope to achieve at the end of their involvement in the process are basically embodied in the agreement texts signed as a result of trade diplomacy.

### **2.6.2. Non-state actors**

In addition to the states, pressure groups defined as non-state actors, business organizations, sectoral organizations, associations, Chambers of Commerce and public-private sector organizations specially created by the states play a major role alongside the states in the conduct of trade diplomacy.

MacDonald & Woolcock (2007, p. 78) state that rationalist approaches in international relations theories are interpreted with the assumption that non-state actors act in an interest-oriented manner, but recently, structuralist approaches have come to the fore more in terms of the role of non-state actors.

MacDonald & Woolcock list non-state actors in economic diplomacy as follows:

- Agricultural Lobbies
- Business interest groups
- Trade unions
- Consumer Organizations
- Transnational civil society: social movements and advocacy networks
- Non-state actors in policy and regulatory networks (MacDonald & Woolcock, 2007, p. 78)

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<sup>26</sup> Constitution of the Republic of Türkiye, Article 90: The ratification of agreements to be made with foreign states and international organizations on behalf of the Republic of Türkiye depends on the approval of the Turkish Grand National Assembly by a law. Agreements regulating economic, commercial or technical relations and whose duration does not exceed one year may be put into effect upon publication, provided that they do not impose a burden on the State Finance and do not affect the personal status of the Turks and the property rights of Turks in foreign countries. In this case, these treaties shall be brought to the notice of the Turkish Grand National Assembly within two months of their publication. Implementation agreements based on an international agreement and economic, commercial, technical or administrative agreements made on the basis of the authority given by law do not have to be approved by the Turkish Grand National Assembly; However, agreements concerning the rights of economic, commercial or private persons made pursuant to this paragraph cannot be put into effect before they are published. The provision of the first paragraph shall be applied in the conclusion of all kinds of agreements that bring changes to Turkish laws.

The extent to which these mentioned groups are influential in Türkiye's trade diplomacy activities is important for the purposes of this thesis. In this context, it is somewhat controversial to what extent the agricultural lobbies are effective in trade diplomacy. The subject of agriculture is undoubtedly important in the field of trade for a country like Türkiye, which is an agricultural producer and where 6.5% of its Gross Domestic Product is constituted by the agricultural sector. (T.C. Tarım ve Orman Bakanlığı, 2021) Because in countries where agriculture is so important in the economy, the protection of the agricultural sector and producers should be expected to be the main objective in the negotiations of foreign trade policies.

However, it is seen that the influence of non-state actors related to agriculture in the formation of foreign trade policies in Türkiye is not very potent. Organizations that represent exporters of agricultural products rather than agricultural producers, especially Mediterranean Exporters' Associations, carry out lobbying activities regarding agriculture in their foreign trade policies. (General Secretariat of Mediterranean Exporters' Associations, 2021) Although agriculture issues are included as an important topic in the JEC Protocols signed at the end of the Joint Economic Commission meetings that Türkiye is conducting with its trading partners, either the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry officials attend these meetings to discuss agricultural issues, or the agriculture issues are negotiated by the Ministry of Trade officials. MacDonald & Woolcock, on the other hand, state that agriculture lobbies are actively forming the agenda of economic diplomacy, especially protectionism, especially in developing countries, while they also state that agricultural interest groups are less organized at the international level than other interest groups. (MacDonald & Woolcock, 2007, p. 80) It is noteworthy that there was no participation from producers' unions, exporters' unions and similar non-governmental organizations regarding agricultural products.<sup>27</sup> Business interest groups

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<sup>27</sup> For example, in the Protocol of the Twelfth Term Meeting of the Intergovernmental Trade and Economic Cooperation Commission between Türkiye and Ukraine, signed in Istanbul on October 16, 2020 (Official Gazette, 21/3/2021, 31430), the 9th title was cooperation in the field of agriculture, but it was seen that there was no Ministry of Agriculture official from the Turkish side in the participation list. The title of Agriculture was also included in the Protocol of the Ninth Term Meeting of the Turkish-Kyrgyz Intergovernmental Joint Economic Commission signed in Ankara on November 22, 2019, and this time it was represented at the level of Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. There was no other official in the field of agriculture. The title of agriculture was also included in the Protocol of the Eleventh Term Meeting of the Türkiye-Kazakhstan Intergovernmental Joint Economic

and Trade Unions are directly represented in trade diplomacy activities in the case of Türkiye.<sup>28</sup>

The impact of business circles on trade diplomacy processes often manifests as providing data to the public authorities, who have the authority to conduct negotiations, to guide the negotiations and create content. (Quick, 2007, p. 118)

MacDonald & Woolcock also draw attention to the fact that non-state actors are sometimes directly involved, especially in international organizations. In this context, confederations are mentioned as business interest groups. They state that they basically defend the rights of business circles in free trade agreements against social rights and workers' rights. Industry associations aim to ensure competitiveness and market liberalization in imports, individual companies struggle to maximize their own interests, and business circles that have developed international cooperation aim to develop their commercial relations through the organizations they have established among themselves. (MacDonald & Woolcock, 2007, p. 82)

In this regard, social movements and advocacy networks and environmental NGOs can also be considered as non-state actors. However, it is not seen that such organizations have a significant place in the trade diplomacy activities that Türkiye carries out with its trade partners. It is seen that these pressure groups are active elements in multilateral platforms and these organizations take an active part in the activities of international commercial organizations of which Türkiye is a member. (MacDonald & Woolcock, 2007, p. 80) However, it is not possible to see these groups in the activities carried out by Türkiye on a bilateral basis. However, NGOs like environmental advocacy groups have been more effective for some countries, such as the USA, according to Bayne. Bayne states that this is also the reason for the USA's support for the Kyoto Protocol, for example, or the USA's support for climate issues

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Commission, signed in Istanbul on November 10, 2019, but a representative from an organization other than the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry did not attend.

<sup>28</sup> In the texts mentioned in Article 1, it is seen that TOBB, Contractors' Association, International Transporters Association and DEİK representatives as representatives of business interest groups and trade unions are also present in the delegation.

within the scope of the WTO within the scope of the demonstrations held in Seattle in 1999. (Bayne, 2007, p. 177)

### **2.6.3. Diplomatic agents**

The Commercial Counselors/Attachments assigned by the states to the addressee states serve as the official representation authorities of the trade diplomacy as it is explained in previous section. Officials assigned to embassies in capitals are Commercial Counselor or Chief Commercial Counselor according to seniority; Officers assigned to cities outside the capital, on the other hand, serve as Commercial Attachés. (T.C. Ticaret Bakanlığı, 2022) Commercial Counselors to the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 1961; Commercial Attachés, on the other hand, operate according to the 1963 Vienna Consular Relations Agreement. The difference in these conventions regulates the status of diplomatic agents against diplomatic immunity and impunity.

The responsibilities of the Commercial Attachés in the countries they are appointed have changed over time. The United States of America, in its current sense, began to assign Trade Attaches after the arrangements made in 1915. (Bishop, 1915, p. 296) Until this date, the US Trade Representatives had a wide range of public duties, from checking bills of lading at ports to preparing the estate of deceased citizens, and it was not possible to perform market entry research and consultancy within this broad job description. Thereupon, as a necessity to be able to compete with the guiding power of Germany and England in Europe and foreign markets, a need to make an arrangement within the scope of the Commercial Attachés arose with a reform made in 1906. (Bishop, 1915, p. 296) While this arrangement was made, in 1904, the opinions of the current diplomatic and consular units of the USA were taken first, and after receiving some negative opinions, mostly positive, the issue was shelved for a while. However, after the regulation in 1906, Commercial Attachés were assigned to a limited number of countries with tasks that were specifically framed: To India to prepare a trade manual, to Germany to study coke oven intermediates, to the far East and England to study the textile trade, to Europe to conduct market research for American canned goods, to research the cotton market, to Africa to research the market of pharmaceuticals, chemicals, dental materials, surgical materials, and a Commercial Attaché was assigned in Washington DC, the capital city, to coordinate the studies

specific to South America. (Bishop, 1915, p. 296)

The Commercial Attachés are the representative of all departments related to trade related issues of the federal government in the respective country. From time to time, it has to fulfill the demands of these institutions and organizations, including the demands of the citizens. It is obliged to inspect the manifests of the vessels heading to the USA at the ports and to check whether the tax obligations are complied with. In addition, it is among their duties to oversee compliance with quarantine regulations. The Commercial Attaché is obliged to investigate the causes of Shipwrecks and take ownership of stranded ships. The Commercial Attaché is obliged to investigate the causes of Ship accidents and to take ownership of the ships stranded and is responsible for answering all questions regarding logistics, trade and industry on the Mission area. (Bishop, 1915, p. 296)

Therefore, taking into account that having a heavy job description, Trade Attachés, to be determined by the Minister of Trade and accredited by the Ministry of Foreign affairs were appointed to where it became a challenge to fulfill the most important responsibilities such as conducting market entry activities and providing support for competitive conditions. (Bishop, 1915, p. 298)

This structure is applied in a similar way in today's world. Commercial Counselors and Attachés, who are working within the scope of the 1963 Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, operate in a diplomatic capacity with immunity within the framework of the said agreement.

## **2.7. Bilateral mechanisms**

The rapid progress of globalization after the Second World War accelerated multilateral trade negotiations within the framework of GATT. In parallel with this trend, the studies on regionalization gained momentum and with the establishment of the European Economic Community, which will laid the foundation of the European Union, in 1958, the most fundamental step of regionalization in Europe was taken. Similarly, regional economic institutions have emerged in Central and South America and Africa. Free trade agreements have started to play a more central role in regional integration studies since the 1990s, when regionalization became the main economic structure of the whole world. (Urata, 2002, p. 21)

### 2.7.1. Preferential Trade Regimes and Regional Trade Arrangements

Bilateral trade agreements are widely signed between the countries all around the world in recent years, especially after 1990s. (Menon, 2007, p. 29) Article 24 of the GATT Agreement regulates the issues related to regional customs unions and free trade zones. In fact, since the beginning of the 1990s, the World Trade Organization has recognized 40 exceptions to the rule of the most favored country among its members, and then these exceptions have become almost the rule. (MacPhee & Sattayanuwat, 2014, p. 65) While there is debate about whether Regional and Free Trade Agreements complement or replace multilateral free trade (MacPhee & Sattayanuwat, 2014, p. 65), there are also opinions that such agreements have a global welfare-creating effect. (Coulibaly, 2009, p. 709) Free Trade Agreements, which are the most comprehensive of the preferential trade regimes, can be signed on a regional basis as well as on a bilateral basis. (Menon, 2007, p. 30)

Coulibaly dwells upon the effects of regional trade agreements, which in this thesis are considered as tools of trade diplomacy. Referring to the works on trade diversion effect of regional trade agreements, he also mentions that, regional trade agreements and negotiations on those had an effect on increasing trade flow in the post crisis world where resources are limited for all countries. (Coulibaly, 2009)

Türkiye has been actively signing bilateral trade agreements with its trading partners. It signed Free Trade Agreements with 24 countries, shown below.

*Table 1: Türkiye's Free Trade Agreements*

<b>Country</b>	<b>Signing Date</b>
United Kingdom	December 29, 2020
Venezuelan	May 18, 2018
Faroe Islands	December 16, 2014
South Korea	May 1, 2013
Kosovo	September 27, 2013
Montenegro	November 26, 2008
Georgia	November 21, 2007
Israel	March 14, 2006
Albania	December 22, 2006
Tunisia	November 25. 2004
Morocco	April 7, 2004



*table cont'd*

Palestine	July 20, 2004
Bosnia and Herzegovina	July 3, 2002
Macedonia	September 1, 2000
EFTA	December 10, 1991

**Source:** Ministry of Trade, Türkiye, 2021

Preferential trade agreements (PTAs) require member countries to grant tariff reductions to each other that are not open to non-members. (Saggi & Yildiz, 2011, p. 168) Preferential Trade Agreements, which are signed in a narrower scope than Free Trade Agreements and provide mutual tax reductions on certain products, are also special agreements signed at the bilateral level between countries and are one of the outputs of trade diplomacy. (Doğan & Uzun, 2014, p. 344) The Preferential Trade Agreement signed between Türkiye and Azerbaijan is important because it is the first agreement both Türkiye and Azerbaijan signed in this regard. (Resmi Gazete, 2021) Türkiye also signed a Preferential Trade Agreement with Uzbekistan on March 2022, which is also a very first agreement of this kind for Uzbekistan to be signed with a country other than CIS members. (T.C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı, 2022)

### **2.7.2. Agreements of Cooperation on Economic and Trade Relations**

Literature on regional trade agreements from economists tend to treat them all as relatively similar in structure, but in fact, the structure of those agreements develop various types of relationship based on many factors which makes them different; we can see that difference in the agreements between EU and US and regional agreements signed by China with its regional partners. (Antkiewicz & Whalley, 2011, p. 113)

Türkiye developed its own model with Turkic states after the collapse of the Soviet Union. It has signed commercial and economic cooperation agreements with all the republics within the scope of the relations developed after they gained their independence. In some of these agreements, the Joint Economic Commission mechanisms were established, and some of them drew a general framework for bilateral relations.

In terms of content, these agreements did not establish a commercial and economic relationship mechanism that would go beyond the mutual declarations for will on further relations and cooperation in general. In this context, these agreements did not establish concrete provisions on mutual tax exemptions, tax regulations, technical regulations or similar issues, but instead manifested as a general declaration for future partnership.

In this context, as an example, the following statement is included in the preamble of the Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreement between the Republic of Türkiye and the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan signed in Ankara on November 1, 1992:

The Government of the Republic of Türkiye and the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan, desiring to develop and diversify trade and economic relations based on mutual benefit between their countries in a stable and balanced manner; Reaffirming their desire to further strengthen their historic good neighborly and friendly relations based on the principles of equality of rights, mutual respect and common interest; have decided to conclude a trade and economic cooperation agreement between their countries. (Resmi Gazete, 1993)

A particularly preferential regime was not established in the following parts of the agreement. However, for example, in the second article, it is stipulated that the parties "will apply the principle of the country that is most favored to each other in relation to customs duties, duties, charges and other transactions applied in their countries of import and export". While this provision is being made, it is also stated that this will not be applied to the rights and privileges established by both parties with third parties. (Resmi Gazete, 1993)

Similarly, in the Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreement between the Republic of Türkiye and the Republic of Tajikistan signed in Ankara on April 8, 1993, a preferential regime is not established, and the application of the most favored country principle is also included. (Resmi Gazete, 1993)

In the Agreement on Trade and Economic and Technical Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Türkiye and the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan, signed in Almaty on September 10, 1997, the same concept was adopted and a broad-meaningful cooperation was mentioned. (Resmi Gazete, 2000)

It is useful to underline an important point here. All of the agreements in question are agreements signed before the 1994 GATT Agreement. The fact that the most favored country rule, which is one of the main features of the GATT agreement, of which Türkiye was a signatory on October 17, 1951, is included in the agreements made with these countries, can be interpreted as a political initiative that can also be interpreted as a unilateral privilege granted by Türkiye to these countries. Because the provisions of the GATT Agreement bind the parties to the agreement, and in this context, the most favored country rule is a provision between the agreement parties. The fact that Türkiye has included the most favored country rule in bilateral agreements for the newly independent Turkic states that are not party to the GATT Agreement can be interpreted as concessions made essentially unilaterally, given the economic and commercial conditions of the parties to the agreement at that time. (Akman, 2012, p. 153) It is understood that Türkiye wants to pave the way for the exports of these countries to Türkiye through these agreements mainly because Türkiye was a country that adopted an export-based development strategy and an import-substituting development model at that time. (Karaçor, Erdoğan, & Er, 2013, p. 1252) For this reason, Türkiye has followed a rather protectionist foreign trade policy. (Yılmaz, 2002, p. 64) Moreover, the fact that GATT signed these agreements at a time when, like every country, tried to keep the bound tariff rates on imports as high as possible under the Uruguay Round, it shows that it uses trade as a tool of diplomacy. (Öniş, 2004, p. 118);

### **2.7.3. Joint Economic Commissions**

The Joint Economic Commission mechanism is the mechanism that comes the closest decision to producing concrete results within the bilateral cooperation mechanisms. The issues that come to the agenda within the scope of the JEC may be issues that directly concern economic and commercial relations, as well as issues that are not directly related to commercial issues such as education, environment and culture.

Joint Economic Commission mechanism is widely used in bilateral relations under various names with similar structures from Africa (Ebegbulem, 2013, p. 36) .

In the Joint Economic Commission meetings, there are no tax regulations as in Free Trade Agreements, Regional Cooperation Agreements, Preferential Trade Agreements

or Customs Union agreements, but there may be some regulations that have short-term economic consequences. For example, in the protocol of the Türkiye-Belarus 9th Term JEC Meeting, a concrete agreement was reached on mutual frequency allocation between the two countries and this agreement was included in the signed text.<sup>29</sup> This situation constitutes an exceptional situation in the Meetings and Protocols of the Joint Economic Commission. However, in terms of the format and outcome of the negotiations, similar concrete issues can be found in the JEC Protocols.

Especially after the crisis, due to downing of a Russian fighter jet by Turkish army, importance of JEC meetings held with the Russian Federation increased in relations between the two countries. At this point, many problematic areas in the relations between the two countries, especially Russian ban on Turkish tomatoes, Russia's suspension of visa agreement and cancellation of civilian flights by Russia, came to the agenda. (Resmi Gazete, 2018)

The first Joint Economic Commission Meeting, which was held in 2017 after the airplane crisis, was held in Kazan on 21 October 2017. (Resmi Gazete, 2018) This meeting was one of the most important steps taken to remove the topic of suspension of the Joint Economic Commission mechanism, which is among the sanctions imposed by the Russian Federation against Türkiye. One of the decisions taken at the meeting between the Deputy Prime Ministers held in Istanbul on 6-7 May 2017 was the re-operation of the JEC Mechanism. (Sudagezer, 2017) Although there was no concrete decision regarding the initiation of tomato exports from Türkiye to Russia, which was one of the most important commercial agenda items between the two countries, at the JEC Meetings held in the following period, it is understood that importance was given to keeping the JEC mechanism alive.

As it can be understood from here, the protocols of the Joint Economic Commission meeting can be meetings held to complete a certain process in some cases, and in some cases, they can play an extremely critical role in the relations between two countries.

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<sup>29</sup> T.C. Official Gazette, 17 January 2018 No: 30304. In the scope of Cooperation in the Fields of Transport, Logistics and Telecommunication of the Protocol, 1,500 bilateral and transit free (Type (A)) and 1,500 bilateral / transit paid (Type (A)) units for the Turkish side to be used additionally in 2017; It is stated that they have agreed to exchange 500 third country free (Type (C)) road pass certificates for the Belarusian side.

On the other hand, the long-lasting detailed negotiation processes and the complex nature of the issues raised in these processes make the JEC Meetings the most fundamental point of trade diplomacy. JEC Meetings can become meetings where Free Trade Agreements, Preferential Trade Agreements and other cooperation mechanisms are decided. In this respect, the JEC mechanism is at the most fundamental aspects of trade diplomacy.

#### **2.7.4. Business Cooperation Mechanisms**

All the activities of non-state actors can be carried out completely separately from the states themselves, or they can follow the activities of the states. The most obvious example of this is the activities of works councils. The mutually established business council mechanisms of the countries are manifested as the environments where the leading businesspeople operating in those countries mutually come together and make new business connections by making evaluations about mutual relations. Business council meetings can be independent from the activities carried out by the states, or they can be held at the same time as high-level visits from time to time and become platforms where participation is provided at the state level.

There are business councils in Türkiye established by the Foreign Economic Relations Board and the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Türkiye with their counterpart. In this context, 146 business councils operate to enhance business partnerships. The number of countries visited with the President of the Republic of Türkiye is stated as 66 on the official website of DEİK. (DEİK, 2021)

Business forums organized by Business Councils have an important place in trade diplomacy. Business Forum meetings are organized within the scope of visits made at the level of President, Prime Minister (now defunct) and Minister. Participation at the level of states in these events gives a positive message to the business world that the activities of the companies that participated in that meeting are encouraged by the states. In this way, expectations from established business connections can be high. For example, on the official website of DEİK, it is stated that on the occasion of the visit of President of Tatarstan of Russian Federation, Rustam Minnikhanov to Türkiye, the Türkiye - Tatarstan Business Forum would be held in Istanbul on May 16, 2019,

and the guest President and the Minister of Trade of the Republic of Türkiye would attend the event. (DEİK, 2021)

It is understood from those examples that, during high-level visits, business forum meetings or business council meetings can be held in some cases, while in some cases business delegations can participate in high-level visits without such an event. In these cases, especially if there is a public procurement for private sector to be taken or an important commercial agreement that is important to follow in that country, heads of state or ministers can travel with a special delegation, (Demirel, 2018, p. 66) and commercial issues can be discussed as well as political issues.

## **2.8. Multilateral Mechanism: World Trade Organization**

Commercial relations can be carried out through bilateral mechanisms as well as multilateral mechanisms. The World Trade Organization is the main institution of multilateral trade diplomacy. (Eagleton-Pierce, 2012, p. 55)

After the devastating effects of the Second World War in Europe and the world, the foundations of institutional structures related to finance rather than trade were laid at the Bretton Woods Conference for the world to have a new post-war economic system, and the International Monetary Fund and International Bank of Reconstruction and Development were established within this framework. (Knorr, 1948, p. 19) Discussions on the founding text of the World Trade Organization, which was presented to the United Nations by the United States in 1946, were held in the following years. At the meeting held in Geneva in 1947, an agreement was reached on mutual tariff reductions and a regulation containing general provisions, and the GATT Agreement and the ITO Charter were signed by 23 countries, however, due to the rejection of the ITO Charter by the US Congress, the ITO remained idle and world trade began to be regulated around the GATT. (Abbott, 2007, p. 316) In this context, while the GATT was originally designed as the ad hoc committee of the ITO, (Finlayson & Zacher, 1981, p. 562) it remained as the text regulating world trade until the establishment of the World Trade Organization in 1994.

At the outset, GATT included customs duties, licenses, incentives and anti-dumping issues for the trade of goods, and the system established within the framework of GATT has also been transformed in the process of 1994. (WTO, 2021) As a result of

this transformation, the World Trade Organization was established. The World Trade Organization was established with a large body of agreements on trade, including detailed agreements (eg. the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade). One of the most basic features of the World Trade Organization is the establishment of a mechanism that creates a supra-international legal norm, such as the Dispute Settlement mechanism. (WTO, 2021)

The basic principles of the World Trade Organization are stated on the official website of the World Trade Organization as follows. (WTO, 2021):

1. Non-discrimination of trade through Most-favored-nation (MFN) and National treatment rules,
2. Trade liberalization through negotiations.
3. Ensuring predictability
4. Promoting fair competition
5. Supporting development and economic reforms

The decision-making processes of the World Trade Organization are regulated in the relevant articles of the GATT Agreement. In this context, the Ministerial Conference, which meets not less than once every two years and consists of representatives of all members, and the General Council are the highest decision-making bodies.<sup>30</sup> Article 9 of the agreement states that, as in GATT 1947, decision-making will take place by consensus. The General Secretariat established within the WTO is basically authorized to organize meetings, follow up the decisions and inform the members. (Article 6/4)

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<sup>30</sup> Article IV: Structure of the WTO

1. There shall be a Ministerial Conference composed of representatives of all the Members, which shall meet at least once every two years. The Ministerial Conference shall carry out the functions of the WTO and take actions necessary to this effect. The Ministerial Conference shall have the authority to take decisions on all matters under any of the Multilateral Trade Agreements, if so requested by a Member, in accordance with the specific requirements for decision-making in this Agreement and in the relevant Multilateral Trade Agreement.

2. There shall be a General Council composed of representatives of all the Members, which shall meet as appropriate. In the intervals between meetings of the Ministerial Conference, its functions shall be conducted by the General Council. The General Council shall also carry out the functions assigned to it by this Agreement. The General Council shall establish its rules of procedure and approve the rules of procedure for the Committees provided for in paragraph 7.

The Dispute Settlement Mechanism has operated as an effective mechanism in the World Trade Organization system until recently. As a result of the consultations and panel processes established within the framework of the Dispute Settlement mechanism, countries are provided with the right to take measures with equal effect against each other within the framework of WTO rules, and the appeal of panel decisions is made possible within the system. (Abbott, 2007, p. 329)

However, as a result of the Trump administration's decision, the appeal body has not been appointed by the USA to the Appellate body (WTO, 2021), whose last member has expired on November 30, 2020, so the appeal body has become dysfunctional. As a justification for its action in this direction, the US side indicates the necessity of taking a serious measure as the body of appeal ceases to be an organ that fulfills its duties specified in Article 3.2 of the Memorandum of Understanding on the Dispute Settlement Mechanism. (Hoekman & Mavroidis , 2019, p. 1)

In the current situation, factors such as absence of an Appellate body, the fact that decisions are made in a slow process due to consensus and a limited range of action effect the ability of WTO against trade-blocking activities of the developed countries. Although there are many deficiencies such as the inability to ensure justice in world trade, it is still the best of the worst for being a method frequently used by the countries, the World Trade Organization maintains its feature as a prominent mechanism by which trade is regulated in the international arena. (Howse, 2016, p. 11)

There are some other international organizations which deal with issues which have direct effect on world trade, such as International Energy Agency. Energy prices in the world are incredibly open to political influences and as the main input of every product produced, energy, has a direct effect on trade. (MacNaughton, 2007, p. 283) However, since the effects of the decisions taken in the International Energy Agency and the decision-making processes on trade are similar for each country, the main focus of the decisions is not to anchor trade, but rather to shape the incomes of the producer countries, through energy prices. The International Energy Agency, on the other hand, holds more sway in energy rather than the pricing issues, and since prices are determined by interest groups formed by energy producing countries such as OPEC,



the position and influence of the International Energy Agency's saliency is questionable. (MacNaughton, 2007, p. 283)

Established after the oil crisis in the 1970s, the International Energy Agency was established mainly for the purposes of long-term energy issues and the energy supply in emergencies. However, the fact that the energy issue is dependent on the political expectations of the producer countries renders IAE as a partaker of the issue and not its sole game changer. On the other hand, the insistence on countries such as Russia, China and India to become members of the IEA since its establishment seems to have created a weakness in fulfilling the objectives of the current structure of the IEA. (Colgan, 2009, p. 3)

In this respect, the International Energy Agency presents a structure that is far from its claim to regulate trade. Every country in the world can trade, but only a certain number of countries can produce energy. Therefore, while trade is an area where rules can be shaped with multiple participation and alliances that can change at any time, energy production and supply can only be a subject of political relations between certain countries. In this respect, it is far from being an area of interest for trade diplomacy in general. Keohane states that international organizations can mobilize potential coalitions by bringing together senior officials to talk about certain common issues in world politics. (Keohane R. O., 1978, p. 930) In this context, although the International Energy Agency, like other international organizations, is in the field of international relations in terms of organizational and political power struggles in the decision-making processes within the scope of the international organization, its place in trade diplomacy is not in a central position like the World Trade Organization.

## CHAPTER 3

### TÜRKİYE AND TRADE DIPLOMACY

Türkiye's economic transition process in 1980s aimed to adopt a model for Türkiye into an open market economy with an export-oriented focus. (Erdoğan, 2017, p. 398) This motivation made Türkiye move to create new structures like Foreign Relations Board (DEİK) to implement trade diplomacy activities. (DEİK, 2021) On the other hand, the collapse of the Soviet Union created new Republics which Türkiye has historical and cultural ties. This new era was perceived as an unpredicted opportunity for Türkiye to build new partnerships in its close neighborhood. As a result, Türkiye immediately recognized the independence of Central Asian States, and signed agreements to initiate economic and trade mechanisms. Therefore, Türkiye's trade diplomacy activities with those countries offer eligible cases to examine the effects of trade diplomacy on international relations.

Türkiye is using various types of instruments to continue its trade diplomacy with its partner countries. Those instruments have two main streamlines: government institutions which include Ministry of Trade and its relevant domestic and foreign branches and non-governmental institutions, which include sectoral NGOs, government-related business associations and chambers of commerce.

#### **3.1 Government Institutions**

The foremost institution constituting the public pillar of economic diplomacy on behalf of the Republic of Türkiye is the Ministry of Trade at the time of writing of this thesis. (T.C. Ticaret Bakanlığı, 2022) After having various institutional transformations, the Undersecretariat of the Prime Ministry for Foreign Trade, which was established in 1994 was the first institution which had a unique focus on foreign trade, and it was transformed into Ministry of Economy in 2011 by Decree Law No: 637 with same functions, along with departments responsible for public incentives and foreign

investments, until 2018. (T.C. Ticaret Bakanlığı, 2019)

Although the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had an institutional restructuring after 2018, the creation of departments such as the General Directorate of Multilateral Economic Affairs and regional General Directorates for Bilateral Economic Affairs, the Presidential Decree No:1 on 2018 (T.C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı, 2018) gave conducting international trade agreements duty to Ministry of Trade.

With the transition to the Presidential Government System in 2018, the Internal Trade and Customs functions were added and it became the Ministry of Trade. (T.C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı, 2018)

In transition from the Undersecretariat of Foreign Trade to the Ministry of Economy, the General Directorate of Incentive Implementation and Foreign Capital, which had moved in to various institutions many times before, joined the Ministry, However, during the transformation from the Ministry of Economy to the Ministry of Trade, this General Directorate was repositioned under the Ministry of Industry and Technology. (T.C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı, 2018) This change essentially created a disintegration in institutional structure of trade diplomacy. Because the Mutual Promotion and Protection of Investments Agreements made on bilateral basis are carried out by this General Directorate, and these agreements constitute an important pillar of trade diplomacy. (T.C. Sanayi ve Teknoloji Bakanlığı, 2021)

In its current form, the Ministry of Trade performs three main tasks; duties related to foreign trade, customs and domestic trade. Although foreign trade and customs seem to be related to each other, it is considered that it is not very suitable to count customs as a part of trade diplomacy as a function. Because functions of the Customs are mostly related to tax collection, law enforcement, and statistical bookkeeping, and tasks that are performed in the implementation process are not in purview of the decision-making process of foreign trade policy. As it is detailed below, the customs side implements the political decisions resulted from trade diplomacy at the customs borders.

Therefore, although the investments part has been separated, it is seen that the main institution in trade diplomacy in Türkiye is still the Ministry of Trade, and the departments within the Ministry that have transferred from the Ministry of Economy

play an active role in the formation of foreign trade policies. Although the Ministries seem to be defined as advisory units that propose policies to the Presidency, not policy-making, with the amendments made in the Constitution of the Republic of Türkiye with the transition to the Presidential Government System, it is noteworthy that this function did not take place in written form. Ministries are actively creating policies, only formally these policies are no longer formed by the Council of Ministers, but by the Presidency. (T.C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı, 2018)

When foreign trade functions of the Ministry is examined, it is seen that the institutional structure of Trade Diplomacy consists of units that prepare legislation, negotiate and coordinate, and prepare data for the decision maker for the infrastructure of the policies to be formed by research and evaluation. Among these units, the General Directorate of International Agreements and European Union, which undertakes negotiation and coordination, serves as the actual implementer of trade diplomacy, but while carrying out this task, the units that prepare legislation especially during the negotiation phases are also actively involved with this General Directorate. (Article 448/b, Presidential Decree No:1) The advisory units do not take part in the activities in the field, but act as information sources.

The tasks of Trade Diplomacy regarding diplomatic agents are also carried out by the Ministry of Trade. (T.C. Ticaret Bakanlığı, 2022) Public officials who act as agents of trade diplomacy as commercial counselors in Embassies and commercial attachés in Consulate Generals are appointed mainly by the Presidency, mostly among from the staff of the Ministry of Trade with some exceptions. The duty of the overseas representations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is to provide necessary infrastructure and ensure an uninterrupted coordination so that the representatives of the Ministry of Trade can carry out their duties unabated.

### **3.2 Non-Governmental Actors**

It is seen that there are not many organizations active within the framework of trade diplomacy in Türkiye. Considering the organizations in the participation lists of the Joint Economic Commission Meeting Protocols, which can be considered as the main reference documents of trade diplomacy activities carried out by Türkiye, it is noteworthy that the following organizations frequently attend these meetings:

- Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Türkiye
- Foreign Economic Relations Board
- Turkish Contractors Association
- International Transporters Association

### **3.2.1 Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Türkiye**

The Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Türkiye and the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges, which were established with the Law No. 5174 dated 18/5/2004, are defined as the professional superior organization and legal representative of the private sector in Türkiye, in terms of their duties in the founding Law. (Türkiye Odalar ve Borsalar Birliği, 2021) It is seen that there are some concrete issues that can be considered as trade diplomacy activities among TOBB activities. In this context, for example, among the duties assigned to the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Türkiye in Article 54 of the Law No. 5174, the provision "to carry out the necessary works for the development of the country and the development of the economy" is counted. In subparagraph (g) of Article 56 it is mentioned that "To organize and participate in national and international meetings and congresses; to examine and decide on the applications made to chambers and commodity exchanges regarding domestic trade fairs and submitted to the Union; issuing a national fair organization authorization certificate to companies participating in overseas trade fairs; To accept and perform the representation and correspondence of foreign countries chambers of commerce and industry; To become a member of national and international organizations related to the Union's field of activity, or to establish such organizations, business councils, economic cooperation committees, to participate in international meetings; to establish trade centers in the country and abroad and to join the established ones; participate in activities related to economic and social problems; to encourage such activities and to provide financial support when necessary; to establish cooperation committees with foreign chambers and unions, and to cooperate with them comprehensively and effectively." In this context, TOBB has undertaken a task that is expected to be carried out directly by the state, such as the development of the country, beyond establishing direct relations with its interlocutors.

The Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Türkiye and the Chambers and Commodity Exchanges were established with the Law No. 5590 published in the Official Gazette dated 15/3/1950, and then with the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Türkiye and the Chambers and Commodity Exchanges Law No. 5174 which entered into force on 1/6/2004 existing structure was created (T.C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı, 2004). In subparagraphs (g) and (h) of Article 56 of the Law, the Union's duties regarding trade diplomacy are defined:

g) To organize and participate in national and international meetings and congresses; to examine and decide on the applications made to chambers and commodity exchanges regarding domestic fairs and submitted to the Union; issuing a national fair organization authorization certificate to fair companies; To accept and perform the representation, representation and correspondence of foreign countries chambers of commerce and industry; To become a member of national and international organizations related to the Union's field of activity or to establish such organizations, business councils, economic cooperation committees, to participate in international meetings; to establish commercial centers in the country and abroad and to join the established ones; participate in activities related to economic and social problems; to encourage such activities and to provide financial support when necessary; to establish cooperation committees with foreign chambers and unions, and to cooperate with them comprehensively and effectively.

h) To provide assistance to Turkish or Turkish-foreign chambers of commerce, industry and maritime commerce in our country and in foreign countries when necessary; to establish representative offices and liaison offices in the country and abroad, when necessary, with the permission of the Ministry. (T.C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı, 2004)

The task of establishing business councils, which is among these duties, is in fact completely overlapping with the mission undertaken by DEİK. As a matter of fact, as mentioned above, it is stated in the relevant law article that established DEİK, that DEİK will carry out its activities through Business Councils. In two different laws in force at the same time, a situation arises in which both institutions are authorized by the public to define the same duties for two different organizations and to establish a Business Council. Therefore, although DEİK positions itself as the center of trade diplomacy, the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Türkiye is in the center of this issue as much as DEİK in terms of legislation. In fact, TOBB is the largest non-governmental organization in Türkiye and has a more free range of action compared to DEİK, as it has the legal authority to use its own budget.

As a matter of fact, TOBB plays an active role in the international organizations of which it is a member and in bilateral and multilateral platforms. The cooperation carried out with bilateral chambers of industry and commerce established with the addressee countries co-chaired by TOBB has a structure similar to the bilateral business councils established by DEİK. However, this cooperation developed with the addressee chambers and exchanges, which have the authority to issue official documents held by the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Türkiye, also offers a cooperation opportunity one step ahead of the business councils established by DEİK in terms of legal authority. (TOBB, 2021).

In addition, the Turkish Chamber of Commerce and Industry, as a structure that was established jointly with Central Asian countries by and under the leadership of TOBB, is a remarkable structure in terms of trade diplomacy. The secretariat of the Chamber, which was established on 31 July 2019 within the framework of the Turkic Council to support the development of mutual trade and investment relations between Türkiye, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, is located in Istanbul. The announcement that the organization will operate in the TOBB service building in Istanbul and that its first president will be the TOBB president shows that the organization was led by TOBB (TOBB, 2021).

Another function of TOBB is to be the main host of the Türkiye Trade Center projects, which have been opened by the Republic of Türkiye in some overseas centers in recent years and that offer exporters the opportunity to benefit from a privileged export support program with convenient office, warehouse and consultancy services. In these centers, buildings, land and warehouses are basically rented by TOBB, working personnel are also employed by TOBB, and resources are transferred from the public budget to these costs by the Ministry of Trade. Therefore, as stated above, the trade diplomacy of the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Türkiye has the feature of being in the center of trade, beyond representation and diplomatic mission activities.

However, the main reason for the establishment of the chambers of commerce and industry is not a foreign trade-oriented understanding, but the functions of representing commercial enterprises and keeping their records are more prominent. This is the most

important factor that distinguishes TOBB from DEİK. DEİK can be considered as an institution that is more central to trade diplomacy in terms of function, despite its weaker appearance as an institution, in terms of its emergence as an organization that aims to bring the business world together with foreign counterparts in visits and meetings at the level of states.

### **3.2.2 Foreign Economic Relations Board**

The Foreign Economic Relations Board was established in 1985, and its structure was changed with the Law No. 6552 dated September 11, 2014, and its public character became stronger. DEİK is basically defined with the task of executing the foreign economic relations of the Turkish private sector. The work carried out by DEİK in the direction of trade diplomacy is carried out through 146 business councils. (DEİK, 2021)

The functioning of DEİK is determined by the Regulation on the Working Procedures and Principles of the Foreign Economic Relations Board and Business Councils published in the Official Gazette dated 26 November 2017. In this regulation, the founding institutions of the Foreign Economic Relations Board were determined as the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Türkiye (TOBB), the Turkish Exporters Assembly (TİM), the Independent Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association (MÜSİAD) and the Turkish Contractors' Association (TMB). These organizations are referred to as “four main founding organizations” in the Regulation, and various chambers of industry and commerce and exporter unions are counted as “other founding organizations”.

The duties of DEİK are listed in Article 5 of the relevant regulation. In this context, it is seen that there are remarkable tasks in terms of trade diplomacy activities. In this context, some of the duties listed in the relevant Regulation, which are considered to be directly related to trade diplomacy activities, are listed below:

- To monitor Türkiye's economic, commercial, industrial and financial relations with other countries or international communities, and to assist in the founding and developing such relations.
- Presenting opinions and suggestions to the relevant institutions and organizations for Türkiye's foreign economic relations and contributing to resolving the problems and obstacles to be encountered.



- By invitation, participating in international or intergovernmental negotiations, representing the private sector platform, on matters falling under its mandate.
- Participating in international or intergovernmental negotiations, representing the private sector platform, on matters falling under its mandate by invitation. This article finds its place especially in relations with Turkic States. DEİK is one of the organizations represented at the Joint Economic Commission meetings.
- To carry out promotional activities in the country or abroad in order to ensure that Türkiye achieves successful results in its foreign economic relations and carry out bilateral economic relations through business councils, as well as conduct relations with multilateral institutions and organizations. These duties directly represents DEİK's role in trade diplomacy via business council mechanisms.
- DEİK is also responsible to conduct activities and events with the countries that it has not business council relationship. Therefore, business councils are one of the tools for DEİK's trade diplomacy activities but they are not the only ones for that.
- Making recommendations to the Ministry to establish and, if necessary, terminate the works councils. (Official Gazette dated 26 November 2017)

The presence of at least ten member companies is required for the establishment of a business council by DEİK, and in this context, a Business Council can be established with the approval of the Ministry of Commerce, taking into account the preferences of the business world as a result of the evaluations and the developments in the world markets. It has also been decreed that business councils will be established bilaterally.

When the Joint Economic Commission Meeting Protocols are examined, it is seen that even the articles specific to them are included in the texts of these two organizations. For example, in Article 1 of the Protocol of the Twelfth Term Meeting of the Intergovernmental Trade and Economic Cooperation Commission between Türkiye and Ukraine, there is a provision regarding “Developing bilateral cooperation at the level of Chambers of Commerce and Industry and increasing the effectiveness of the Türkiye-Ukraine Business Council”. Similarly, the issue of organizing a Business and Investment Forum is included in Article 5 of the Protocol of the Ninth Term Meeting of the Turkish-Kyrgyz Intergovernmental Joint Economic Commission. These issues draw attention as provisions that directly define and strengthen the duties of the two institutions in question.

It is noteworthy that the institution that uses the concept of trade diplomacy as its field of duty in Türkiye is the Foreign Economic Relations Board (DEİK). It is debatable

that DEİK, whose slogan "our job is trade diplomacy" can be seen on its website, has an area of activity that overlaps with the concept of Trade Diplomacy in the sense covered in this thesis. Because the concept of diplomacy corresponds to an interstate relationship in itself, and it is considered that the fact that actors other than states are the direct executives of any field of diplomacy does not coincide with the use of this concept in the literature. This situation will not necessitate reaching a conclusion such as underestimating or ignoring the influence of non-state actors in trade diplomacy. However, at the last point, the deciding factor in trade diplomacy will be the states and the intrastate actors representing the states.

However, it will not be possible to talk about a trade diplomacy separate from the business world, since trade diplomacy ultimately aims to protect the interests of the business world before the partnering country and to develop the commercial connections of the business world by increasing trade. As a proof of this, it is seen that business forum meetings are organized in parallel with the Joint Economic Commission meetings with the Central Asian countries. This also ensures that contacts with the business world are at the center of diplomacy, even in a country like Turkmenistan, where there is no private sector or some kind of ostensible private sector exists and all economic actors are state institutions.

The Foreign Economic Relations Board - DEİK, established in 1985, defines its duties on its website as follows:

Managing the foreign economic relations of the Turkish private sector, especially foreign trade, international investments, services, contracting and logistics; researching investment opportunities at home and abroad; Contributing to increase Türkiye's exports and coordinating similar business development activities. (DEİK, 2021)

While it was operating under the umbrella of the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Türkiye before, with the Law No. 6552 enacted on September 11, 2014, the structure of DEİK has changed and it has become an institution that is more under the direction of the government. As a matter of fact, the following statement is included in the second paragraph of the 36th article of the aforementioned law:.

In order to carry out the foreign economic relations of the private sector under the supervision and control of the Ministry, the Foreign Economic Relations Board consists of private sector organizations that are subject to the provisions

of private law and have legal personality, to be determined by the Ministry. The short name of the board is DEİK. DEİK conducts its bilateral economic relations through Business Councils. Duties and authorities, organization and functioning, organs, budgets, management and audits of DEİK and Business Councils, and procedures and principles regarding membership are regulated by a regulation to be issued by the Ministry. DEİK's budget consists of the contributions to be made from the budget of the Ministry of Economy and the contributions and/or annual membership fees of the founding organizations specified in the regulation, Business Council membership fees and other incomes. The Ministry supervises the DEİK budget. (DEİK, 2021)

Here, it is understood that DEİK mainly aims to organize the activities of the business world by the public. The control of the budget, which consists of membership fees to which the members of the Business Council are members and which DEİK pays to the institutions that are one of its founding organizations, is entirely left to the Ministry, which strengthens the public character of DEİK.

DEİK carries out its activities through Business Councils established on a regional, sectoral and national basis, organizes Business Council meetings within itself, and also carries out the task of organizing Business Forum meetings during the visits of the President, Vice President, Prime Minister and Ministers.

As stated above, DEİK defines itself as a 'business diplomacy' organization on its website and uses the phrase 'our business is commercial diplomacy' as its main slogan next to its name. It is seen that DEİK gives the message that this issue is in its own responsibility to its followers through its (*#isimizticaridiplomasi*) link on social media. It is acceptable that DEİK is associated with business diplomacy. In addition, DEİK has a structure that fulfills the powers and duties given to it by the public, as stated in its founding legislation. This prevents DEİK from being adopted as the sole and leading institution in the field of commercial diplomacy. As a matter of fact, it can also be evaluated that DEİK does not claim to be the sole owner of this field, but prefers to define its main function within trade diplomacy. DEİK also strengthens its claim in its role in business diplomacy by publishing the name of the English language journal it publishes regularly under the name "Business Diplomacy". It organizes the Trade Diplomacy Awards Ceremony, (DEİK, 2021, p. 14) in this context, it places itself at the center of trade diplomacy. However, underlining that the said award ceremony was held with the participation of Deputy Minister of Trade, confirms by DEİK that trade diplomacy is a process carried out together with the public.

In Central Asian countries, it is observed that there is not any sole organization that fully corresponds to DEİK. Counter-part organizations of business councils are mostly business world organizations with different names and structures such as Chambers of Commerce in some countries and Entrepreneurs Union in others. Türkiye-Eurasia Business Councils is used as an umbrella for the separately established Business Councils with the Central Asian countries.

Kazakhstan International Chamber of Commerce on the counterpart in the Kazakhstan Business Council; Kyrgyzstan Eurasia Business Club in Kyrgyzstan Business Council; Uzbekistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Uzbekistan Business Council and Turkmenistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Turkmenistan Business Council are the addressee institutions of DEİK.

Looking at the activities of the business councils, for example, the activities of the Kazakhstan Business Council are mentioned as follows: (DEİK, 2021)

One of the important work areas of the Business Council is to introduce the investment projects that are envisaged to be realized within the scope of the Accelerated Industrial Innovative Development State Program implemented in Kazakhstan to the Turkish private sector and to support our companies that show interest in these projects. In October 2010, a memorandum of understanding on cooperation was signed between the Kazakhstan National Export and Investment Agency (KAZNEX INVEST) under the Ministry of Industry and New Technologies of the Republic of Kazakhstan and DEİK. In this context, meetings are held in cooperation with the Business Council and KAZNEX INVEST, where Turkish private sector representatives and officials from related institutions of Kazakhstan come together and investment projects are discussed. (DEİK, 2021)

From these activities, it is seen that the counterpart organizations in Kazakhstan are also agencies and institutions affiliated to the state institutions in Kazakhstan. The Business Council activities carried out by DEİK with its counterpart organizations are carried out by the private sector only under the supervision and roof of public institutions. As a result, it is seen that the Business Council meetings and Business Forum meetings held by the Business Councils through DEİK and its counterparts aim to support and strengthen the diplomatic relations between the states by the private sector. In this respect, DEİK, as the umbrella organization where the business world is actively involved in the field, which should be considered as one of the most important actors of trade diplomacy, appears as the main player supporting the public, although

it is not the only actor in trade diplomacy.

### **3.2.3 Turkish Exporters Assembly (TİM)**

Turkish Exporters Assembly is a professional organization in the type of a public institution established within the scope of the Law No. 5910 on the Establishment and Duties of the Turkish Exporters Assembly and Exporters' Associations. (T.C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı, 2009). The primary mission of the institution is expressed as follows: (TİM, 2021)

To increase the sustainable foreign trade volume in order for Türkiye to become a country with foreign trade surplus, to develop bilateral commercial, social and cultural relations with the trade partner countries, and to support the private sector in activities to be held in line with this goal. to act as a bridge between the public and the public. (TİM, 2021)

Unlike TOBB and DEİK, the Turkish Exporters' Assembly has activities that are more concrete and whose outputs can be measured more clearly in the development of foreign trade. Direct target-oriented activities such as the organization of trade delegations abroad, the execution of the business model in the form of purchasing delegations by bringing companies from abroad to Türkiye are carried out by TIM and the Exporters' Associations that make up TIM.

Exporters' Associations is a professional organization in the type of a public institution to which those who want to be exporters in Türkiye are obligatory members. A person must be a member of one of these organizations in order to export. The Turkish Exporters Assembly, on the other hand, is an umbrella organization formed by the coming together of these Unions. The public institution that TİM is affiliated with is the Ministry of Trade. It is seen that the TİM President mostly accompanies the Minister in the foreign contacts of the Minister of Commerce, and the TİM President stands by the Minister in the announcement of export figures and similar important developments related to exports.

On the other hand, it is seen that TİM carries out activities such as fairs, exhibitions and trade delegations, which are directly involved in the general operation of trade, in the background of trade diplomacy activities, rather than organizational activities such as DEİK. Although it is seen that TİM's views are also sought in the Joint Economic Commission meetings and that TİM's position is defended in the negotiations, it is also

seen that there is no situation that stands in the way of DEİK in the activities of the Business Council and the Business Forum, as it is in the case of TOBB.

Another function of the exporters' associations is to perform a public duty of issuing documents directly in the practices called Inward Processing Regime applied in Türkiye, which basically involves the import of raw materials and intermediates made for export, exempt from tax under certain conditions. In addition to this, there are duties performed by the exporters' associations on behalf of the government institutions in the state incentives implemented by Türkiye for exports. Therefore, TİM performs basic duties related to trade, and in this respect, it is in a position to carry out consular affairs in a sense of diplomacy.

#### **3.2.4 Turkish Contractors Association (TMB)**

Türkiye is actively involved in the contracting sector, especially in Central Asia and in the Middle East. The sector is an important driving force of the economy in terms of its activities outside of Türkiye as well as in Türkiye. Turkish contractors, which started their overseas activities in Libya in 1972, have expanded their activities to the whole world in the meantime, and as of the end of March 2021, they have undertaken 10,725 projects in 128 countries with a total cost of US\$ 425.5 billion. In 2020, Türkiye was included in the list of "The World's Top 250 International Contractors" with 40 companies. (TMB, 2021)

The fact that the contracting sector is so important in the domestic and foreign economy makes it normal that the most important umbrella organization of this sector is at the forefront of Türkiye's trade diplomacy activities. As it is mentioned above, Turkish Contractors' Association is appointed as one of the founding members of Foreign Economic Relations Board, which also gives it a power on decisions made by DEİK in terms of establishing business councils and in decision making process of DEİK in relevant trade diplomacy activities. TMB is one of the most prominent actors in deciding where to set a business council. Therefore, it can be observed that in the countries where TMB members are active, the business councils are more effective.

In addition to the above-mentioned organizations, the Turkish Contractors' Association also participates in trade talks and high-level visits. The existence of a separate Department devoted to foreign contracting services under the Ministry of

Trade can also be considered as showing the importance of this sector's contribution to trade diplomacy. (Nesimođlu, 2019)

### **3.2.5 Other institutions**

Other organizations, the Contractors' Association and the International Transporters Association, are prominently involved in the JEC Meetings, but since they do not have a public duty, the articles that assign duties to these two organizations or define their duties are not included in the meeting protocols. However, it is noteworthy that the titles of contracting and transportation, which are the direct areas of interest of these institutions, are the subjects that directly concern the sectors represented by these institutions. In this respect, these organizations are actively involved in trade diplomacy. The involvement of those organizations can be seen in JEC Protocols of Türkiye and Ukraine and Türkiye and Kazakhstan: *“Türkiye-Ukrayna Hükümetlerarası Ticari ve Ekonomik İşbirliği iKomisyonu On İkinci Dönem Toplantısı Protokolü Md. 6: Ulaştırma Alanında İşbirliği. Md. 11: İnşaat, Müteahhitlik ve Teknik Müşavirlik Hizmetleri Alanlarında İşbirliği”* *“Türkiye-Kazakistan Hükümetlerarası Karma Ekonomik Komisyonu Onbirinci Dönem Toplantısı Protokolü Md. 55: Ulaştırma Alanında İşbirliği”*

In the bilateral and multilateral contacts that Türkiye carries out within the scope of trade diplomacy, besides the above-mentioned private sector actors, it is observed that there is sectoral representation that differs according to the center of gravity in the relationship of the addressee country with Türkiye. For example, while the International Transporters Association can be represented at the Joint Economic Commission meetings held with the Russian Federation, it is seen that the Turkish Contractors Association comes to the fore in the negotiations with Kazakhstan. While the demands of the iron and steel industry come to the fore in the negotiations with the United States, the demands of the investors predominate in the negotiations with Uzbekistan.

However, as a result, it is noteworthy that the main actors that do not change in every field are DEİK and TOBB, and the representatives of other sectors are shaped according to needs.

### **3.3 Türkiye's Foreign Trade Missions**

In addition to the commercial and economic mechanisms carried out by Türkiye, there are also activities carried out through Commercial Counsellors and Commercial Attachés in 106 countries. (T.C. Ticaret Bakanlığı, 2021) In some of these countries, for example, in Kazakhstan, there appears to be representation in more than one city.

The responsibilities and duties of trade representatives are included in the articles 510 and 520 of the Presidential Decree No. 1, in which the duties and authorities of all foreign officers of the public are determined. (T.C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı, 2018) Accordingly, trade representations, which are considered as specialized units, are expected to fulfill "the duties assigned to them by the mission and consular chiefs of the public institutions and organizations to which they are affiliated". (T.C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı, 2018)

On the other hand, there is a Presidential Decree which regulates, along with other issues, the method and provisions for the public officers who will be appointed for permanent positions in foreign countries. (T.C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı, 2018). In a separate amendment made in this Presidential Decree the foreign staff appointed by the Ministry of Trade have been exempted for their length of the term in the office and they're proposed to be appointed for 4 years. This regulation covers, the Commercial Counselors, Commercial Attachés and Deputy Permanent Representatives at international organizations (Yavuz, 2020). There is not another separate legislation which outlines the duties and responsibilities of the foreign trade officers.

Other than the abovementioned regulations, there are some other legislative regulations which draw out some kind of duties that should be undertaken by the foreign commercial staff. The mentioned legislations are Decrees, Regulations and Communiqué which are conducted by the Ministry of Trade. (T.C. Ticaret Bakanlığı, 2021) According to these arrangements, there are some documents within the framework of public incentives for exports which should be approved by the foreign commercial staff. This outlines the bureaucratic functions of the representatives. On the other hand, it is understood that there are some other internal documents or orders which also set rules for the progress.



When we zoom to the Central Asia, as of October 2021, Türkiye's commercial offices are in two cities in Kazakhstan (2 representatives in Nur-Sultan and 1 in Almaty), one city in Kyrgyzstan (Bishkek), one city in Turkmenistan (2 representatives in Asghabat), one city in Uzbekistan (2 representatives in Tashkent), and in two separate locations in Azerbaijan (2 representatives in Baku and 1 representative in Nakhcivan). (T.C. Ticaret Bakanlığı, 2022)

It is possible to follow the activities of the commercial representatives other than approval of official documents using social media. It shows that the commercial representatives assume many duties other than the bureaucratic activities. Their representation goes beyond their definition for public incentives on exports. They're accompanying with the businesspeople who visit their country of office and they also build business networks for them. They participate in fairs and exhibitions, accompany with the high-level officials from the capital. They not only join to the meetings of Minister of Trade, but also they follow the program of the other ministers who are dealing with issues which have direct or indirect relation with trade. They also participate in symposiums and panels which aim to introduce their country of office in terms of economic and trade overview and sharing experience for the potential exporters. They act like a consultant to Turkish companies to make and develop business. In the website of Turkish Ministry of Trade, a section takes attention which has the name of "Ask to the Counselor", which provides the users directly connect with commercial representatives to ask their detailed questions. The members are encouraged to direct their questions to the counselors.<sup>31</sup>

As a result, the commercial representatives of Türkiye are working as the representatives of Türkiye's business environment in establishing business networks and contributing the solutions of their problems in the country, along with their main duties which are set out in 1961 and 1963 Vienna Conventions as diplomatic agents, and legislation regarding the export incentives.

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<sup>31</sup> <https://musaviredanisin.ticaret.gov.tr> Accessed on July 5, 2022

### **3.4. An important factor in trade diplomacy with the Turkic Republics: High Level Visits**

High-level visits have a significant weight in trade diplomacy relations with the Turkic Republics. Since the private sector and public relations are an interdependent relationship model in these countries, the course of cooperation between the private sector appears to be directly dependent on interstate relations. Most of the time, political relations are the basic elements for establishing and maintaining economic and commercial relations. (Bohr, et al., 2019, p. vi) While this was more common in the first years of the independence of the Turkic states, it is possible to state that a relatively more institutional private sector relationship has been established by the time. For example, for Kazakhstan, as the economic structures increasingly transformed, private sector gained more share in the economy. (Ahrens & Stark, 2014, p. 12)

On the other hand, it is possible to state that interstate relations are directly effective in the relations between Uzbekistan and Türkiye. It is noteworthy that business council activities did not take place between the private sectors, directly related to the cold relations between the two countries during the Karimov period. In the post-Karimov period, as a result of the rapprochement of two states which includes high level visits and several economic and trade related agreements, (Isabaev, 2018, p. 105) both the work council activities within DEİK and organizations such as TOBB and TMB could come together with their interlocutors and establish institutional relations without the need for state officials. (DEİK, 2017)

Within the scope of this thesis, Türkiye's trade diplomacy with Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan has been specifically examined. On the other hand, in order to understand the impact of high-level visits on Türkiye's relations with the Turkic Republics, the example of Turkmenistan should be considered as a special example. States are almost the only actors in the relations with this country, and the activities of the private sector depend entirely on the relations between the states themselves. The current business council with this country does not meet in any way without the Minister's visits. In most cases, the reason for the Joint Economic Meetings is seen as the occasion for a high-level visit. In Turkmenistan, there is no situation where the business world comes together without high-level state visits. Even if private sector

organizations such as TOBB from Türkiye visit Turkmenistan, these visits are perceived by the Turkmen within the state protocol and a meeting is held with a government official<sup>32</sup>. The most important focus of the visits is these state meetings.

In order to understand this approach of Turkmenistan, it is useful to first look at the post-independence period of Turkmenistan. Among the Central Asian countries, the most important aspect of Turkmenistan that differs from the others has been its neutrality policy. The positive neutrality policy, which was announced for the first time by Turkmenistan President Saparmurat Niyazov at the summit meeting of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, carried Turkmenistan to a different position. (Shikmuradov B. O., 1997, p. 3) Turkmenistan gained the "Permanent Neutrality Status" with the unanimous vote of 185 countries, including Türkiye, at the United Nations General Assembly on 12 December 1995. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan, 2021)

This status was maintained by the precedent President Gurbanguly Berdymukhammedov as well, and Turkmenistan celebrates the adoption of this policy every year like a national day. It also continues with the new leader, the son of the previous, Sardor Berdymukhammedov as well. As a matter of fact, for 22 years, December 12 has been celebrated as the "Day of Neutrality" and is a public holiday. (TRT, 2019) Now, with its new leader, son of Berdymukhammedov, Serdar Berdymukhammedov hasn't declared any diversion from that policy.

Türkiye's commercial and economic relations with Turkmenistan are not only limited to the trade of goods, but also have a significant volume in terms of Türkiye's investments in this country, especially in contracting sector. It ranked second after Russia among the countries in which Turkish contracting companies undertook the most work from 1972 to 2021, with a total project cost of 48.8 billion dollars. (Data obtained from Turkish Contractors Association, 2021)

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<sup>32</sup> The Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB) President Rifat Hisarcıklıoğlu frequently visits Turkmenistan and he is received by President of Turkmenistan. For example, <https://www.tobb.org.tr/Sayfalar/Eng/Detay.php?rid=23942&lst=MansetListesi> Accessed on December 11, 2022

As with other Central Asian countries, Türkiye has signed a series of economic and commercial agreements with Turkmenistan since the first years of its independence and has created mechanisms as it did with the others.

*Table 2: Turkmenistan's Agreements with Türkiye*

Agreement on Mutual Promotion and Protection of Investments	2-May-1992
Agreement on Avoidance of Double Taxation	17-Aug-1995
Agreement on Trade and Economic Cooperation	24-Mar-2008
Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Türkiye and the Government of Turkmenistan on the Expansion and Deepening of Commercial and Economic Cooperation	7-Nov-2014
Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Türkiye and the Government of Turkmenistan on the Intergovernmental Turk-Turkmen Commission on Economic Cooperation	6 Aralık 2007

Source: Ministry of Trade, Türkiye

Turkmenistan's permanent neutrality affected its decisions on being part of economic and trade mechanisms as well. It preferred not to be embedded with any international economic organization which creates a preferential system. It never became a member to CIS officially, did not ratify the agreement establishing the CIS, although it has been treated like a member state. (Malashenko, 2012, p. 2)

A mechanism has also been established between the two countries, which is similar to the structure of the Joint Economic Commission with other Central Asian countries, but whose name is determined as the Intergovernmental Turkish-Turkmen Commission (HEK). This mechanism is a mechanism established in accordance with the Agreement on the Intergovernmental Turk-Turkmen Commission on Economic Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Türkiye and the Government of Turkmenistan signed in Ashgabat on December 6, 2007 (T.C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı, 2012). The point that draws attention here is that the Agreement was the first to repeal the "Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Türkiye and the

Government of the Republic of Turkmenistan on the Establishment of the Turkish-Turkmen Joint Economic Commission on Commercial and Economic Cooperation", which was signed on 17 August 1995, right after Turkmenistan gained its independence. It was signed 12 years after the first agreement. Main difference between the two agreements is the change in the name of Turkmenistan. In the first agreement, it is stated as "Republic of Turkmenistan" where in the second it was converted to "Turkmenistan". On the other hand, the name of the Joint Economic Commission was also changed to be "Intergovernmental Turkish-Turkmen Commission on Economic Cooperation".

It is understood that Turkmenistan implements its neutrality policy not only within the framework of security issues, but also its practices and approach through economic cooperation mechanisms are evaluated within that neutrality policy. Hence Turkmenistan did not officially participate even in Commonwealth of Independent States as an active member since it assumed that any active membership might have overshadowed its neutrality policy. The HEK mechanism established with Türkiye was also formulated as a mechanism which does not burden any responsibility over Turkmenistan in terms of economic integration or any type of economic concessions with regards to tax or other same effect measures. Agreement of Friendship and Partnership signed on December 3, 1991 and the Agreement on Developing and Deepening the Multi Dimensional Cooperation signed on November 18, 1996 between the two countries have been the main basis of the HEK mechanism and both agreements do not establish any binding mechanism between the two countries and do not go beyond being a declaration of good intent. HEK founding agreement only contains a declaration of an intangible objective for future which mentions about developing economic cooperation where it does not have any statement about any type of a preferential trade regime. It is seen that the HEK meetings held after the establishment of the mechanism also has not founded a tangible trade regime which has any type of concessions or mutual tax reductions.

On the other hand, Construction sector has an extra significance in economic and trade relations of Türkiye and Turkmenistan. Turkmenistan is a country which has sui generis regulations that makes creates hard conditions for doing business. (Olcott, 2013, p. 9) It is understood from that the Doing Business report of the World Bank

does not even give a rank to Turkmenistan, which shows that it is out of category country. However, although it is very hard to build and develop business in that country, Turkish construction companies have been able to make profit in that hard market. The country has been one of the most prominent countries for Turkish contractors in Eurasia. One of the reasons that Turkmenistan pays importance to construction sector is that the country gives more emphasis to build new cities and infrastructure to change the looking of the country, using the profits made from natural gas exports. Turkmenistan also invested in road construction, infrastructure, natural gas processing facilities, had to be built by foreign companies and Turkish companies has undertaken important amount of projects in those areas. (Durdyev & Ismail, 2012, p. 887)

On the other hand, the economic and trade mechanisms between Türkiye and Turkmenistan remained behind the ones which Türkiye has with other Turkic states. As of 2021, Türkiye had 11 JEC meetings with Kazakhstan, 10 with Kyrgyzstan, 9 with Uzbekistan, 9 with Azerbaijan, however, this number remained 5 with Turkmenistan. (T.C. Ticaret Bakanlığı, 2022) Moreover, it is seen that Turkmenistan conducts this mechanisms with other countries more regularly than it conducts with Türkiye. For example, it had its 12th JEC meeting with Japan in 2017. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2021) The number with Türkiye was 5 in the same period. (T.C. Ticaret Bakanlığı, 2022)

It would be a powerful based assertion to reach such a conclusion that Türkiye has been the triggering force of the economic and trade mechanisms between Türkiye and Turkmenistan. Hence, Türkiye mostly gives one sided support to Turkmenistan, such as organizing, hosting and promoting Turkmenistan Investment Forum in Istanbul in 2013 in order to keep its economic and trade ties tight with Turkmenistan. (TOBB, 2013) Turkmenistan seems to evaluate the JEC mechanism as a part of its political relations with Türkiye, rather than seeing it as an opportunity to develop and evaluate the trade and economic relations. It can be regarded as being in a direct relation between high level connection traffic between the two countries that the JEC meeting could not be held between 2015 and 2021 due to the absence of that high level mutual visits.

Another important aspect to support this argument is the content of the signed JEC protocols. Having almost nothing tangible in the Protocols gives the signs of perception of Turkmenistan for those texts. What shows that lack of having tangible outcomes is that the Turkish side did not publish any of the 5 Protocols on the Official Gazette since 2012, which prefers publishing for the agreements which were signed with the other Turkic states. JEC Protocols are international agreements under the scope of the Article 90 of the Constitution of the Republic of Türkiye and referring to the founding agreement, they don't have any kind of confidentiality, therefore, it is supposed to be published. As a result, for Turkmenistan, signing the agreement is more important for the two countries during the high level visits, much more than what is written in it.

Moreover, Turkmenistan does not officially publish its statistics or any official data about its economic structure therefore it is difficult to envisage how it conducts and what it expects from that kind of trade and economic mechanisms with the rest of the World. In Trademap data, a researcher needs to use mirror data to see Turkmenistan's import and export volume. Mirror data is based on the data provided by the other country, instead of direct data from Turkmenistan resources.

However, we understand that it does not have that kind of mechanism with western countries. Official website of the Department of State of the United States of America, states about Turkmenistan that "The United States and Turkmenistan have a most-favored-nation trade agreement. The U.S. government considers the Soviet-era dual taxation convention to continue to be in effect and applicable between the United States and Turkmenistan. In July 2017, the Government of Turkmenistan signed a Model 1 Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) with the United States to improve international tax compliance and implement the provisions of the FATCA." However, it does not mention about a permanent committee or any type of mechanisms (US Department of State, 2021). Similarly, Federal Foreign Office of Germany states in its website that German-Turkmen Business Forum was held for the first time in Berlin in February 2019, without mentioning about any mechanism. (Federal Foreign Office, 2022)

On the other hand, it is understood that Turkmenistan established a regular mechanism with its neighbor, Iran (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Islamic Republic of Iran, 2021). However, any published document regarding the outcomes of this mechanism was not published.

It is possible to reach to a conclusion that Turkmenistan has been considering the JEC mechanism as a tool of foreign relations. It prefers ad hoc mechanisms on the purpose, rather than founding a regular mechanism focused on economy and trade. It does not prefer binding itself with any concessions or propositions for the future with any type of mechanism, rather, it prefers the JEC protocols to be mostly shaped as a letter of good intention, without touching at any ongoing problems, solutions or cooperation areas. Therefore, the JEC mechanism remains to be a mechanism which aims to create a text full of good intentions to be signed and shown before the public at a signing ceremony as a tool for high level visits. In this stage, it would be a very powerful argument to make it a general proposition for Turkmenistan's JEC perspective, however, keeping the limits of this thesis, this can be considered as an observation for its JEC perspective with Türkiye. It can be verified to be correct for the irregularity in JEC mechanism between Türkiye and Turkmenistan. It is an example for JEC mechanism being a tool for foreign relations in the cases where the countries do not prefer establishing binding trade rules, but continuing and developing the relations. Turkmenistan is an important case to understand the role of trade mechanisms in making and conducting diplomacy.

### **3.5. Concrete outputs of Trade Diplomacy: International Agreements**

As a result of the trade diplomacy activities carried out by the abovementioned actors in Türkiye, there is the establishment of mechanisms or the realization of meetings between the private sectors. In addition, the results of trade diplomacy activities can be the agreements signed by the Ministers at the level of the states and the institutional mechanisms created by these agreements.

As will be explained in detail in the relevant chapters, Türkiye has basically signed a Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreement with these countries as a result of the activities carried out with the Turkic states. The Joint Economic Commission mechanisms established with these agreements or different agreements have been the



mechanisms in which bilateral relations are discussed in the broadest sense. As a result of these meetings, the JEC Protocol texts signed by Türkiye with the addressee countries are the documents signed at the level of Ministers.

The JEC Protocols are not the only concrete texts as the outputs of the Trade Diplomacy mechanisms. The preferential trade agreements signed by Türkiye with Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan are also the concrete outputs of the trade diplomacy activities. On the other hand, the mechanisms that emerged as a result of the negotiations carried out by the relevant institutions in areas such as land transportation carried out on a technical basis are the concrete outputs of trade diplomacy.

Ministers stand out as the most important elements in these mechanisms implemented by Türkiye. While the protocol texts resulting from the mechanisms of the Joint Economic Commission are signed by the Ministers, on the other hand, the business forum meetings held with the participation of the Ministers assign a special duty to the Ministers in the part of the trade diplomacy carried out by the private sector. A Minister has been appointed to each country for the Joint Economic Commission meetings in Türkiye, and the JEC secretariat is carried out by the Ministry of Trade.

On the other hand, with the Presidential Circular published in the Official Gazette dated February 15, 2019 and numbered 30687, the framework of the issues related to the Joint Economic Commission was drawn, and it was also decided which Minister would act as the JEC co-chair in charge of which country.

According to that Circular;

The principle of reciprocity will be used when determining the heads of delegations to attend the Joint Economic Commission meetings. The information to be submitted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs about the duty and hierarchical level of the head of the other state delegation will be taken as a basis. In this way, if the head of the other party's delegation is at the Ministerial level, the Presidency of the Turkish delegation will also be assumed by a Minister, and in different cases, the principle of equal representation will be applied. In this case, there is no requirement for the JEC co-chairmanship to be at the ministerial level, and it is understood that it is determined within the framework of the principle of reciprocity. However, when the relevant circular is examined, it is seen that assignments are made at the level of Vice President and Minister in the Turkic Republics. Vice President Fuat Oktay serves as co-chairman in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, as well as Portugal, Romania and Sudan.

All the preparation, negotiation and monitoring activities of the Joint Economic Commission meetings will be carried out by the Ministry of Commerce, the meeting dates will be determined by the Ministry of Trade, and the coordination with the addressee country on this matter will be ensured through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This shows that, as stated above, the Ministry of Commerce is primarily responsible for the execution of trade diplomacy on the public side.

The issues to be discussed at the Joint Economic Commission meetings are determined as a result of the meetings to be held between other relevant ministries, public and private sector organizations under the coordination of the Ministry of Trade, and the negotiations are carried out in integrity in line with the agenda to be established and the strategy to be determined within this framework.

Relevant Ministries and organizations will hold their meetings and meetings with their counterparts in other countries on commercial and economic issues in coordination with the Ministry of Commerce, and they will take care that such activities are carried out simultaneously with the Joint Economic Commission meetings to be held with the relevant country. With this provision, the Ministry of Commerce seems to be as an institution with the widest area of authority in the execution of trade diplomacy. (Official Gazette dated February 15, 2019)

In this respect, as will be seen in the following sections, the commercial diplomacy activities carried out by the private sector are carried out in coordination with the activities carried out by the states in many cases and have a complementary character. The events, where the ministers basically come together to sign the agreements, continue with the opening of a business forum or a business council meeting, so that official texts are approved on the one hand and the private sector is supported on the other. There are many examples of this in Türkiye's relations with the Turkic states.

## CHAPTER 4

### TÜRKİYE'S TRADE WITH TURKIC STATES

In Türkiye, transformations of Turkic states seem to have been studied more in political aspects. The academic approach in Türkiye about these countries is influenced by the above-mentioned historical and cultural ties. Some scholars contribute to “Turkic World” terminology as a political tendency (Erarslan & Özdemir, 2021, p. 329) as well as emphasizing on “Eurasianism” (CENGİZ, 2017, p. 72) and “Turkestanism” (Karasar H. A., 2016) to enlighten the historical structure and ideological thinking for the region which also pose as the basic viewpoint for the international political assessments. On the one hand, the concept of Eurasia and on the other hand, the concept of Turkistan emerged as concepts used to indicate the same geography. For example, Barthold describes the region as Turkestan and states that the first information about the region was obtained with the expedition organized by Alexander. (Barthold, 2010, p. 21) Referring to Djalili and Kellner Barthold, he states that the region was called *Maveraunnehir* in history, while Ferdowsi refers to the region as Turan with reference to it. In this context, it is seen that terms such as Central Asia, Turkic states, Turkic states in various usages are frequently used in the literature published in Türkiye. (Yesevi Ç. G., 2020, p. 330)

It is observed that some scholars whose opinions were consulted while preparing this thesis showed a special sensitivity to the use of terminology. As a result, in this thesis the use of the terminology is not at the core of the study therefore, to determine those states, ideological or academic bias are kept away and rather, an official use is adopted, based on the naming of the Organization of Turkic States, the five Republics are determined as Turkic states. In this respect, the phrase “Turkic States” is used to cover Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan in this study.

However, in academic studies in Türkiye, it has been observed that the bilateral and multilateral trade and economic mechanisms that Türkiye has formed with the Turkic states is not mentioned much. Although it is seen that some studies examining bilateral trade and economic relations refer to the Joint Economic Commission meetings in a way that is not detailed (Fidan, 2010, p. 115), any study could not be found that deals with those mechanisms in details academic level.

Similarly, although it is seen that some institutional elements such as the Eurasian Customs Union and the Commonwealth of Independent States Free Trade Agreement were examined or referred to in the studies on post-Soviet economic transformations of the Turkic states (Mostafa & Mahood, 2018, p. 163), Türkiye's bilateral mechanisms with them have also less attracted scholarly interest in the academic literature inside and outside Türkiye.

In the first years of their independence, the Turkic states in Central Asia, like others in the region faced with significant economic instabilities. (Erol & Şahin, 2013, p. 115) The disintegration of the Soviet Union brought along a rapid transformation process in post-Soviet countries. Countries that have declared their independence primarily were in need of making their economic transformations and have sought to meet their production and consumption habits in accordance with the requirements of the new order. While these countries, some of which are rich in natural resources, tried to attract foreign investors, they also aimed to abandon a tightly centralized control economy model. These countries also aimed at attracting foreign investors to invest in their countries. However, the centrally planned production structure did not allow countries to produce, supply to the market and provide logistics chain adding any economic value on their own. (Işık, 2013, p. 113) While some former Soviet republics have become more open and effective economies thanks to structural and institutional reforms, others have had more difficulties in this process due to the fact that they do not have strong political support and sufficient legal infrastructure to implement economic reforms. (Tsintsiruk & Deese, 2008, p. 1)

Technological backwardness and the inadequacy of qualified workforce capacity had been the most important obstacles to economic recovery. (Rumer, 2002, p. 5) In this regard, in the Soviet system, while a part of any finished product was produced in one

country, the other complementary part could be produced in another country, so no country had chance to maintain its economic existence alone without the others. (Rutt, 1986, p. 426) This structure has created a two-way need in these countries. First of all, it is to re-establish an economic cooperation infrastructure that will enable them to continue production, and in parallel, to make the production structure in their countries self-sufficient by attracting investors from the western bloc countries as a result of the new liberal economic order.

For this reason, the need to create a political and economic partnership structure has emerged in order to fill this gap immediately after the collapse of the Soviet Union. As a result of this need, the leaders of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus came together in 1991 to establish the Commonwealth of Independent States. Beyond this aim, CIS also aimed to develop new regional cooperation opportunities. (Kubicek, 2009, p. 237) At present the CIS defines itself as an organization which aims to unite Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Ukraine. (CIS Executive Committee, 2021) In fact, although Turkmenistan attends CIS meetings in accordance with its neutrality policy, it is not an official member. Georgia left the CIS membership in 2009. Ukraine, on the other hand, has not officially exited from the CIS membership after Russia's invasion of Crimea in 2014, but it does not cooperate with the CIS due to the political problems with Russia. With the decree signed by President Petro Poroshenko on May 19, 2018, Ukraine's participation in the CIS bodies ended. (Vestnik, 2018)

Transformation of Central Asian countries in terms of management and leadership has been a focus of attention in the literature. Some scholars focused primarily on foreign relations of these countries. Governments and elites of Central Asian states have actually been successful in getting external actors to recognize and play by their local rules, however, the local rules, alas, have been rules of corruption to benefit the ruling elites. (Heathershaw, 2012, p. 1364) On the other hand, Central Asian regimes used the existing legal and institutional facilities of global political economy to enrich themselves and to control opposition. (Heathershaw & Cooley, 2015, p. 1)

As soon as the newly independent states of Central Asia had become sovereign and been left alone to take care of themselves, they sought building up balanced relations

with outer World without being under the rule of another superpower. (Gleason, 2001) Hanks defines this emergent foreign policy pattern of all these states as “multi-vector” foreign policies, by arguing that, while not all five explicitly embrace this concept – Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan have done so in various documents and official statements (Hanks, 2009) – it is arguably applicable to all of them in some fashion or another, and indeed, the five foreign policy practices are of interests as variations of multi-vectorism.

The economic transformations of these countries, on the other hand, are mainly in the field of economics and development disciplines. The transition processes that adopted the liberal economic model instead of Soviet period production model aroused curiosity as an area in which economic studies attracted attention (Manove, 1971, p. 391), and valuable studies were produced on the transformation processes of these countries, such as Fierman’s work on The Soviet" Transformation" of Central Asia (Fierman, 2019) or Abashin’s work on Nation-construction in post-Soviet Central Asia (Abashin, 2012).

Although Kyrgyzstan witnessed the events that resulted in the resignation and departure of the first President Askar Akaev in 2005, influenced by the winds of the colorful revolution, these events did not clearly bear the signs of US-EU-Russia conflict as in Georgia and Ukraine. (Way, 2008, p. 56) As an exception from other revolutions, with the size and the violence, the situation in the country was rather occurred as pains of transition to democracy. (Beissinger, 2009, p. 75)

Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, on the other hand, enjoyed the comfort of not being border neighbors with Russia and preferred following a more independent domestic and foreign policies. Turkmenistan’s neutrality status which provides the country not being involved in any international engagement. (Shikhmuradov B. O., 1997, s. 26) Despite this, although it is not an official member of the Commonwealth of Independent States, it acts as a member of the CIS and in this respect, it transmits positive signals to Russia. (Chasnouski & Khudayberdiyeva, 2016, s. 40)

Türkiye has an important role in the economic transformation of the Central Asian republics. As a matter of fact, one of the countries with the highest trade volumes after their independence is Türkiye. In this context, Türkiye ranks 3rd in Azerbaijan's

imports and 2nd in exports; 6th in Kazakhstan's imports and exports; 4th in Kyrgyzstan's imports and 5th in exports; 1st in Turkmenistan's imports and 4th in exports; 5th in Uzbekistan's imports and 3rd in exports, according to Trademap data on 2021.

#### **4.1. Türkiye's commercial presence in Central Asia**

In fact, one point here is the fact that Türkiye's commercial presence is more important than what these rankings show. (Peyrouse & Gaël, 2015, p. 410) The basis of this claim stems from the direct reflection of the energy trades of the countries in question on their trade figures. As a matter of fact, when we look at the trade of Kyrgyzstan, based on Trademap data, for example, the total import of the country in 2020 is 1.3 billion dollars, of which 438 billion dollars came from Russia. When energy imports are not included, it is seen that the trade volume is 877 million dollars. The total import from Türkiye in the same year was 194.7 million dollars. In this context, when energy is included, there is a difference of approximately 6.4 times between imports from the two countries, while this difference decreases to 4 times when energy is excluded.

The fact that Türkiye ranks first in Turkmenistan's imports, but China ranks first in exports due to energy is due to the fact that almost all of the natural gas, which is the most important export item of this country, is exported to China. While the country's total export in 2020 was 7.7 billion Dollars, the export to China was 6 billion Dollars<sup>33</sup>. While the country's total export of energy products in Chapter 27 was 6.8 billion dollars, 6.03 billion dollars of this was to China. This figure corresponds to all of Turkmenistan's exports to China, and it does not sell any other products to this country. While Ukraine was the main export country of Turkmenistan until 2010, China suddenly stepped in in 2010 and took the first place by a large margin. (Trademap, 2021) This is a result of the commissioning of the Central Asia - China gas pipeline in 2009. (Hess, 2020) On the other hand, Türkiye has consistently ranked first in Turkmenistan's exports of non-energy products from 2007 to 2016. After the change of management in Uzbekistan following the death of Kerimov, Uzbekistan seems to have become the most important export route of Turkmenistan, but Türkiye maintains

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<sup>33</sup> Trademap, 2021

its place in the first place since a significant part of this export is energy. This confirms the above-mentioned proposition for Turkmenistan in terms of Türkiye's position.

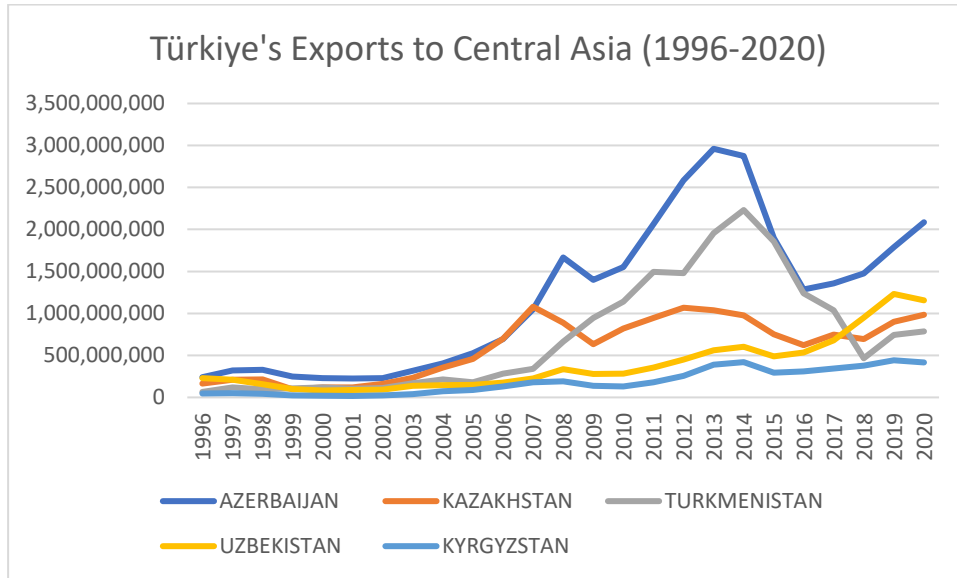


Figure 1: Türkiye's Exports to Central Asian Countries (1996-2020)

Source: Calculations made by author based on TÜİK Data on 7/9/2021

In the calculation made based on TUIK statistics from 1996 to 2020, it is seen that Türkiye's exports to Central Asia started with a total of 747 million dollars and reached 5.4 billion dollars in 2020. The rapidly rising export line within the framework of Türkiye's export-based development model also showed itself in exports to Central Asian countries. The export-based development model adopted by Turgut Özal after the 1980s (Duman, 2011, p. 109) was also adopted by later governments. The project expressed as Neighboring and Peripheral Countries Strategy by Kürşad Tüzmen, who was the Minister of State for Foreign Trade between 2003-2009. (Kılıçkaya, 2004), The approach expressed as "Cultural Geography" by Nihat Zeybekci, who was the Minister of Economy between 2014-2018 aimed to increase Türkiye's exports to those countries and it mostly accomplished its objective. (Anadolu Ajansı, 2018)



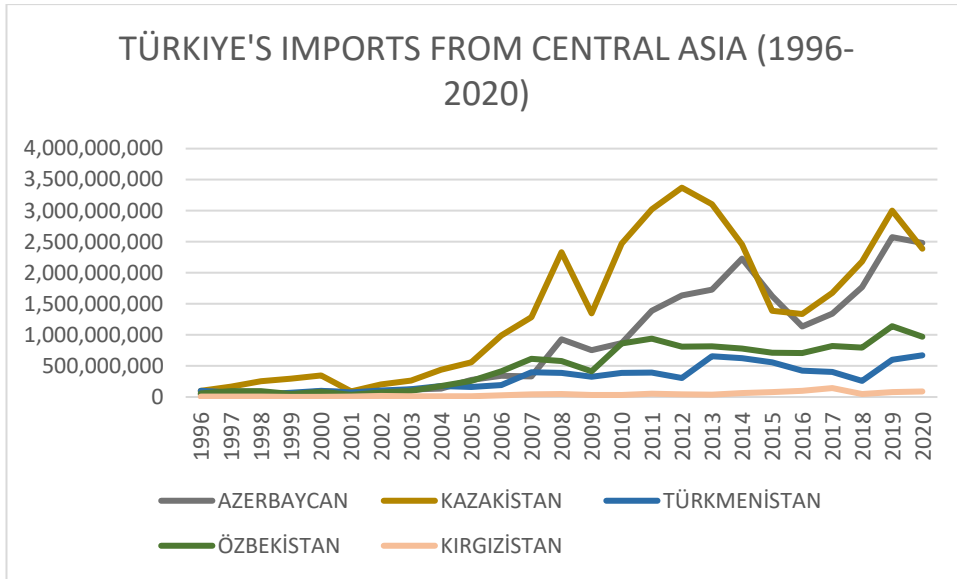


Figure 2: Türkiye's imports from central asia (1996-2000)

Source: Calculations made by author based on TÜİK Data on 7/9/2021

It is noteworthy that the share of Türkiye's exports to Central Asia in its exports to the world is less than the share of Central Asia's imports from Türkiye in its imports from the world. A significant and rapid increase is observed in Türkiye's exports to the world in the same period.

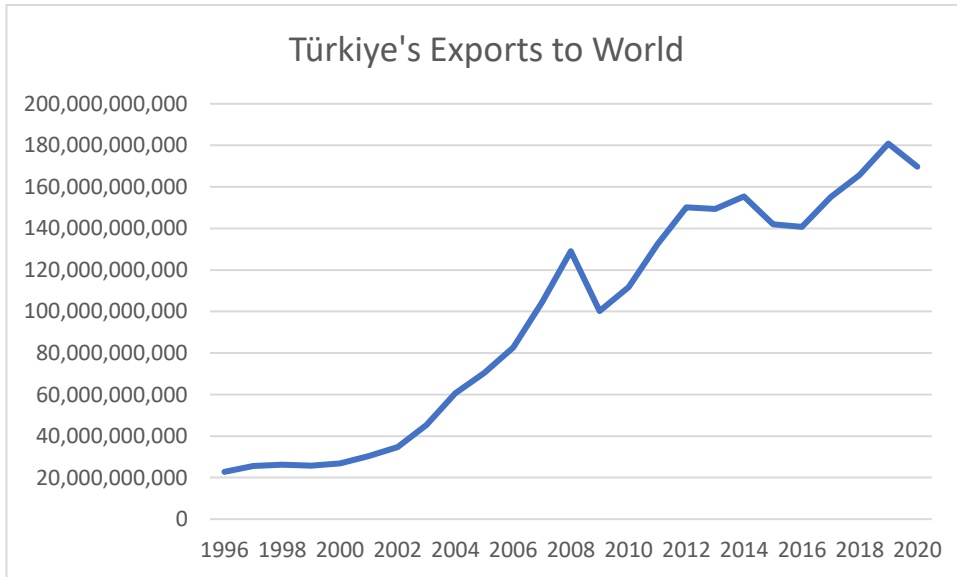


Figure 3: Türkiye's exports to world (1996-2020)

Source: Calculations made by author based on TÜİK Data on 7/9/2021

On the other hand, when we consider the change in Türkiye's exports comparatively, it is understood that the change in its exports to the world and the change in its exports to Central Asia show a similar course. This is important in terms of showing the market diversity in Türkiye's exports.

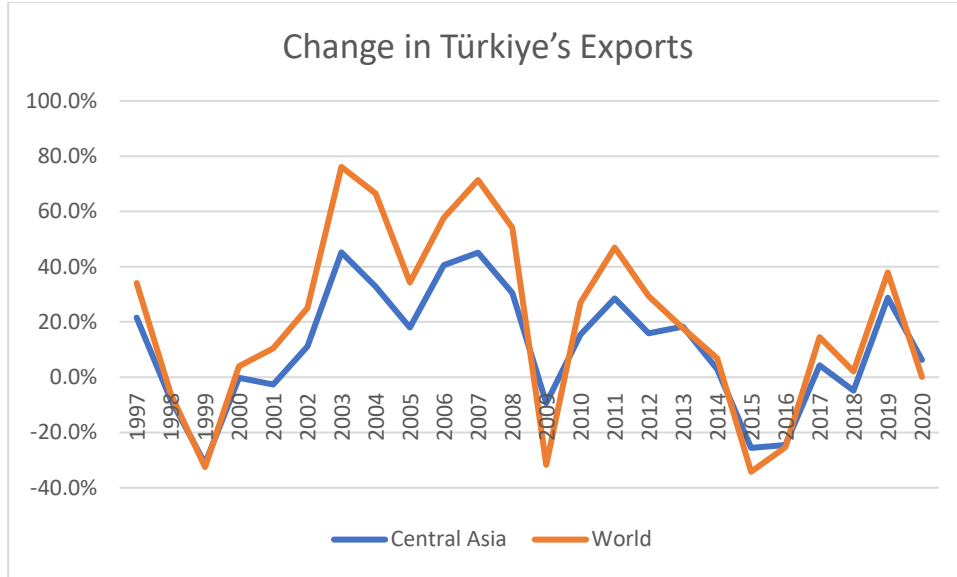


Figure 4: Change in Türkiye's Exports (1997-2020)

Source: Calculations made by author based on TÜİK Data on 7/9/2021

Türkiye's share in Central Asia's imports could be discussed starting from this year, as Trademap data can be traced back to 2001. In this context, the share, which was 5.4% in 2001, reached its maximum level in 2015 and became 8.8%. After 2016, there was a rapid decline in Türkiye's share and it decreased to 6%. It is considered that the Eurasian Customs Union has a significant impact on this.

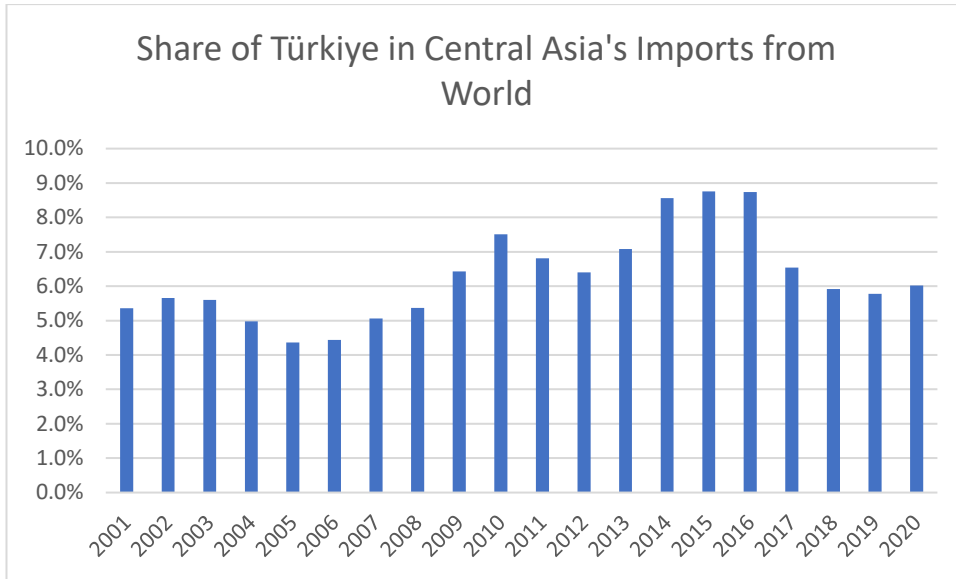


Figure 5: Share of Türkiye in Central Asia's Imports from World

Source: Trademap, calculated by the author

#### 4.1.1. Logistics perspective

Another point here is the logistical problems that Türkiye is experiencing in trade via Iran and Russia. Türkiye's main export method to Central Asia is road transport. The share of road transport in exports to these countries in 2020 is shown in the table below.

Table 3: The share of road transport

COUNTRY	SHARE
Azərbaycan	83,1%
Kazakhstan	80,7%
Kyrgyzstan	73,3%
Turkmenistan	65,7%
Uzbekistan	93,1%

Source: Calculated by the author based on data retrieved from TÜİK

At this point, it is also seen that Türkiye has made efforts to reduce its dependence on the two countries on the existing routes to Central Asia. In this context, the most important goal is developing Ro-Ro transportation over the Caspian Sea and strengthening of the Caspian as an alternative route within the scope of the Middle Corridor, which emerges as one of the most important logistics targets of Türkiye. (Duyar Canli, 2021) It should be expected that the most important partners of Türkiye

on the Caspian route will be Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. Currently, for example, a vehicle going to Uzbekistan uses the Iran-Turkmenistan route. Here, creating an alternative to be provided by decommissioning Iran by Ro-Ro transportation via Georgia-Azerbaijan and reaching Turkmenistan's Turkmenbashi port, (Toprak, 2020, p. 24) would provide a significant price advantage for Türkiye, as it would eliminate Iran's monopoly on transits.

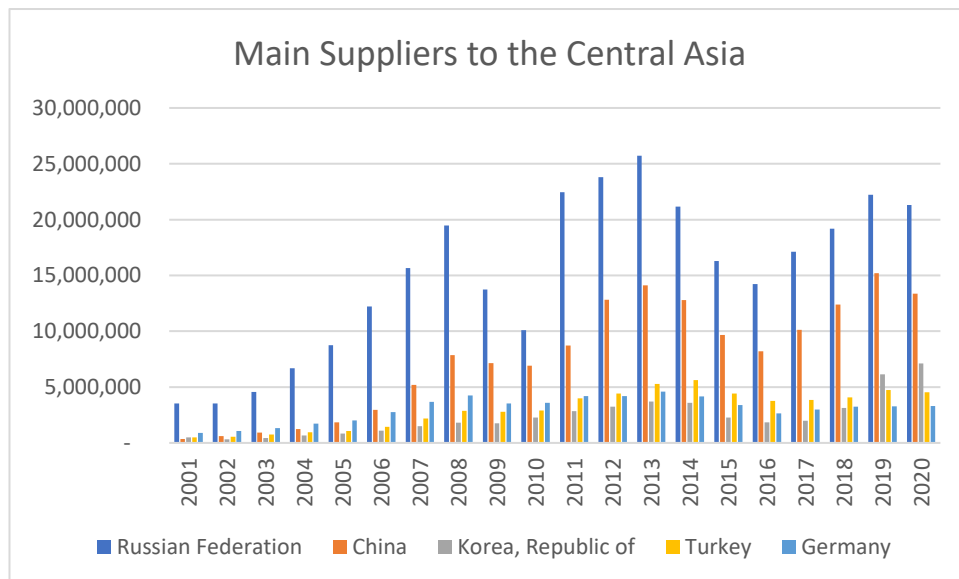
Similarly, as an alternative to Georgia-Russia route for exports to Kazakhstan, connecting the Caspian corridor via Georgia-Azerbaijan and connecting with maritime transport to Kazakhstan directly, it will also pave the way for creating an important alternative to Russia in this regard. (Günay, 2019) However, it is certain that efforts to create alternatives in this way will have some political consequences. As a result, most of the shipments from Türkiye to Kazakhstan pass through the territory of Russia, and it should be expected that the creation of alternatives will be a serious loss of income.

Türkiye has always been one of the top 5 suppliers for Central Asian countries, considering the available statistics since 2000. (Trademap, 2021) The Russian Federation is in the first place by far, and countries such as the Republic of Korea, United States of America, Germany are the main supplier countries for Central Asia. It is noteworthy that China's market share has been increasing rapidly, especially since 2006, and since 2007, it has become the second supplier in the region after Russia.

It is possible to evaluate that the most important reason why Russia is so effective in trade for the countries in the region is the continuation of the Russian-based technological infrastructure established during the Soviet Union in all the industrial infrastructure of the region and the materials used. Because machinery and electrical equipment constitute the most important item in the import of Central Asian countries. For example, for Kazakhstan, the leading supplier of machinery in Chapter 84 was clearly Russia until 2011. (Trademap, 2021) As of 2011, it is observed that suppliers have started to diversify and China has come to the fore. This situation is in parallel with the economic transformation of the Central Asian countries. It can also be considered as a natural result of the increase in technological diversity and the development of industrial infrastructure. (Trademap, 2021)

From the angle of Türkiye, it can be thought that China's market entry move towards Central Asian countries within the scope of the Belt and Road project may be effective in the decrease in Türkiye's share in these countries' imports. Within the scope of this project, China's relations with Central Asia started primarily with the purchase of natural gas from the countries of the region, and this relationship began to be reflected in the trade of goods. As a matter of fact, before the natural gas flow between the two countries, countries such as Germany and Ukraine were the most important suppliers of machinery and equipment, which was the most important import item of Turkmenistan, until 2008, while China has become the country's most important supplier of these products by a very important margin since 2008. (Trademap, 2021)

*Figure 6: Main Suppliers to Central Asia*



Source: Created by the author based on Trademap data, 2021

#### 4.1.2. Türkiye's trade with Russia

Apart from trade with Central Asian countries, it is important to mention Türkiye's trade with the Russian Federation. In the period between 2001 and 2020, Türkiye was among the top 10 countries in the export of the Russian Federation.



Figure 7: Russia's Exports (2001-2020)

Source: Created by the author based on data retrieved from Trademap, 2021, 2021

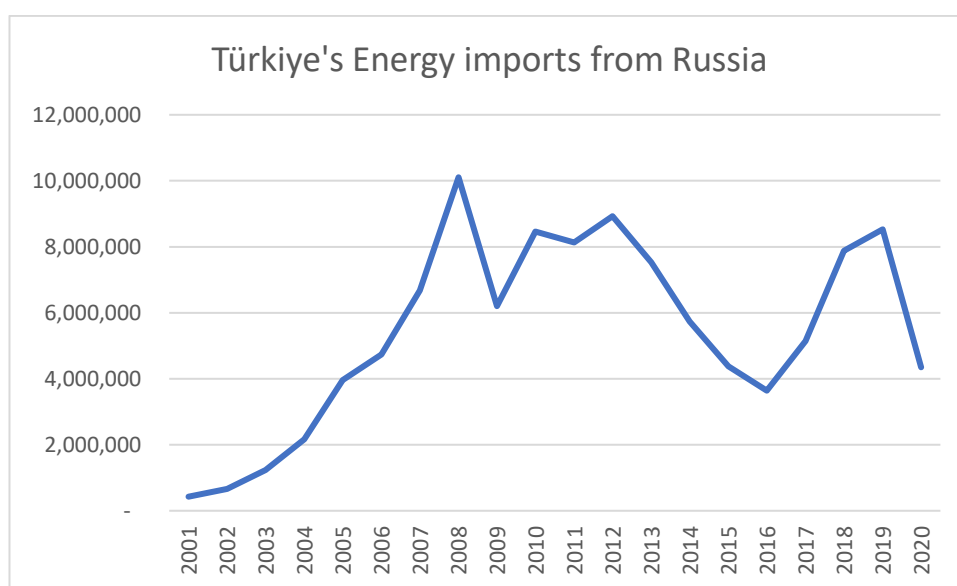
There has been a fluctuating course in Russia's exports to Türkiye in the last 20 years. The year in which the export figure reached its peak was 2008 (27.6 billion USD). The reasons for this increase in exports are the rapid increase in commodity prices in 2008. In the middle of the year 2008, crude oil price rose unceasingly and up to a record high price, nearly \$140 per barrel. However, in the second half of the year 2008 it dropped rapidly at the lowest level to \$40 per barrel. (Kojima, 2009, p. 1) (Yan, 2012, p. 41)



*Figure 8: Russia's Exports to Türkiye (2001-2020)*

Source: Created by the author based on data retrieved from Trademap, 2021

Energy constitutes the largest item in the trade between Türkiye and Russia. Türkiye's energy imports from Russia increased steadily from \$427.2 million in 2001 to \$10.1 billion in 2008. Fluctuations in world oil prices directly affect Türkiye's import figures from Russia. The two tables below show Türkiye's energy imports from Russia and the course of world energy prices.



*Figure 9: Türkiye's Energy imports from Russia (2001-2020)*

Source: Created by the author based on data retrieved from Trademap, 2021

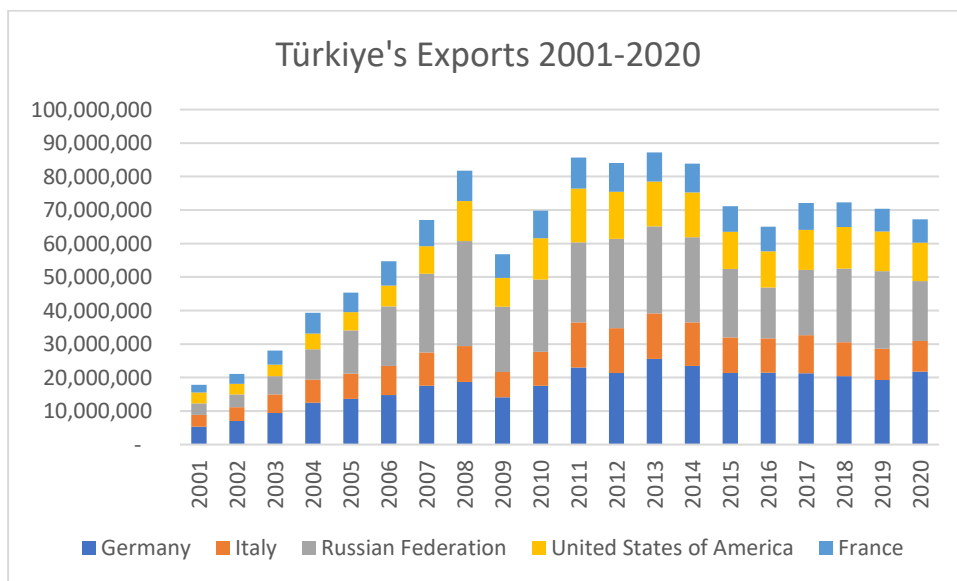


Figure 10: The course of World Oil Prices 2001-2020

Source: MacroTrends (<https://www.macrotrends.net/1369/crude-oil-price-history-chart>)

One of the results from the comparison of the two tables is that the change in prices is more effective than the change in the quantity in Türkiye's energy imports from Russia.

When we look at Türkiye's exports to Russia, it is seen that Russia was one of the most important export points of Türkiye in the same period (2001-2020).





*Figure 11: Türkiye's Exports 2001-2020*

Source: Created by the author based on data retrieved from Trademap, 2021

In 2008, when imports from Russia increased the most, it is observed that Türkiye's exports to Russia increased at a similar rate. It is possible that this can be explained by the same reason as the increase in imports. Because Russia is an oil and natural gas exporter country, and the rapid increase in the prices of these commodities causes an increase in imports due to the increase in purchasing power, as in Russia's exports. As a matter of fact, it is possible to see the same trend in Russia's imports from the world in a similar period.



*Figure 12: Türkiye's exports to Russian Federation*

Source: Created by the author based on data retrieved from Trademap, 2021



*Figure 13: Russia's imports from world (2001-2020)*

Source: Created by the author based on data retrieved from Trademap, 2021

To summarize the results of the numerical evaluation of Türkiye's trade with Central Asia and Russia, Türkiye's trade with the region is affected by political relations. Since there has been no significant political tension with the Central Asian countries since their independence, there has been no significant negative movement in the trade figures, and a stable growth has been observed.

Here, Uzbekistan can be considered an exception. It is seen that trade with Uzbekistan did not increase rapidly in the time period until 2017, but it progressed steadily, however, after 2017, a significant increase was observed in exports to Uzbekistan. Although this will be discussed in detail under the title of Uzbekistan, the main point that distinguishes Uzbekistan from Central Asia is that political relations have a visible effect.

On the other hand, it is seen that Türkiye's trade relations with Russia, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan are mostly related to the volatility in oil prices. The fact that the main export goods of these countries are energy products makes their purchasing power dependent on the fluctuations of the prices of these commodities. In this respect, from Türkiye's point of view, trade with these countries took place within the normal conditions of the economy.

However, although it is aimed to improve the trade volume with trade diplomacy, this is not the only goal. Similarly, it is useful to consider that the only means of improving the trade volume are not the elements addressed within the framework of trade diplomacy. In addition to the types of relationships developed by the private sector within itself, it is also considered that there may be types of relationships that can be developed other than rational behaviors for military, political and security reasons.

#### **4.2. Turkic states' Trade Diplomacy with Türkiye**

Türkiye has been at the center of trade diplomacy activities of Central Asian states. The first preferential trade agreement signed by Azerbaijan outside the CIS was signed with Türkiye. (UNESCAP, 2022, p. 11) The cooperation between Turkmenistan and Türkiye in the field of contracting is a unique form of relationship for Turkmenistan since it has not developed that kind of huge amount of public construction procurements with any other country. (Durdyev, Serdar, Syuhaida, & Nooh, 2013, p. 19)

Although Kazakhstan approaches economic integration more institutionally and conducting close partnership with Russia, (Mostafa & Mahmood, Eurasian Economic Union: Evolution, challenges and possible future directions., 2018, p. 169) it is also acting as a country that put forward institutional proposals such as the establishment of a joint investment fund within the organization of the Turkic Council. By this meaning, it is trying to develop a different model with this structure in which Türkiye is at the center. (Shaukenova, 2019, p. 83)

Uzbekistan signed a preferential trade agreement with Türkiye, which is a first for Uzbekistan. (T.C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı, 2022) Particularly, the relationship pattern after 2017 strengthens the argument basis which puts Türkiye at the center as a country for new economic transformation. (Yuldasheva, 2022, p. 416) There is an extraordinary period when special representatives are appointed at the ministerial level, high-level visits are made several times a year, the Ministers communicate directly via mobile phones, (DEİK, 2017) and chief advisors from Türkiye are assigned to the President of Uzbekistan. (Anadolu Ajansı, 2021) While Uzbekistan develops relations with multilateral regional and global mechanisms such as the membership of the World Trade Organization and the monitoring of the Eurasian Customs Union on the one

hand, it is also transforming itself with the way it establishes relations with Türkiye. (Gazieva, Eshonqulova, & Umarov, 2019, p. 5)

In this regard, it is important to make a glance to Turkic states' integration efforts in the region to understand their need to establish trade diplomacy mechanisms with Türkiye.

#### **4.2.1. Commonwealth of Independent States**

Post-Soviet states, which declared their independence and showed their common will on political cooperation with the CIS, also designed to create a free trade area in line with the goal of ensuring their economic recovery. (Daly, 2014, p. 82) Almost all members of the USSR signed the Treaty establishing Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) on December 1991 as the first step for integration processes. (Kubicek, 2009, p. 237) However, as the president of Kazakhstan has remarked, “for objective and subjective reasons the CIS has not become the decisive integration structure of the post-Soviet space”. (Yesdauletova & Yesdauletov, 2014, p. 3) Therefore, there was still a strong need for a solid, strong integration model, that would go beyond a cooperation organization, which should include a certain level of economic integration. The regional integration gained impetus under the leadership of Russia only after Mr. Putin took office (Ergül, 2012, p. 468).

These regional integration efforts gained a new identity with the signing of bilateral Free Trade Agreements among CIS members. Nearly all CIS countries have signed bilateral free trade agreements (FTAs) with each other, with exception of Armenia and Azeraijan, however, those FTAs have not been practically implemented or enforced. (Roberts & Wehrheim, 2001, p. 319)

As those FTAs did not work effectively and implemented by the signatories, regional integration efforts were deepened in Russian domination and as a result, in the first stage, the countries that established the Customs Union were Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus. (Constantine & David, 1997, p. 125) Members of the Customs Union have taken the tax level of Russia as a basis for determining a common tax. Duty-free trade has been essential among CIS members. (Constantine & David, 1997, p. 128)

Referring to Viner (Viner, 2006 ), who presented the first study on the effect of trade creation and diversification, Guarova states that the effect of integration on trade can be positive or negative, and states that the ability to evaluate the impact of integration on trade, economy and welfare depends on its effect on trade creation and trade diversion. In this context, according to Guarova, the effect of creating trade defines the increase in the flow of goods in order to remove the barriers to trade and reduce prices in mutual trade, and the diversion of trade means improving the commercial structure of the countries within the bloc by reducing the rate of imports from third countries. (Gurova, 2014, p. 39) In this regard, main feature of trade integration in the CIS region is the lack of a diversion effect: instead, gradual growth of openness in third-country relations and a decline in openness among partners to the agreement were main outputs. (Gurova, 2014, p. 40)

To support this, trade of the countries that are signatories of the CIS are presented below, within the framework of statistics published by the United Nations (Trademap). Since the statistics go back to 2001, tables have been created using 2001 and 2003 data and after that, based on the 5-year course since 2001.

*Table 4: CIS- World Imports*

<b>Importers</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2018</b>
World	6,295,722	7,700,394	10,609,920	9,393,146	16,561,834	19,690,568
CIS	73,567	102,446	172,261	136,394	287,012	397,409

Unit : US Dollar Million, Source: Trademap

*Table 5: CIS-World- Exports*

<b>Exporters</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2018</b>
World	6,127,168	7,485,766	10,342,419	15,095,730	16,413,417	19,324,248
CIS	133,114	180,956	321,266	534,055	448,756	607,830

Unit : US Dollar Million, Source: Trademap

In Table 4: CIS- World Imports and Table 5: CIS-World- Exports show the total exports of CIS countries to the world between 2001-2018 and their total imports from the world. The table also includes the total imports and exports of CIS countries from and to each other. At this point, it is seen that the imports of the CIS countries from

the world and their exports to the world show a steady increase. This inclination in exports can be seen in Figure 14: CIS to World Exports

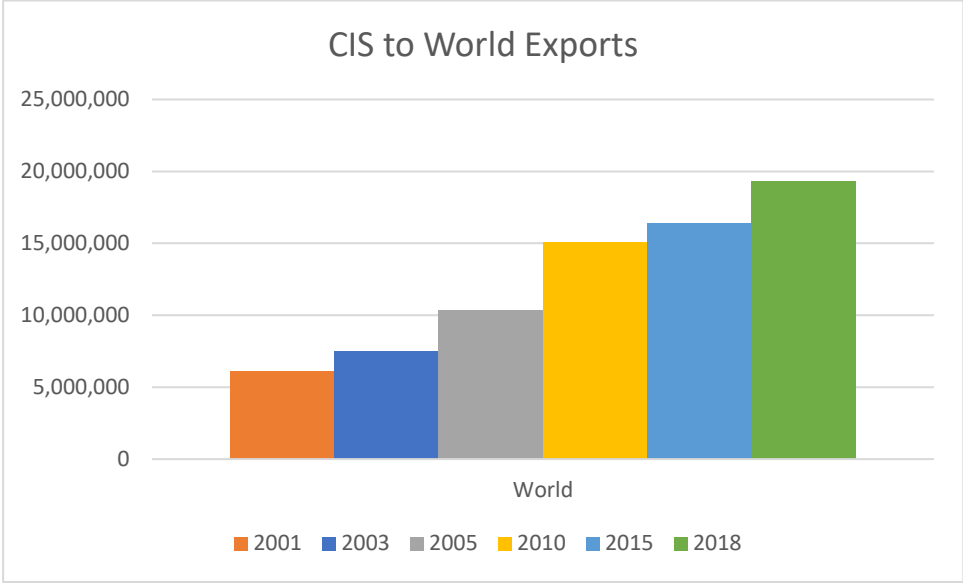


Figure 14: CIS to World Exports

Created by author, based on data retrieved from Trademap, 2022

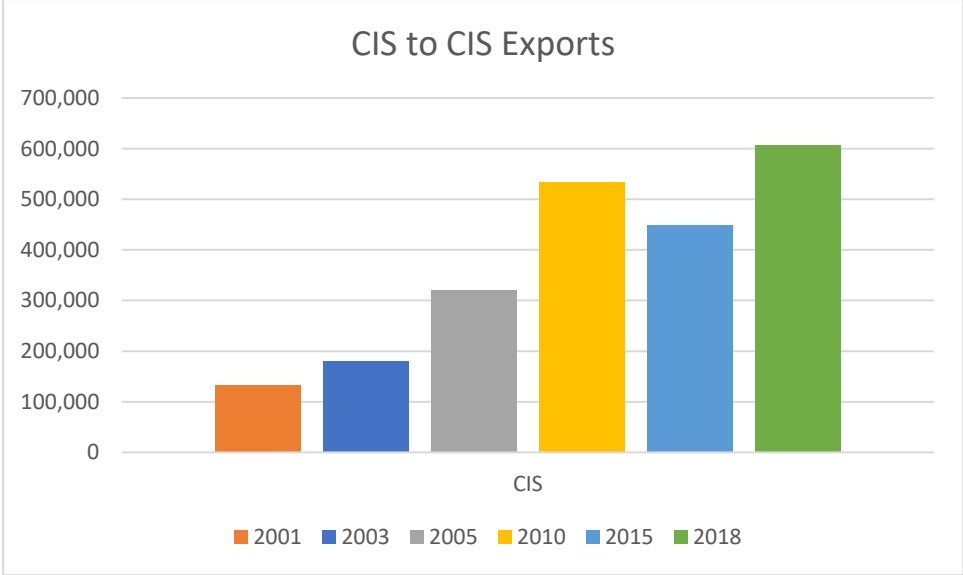


Figure 15: CIS to CIS Exports

Created by author, based on data retrieved from Trademap, 2022

On the other hand, when viewed proportionally as it is seen in Figure 15: CIS to CIS Exports trade between the CIS countries has increased more than the trade of the CIS countries with the world.

Russia has been the most important actor in the integration efforts of the region. This special position continued after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Within the framework of trade and economic relations, trade between Central Asia and Russia has shown a rapid decline since the 1990s. Russia has lost its position as the first commercial partner for the countries in the region to China. In 2001, the 10th anniversary of independence, the trade volume between Central Asian countries (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan) and Russia was 6.3 billion dollars, while in the same year the trade volume of these countries with China was 1.5 billion dollars. However, the increasing trend in trade with China in the following years was much faster than the increasing trend in trade with Russia, and by 2008, while the trade with China reached 30.8 billion dollars, the trade volume with Russia remained at 26 billion dollars. 2008 was the first year that China surpassed Russia. In the following years, the rate of increase in trade with China continued. (Data retrieved from Trademap, April 27, 2021)



Figure 16: China's trade with Central Asia (2001-2010)

Created by author, based on data retrieved from Trademap, April 27, 2021

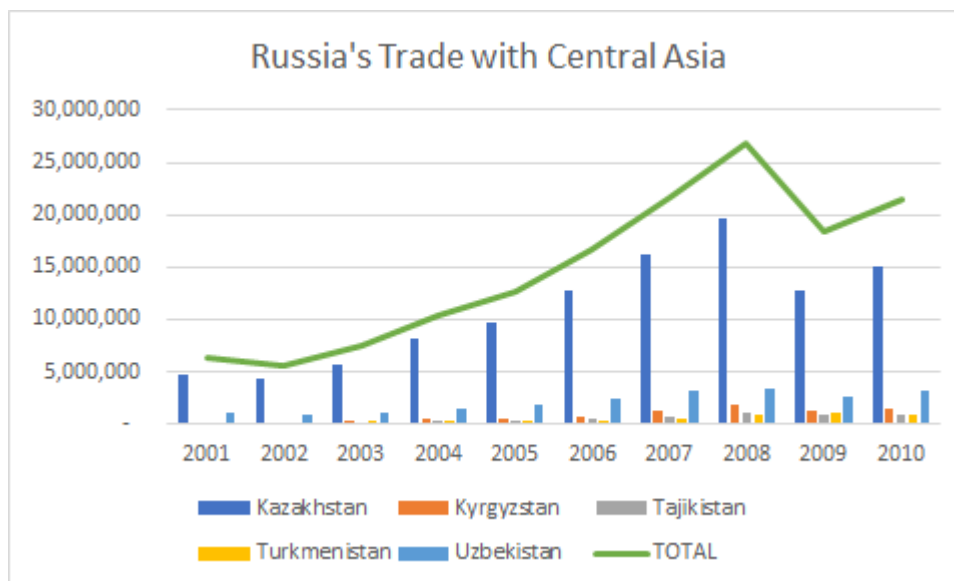


Figure 17: Russia's trade with Central Asia (2001-2010)

Created by author, based on data retrieved from Trademap, April 27, 2021

After the Eurasian Customs Union came into effect in 2010, the trade volume in Central Asia did not change for China and Russia, and the role of China in World trade was directly reflected in its trade with Central Asia. During this period, China was ahead of Russia. In 2020, the region's trade volume with Russia was 28.3 billion dollars, while the trade volume with China was 38.5 billion dollars. Kazakhstan plays the dominant role in trade in Central Asian countries.

Table 6: Trade Volume of Central Asian Countries with China

Countries	2018	2019	2020
Kazakhstan	19,856,135	22,065,796	21,446,608
Kyrgyzstan	5,601,314	6,378,052	2,900,898
Tajikistan	1,502,738	1,696,866	1,063,089
Turkmenistan	8,436,149	9,116,722	6,515,879
Uzbekistan	6,266,491	7,225,205	6,628,697
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>41,662,827</b>	<b>46,482,641</b>	<b>38,555,171</b>

Source: Data retrieved from Trademap, April 27, 2021



*Table 7: Trade Volume of Central Asian Countries with Russia*

<b>Countries</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>
Kazakhstan	18,219,255	19,621,839	18,995,576
Kyrgyzstan	1,883,733	1,866,268	1,691,427
Tajikistan	893,863	990,007	838,169
Turkmenistan	444,034	694,797	969,927
Uzbekistan	4,383,845	5,085,846	5,881,358
<b>TOTAL Russia Trade</b>	<b>25,824,730</b>	<b>28,258,757</b>	<b>28,376,457</b>

Source: Data retrieved from Trademap, April 27, 2021

China has not been Russia's only commercial rival in Central Asia. Iran, South Korea and Gulf countries, especially Türkiye, came to the fore as countries that rapidly developed their commercial and economic relations with Central Asian countries after their independence. According to Trademap data, Türkiye's exports to the countries in the region, which was 363.2 million dollars in 2001, increased almost 7 times and reached to 2.8 billion dollars in 2011. In the same period, imports from Russia increased 5 times (from 3.4 billion dollars to 21.5 billion dollars), while imports from China increased 30 times (from 307.9 million dollars to 10 billion dollars).

In the field of energy, although Russia had to share its monopoly position in the region with other countries that have energy resources, especially Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, which are newly emerging states, it is seen that Russia concentrated its efforts in the Arctic region. It would not be wrong to say that the most important loss of Russia in terms of energy in the region is the natural gas of Turkmenistan. Hence, Turkmenistan has the fourth-largest natural gas reserves in the world, totaling 19.5 tcm (688 trillion cubic feet), which is equivalent to a 9.8% share of the overall global resource. (Fawthrop, 2021) In the current situation, it is seen that China's investments in processing Turkmenistan gas and transferring it to China are intense. Currently, 90% of Turkmen natural gas is sent to China. (Hess, 2020)

However, Russia's main focus on Central Asian energy resources has been natural gas to Europe rather than to China. For Russia, the main goal here is to prevent any pipeline and similar initiatives that can be made over the Caspian, and to ensure the transmission of Kazakhstan oil to markets such as Europe and Türkiye through itself. (Laruelle, 2010, p. 2)

The economic development of Russia after 1991 is shown in Figure 18: Russia’s GDP (1991-2019). As will be discussed in detail in the following sections, in the first 10 years of independence, Russia is far from achieving economic recovery and a decreasing trend is observed in the national income compared to the beginning. This downward trend continued until 2005, but a rapid growth trend has been observed since 2005.

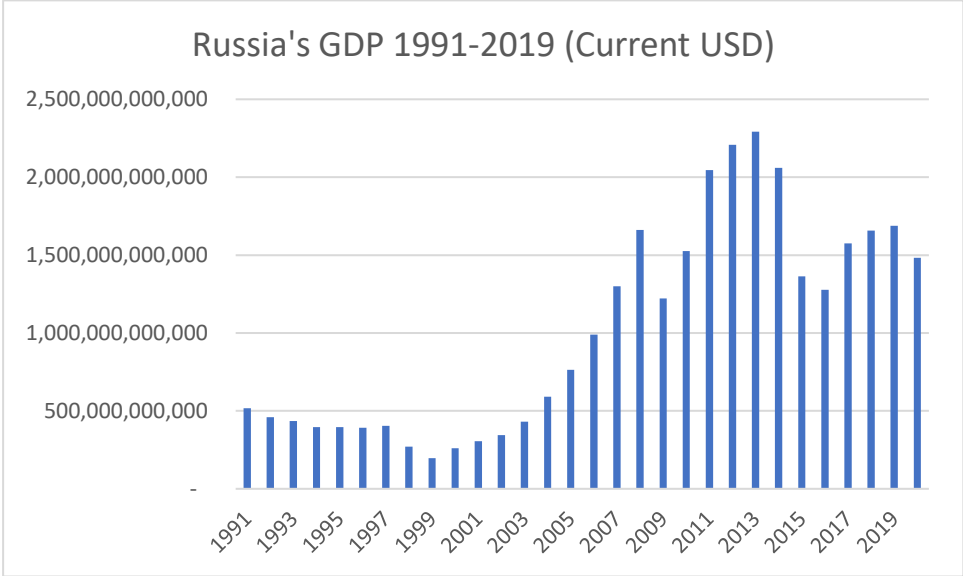


Figure 18: Russia’s GDP (1991-2019)

Source: World Bank, 2021

For other members of the Commonwealth of Independent States, the first years of independence were similarly the years when economic recovery could not be realized. Below is a table of Kazakhstan's GDP growth.

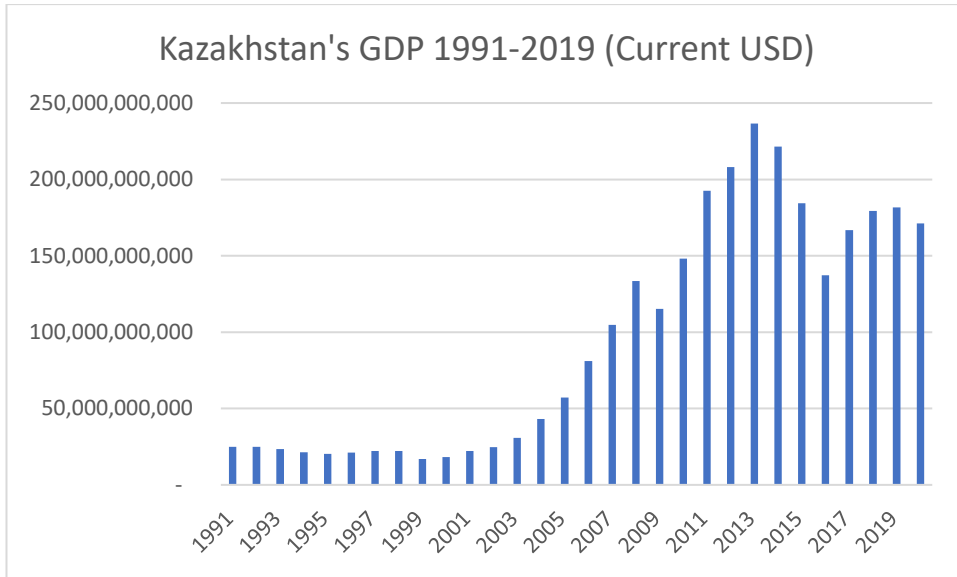


Figure 19: Kazakhstan's GDP (1991-2019)

Source: World Bank, 2021

It is noteworthy that the figure is not too much different in Belarus, one of the founding members of CIS.

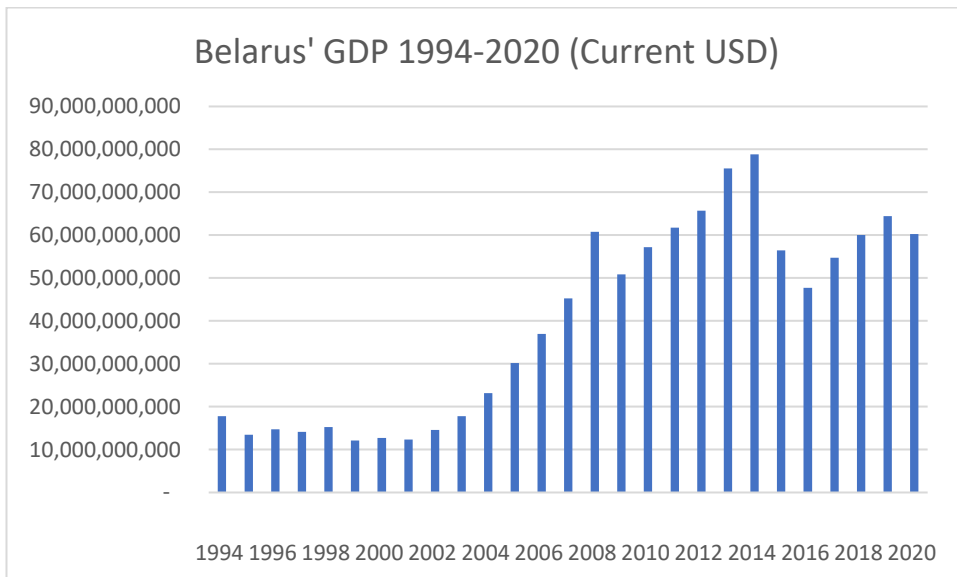


Figure 20: Belarus' GDP (1994-2020)

Source: World Bank, 2021

This regression experienced in the early stages of the economic recovery process has led to the continuation of the search for an economic integration model that goes

beyond the free trade agreement established within the framework of the CIS. This search started a process that resulted in the Eurasian Customs Union.

Moreover, while Russia’s trade surplus was 14.4 billion Dollars in 1998 ( Bush, K., 1999, 133), it occurred as 201 billion Dollars in 2008 (Trademap). In a decade, as it is shown in Figure 21: Change in oil prices (1998-2008), Russian economy’s need to European support diminished dramatically. This is directly because that oil prices soared after the crisis of 1998, reaching the fifty-year linear trend by 2004 and they stayed high above the trend until autumn 2014. (Mironov & Petronevich, 2015, p. 97).

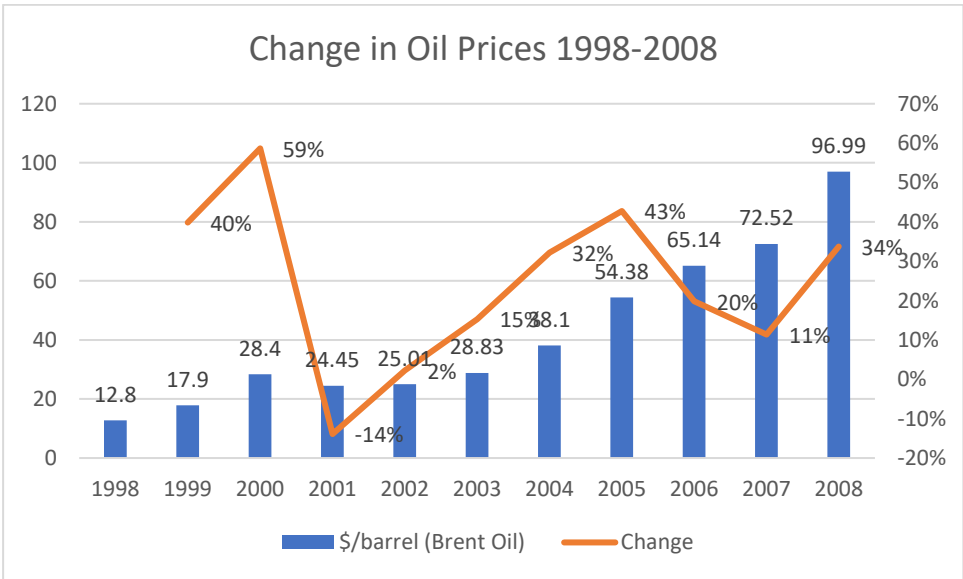


Figure 21: Change in oil prices (1998-2008)

Source: Statista.com

Due to the fact that the natural resources made Russia feel comfortable with its revenue, Russia changed its attitude to liberalization politics. It was also reflected in politics as well. Russia felt itself more independent from the EU’s and western economic partnerships, since the promised (Ziegler, 2016, p. 556) wealth by the liberal transformations was easily provided from the natural resources. The failure in being liberal economy was compensated by the increase in oil prices as it is seen in Figure 21: Change in oil prices (1998-2008). This phenomenon that Russia has been facing with looks very similar to be rolling in the ‘Dutch Disease’ in the Economy literature (Algieri, 2011, p. 261), which is defined as “the coexistence within the traded goods

sector of progressing and declining, or booming and lagging, sub-sectors” (Corden & Neary, 1982, p. 825). Russia, based on its reliance on the revenue of oil and gas, has been an energy superpower. (Rutland, 2015, p. 67)

This phenomenon will not be examined in details in this chapter, however, it is important to understand Russia’s transformation in its economic and social structure. Relying on this export revenues resulted with a waving economic structure, which has been very sensitive to foreign attacks and developments. The oil prices have direct effects on Russia as it was seen above. After Ukraine crisis, the global oil prices had been decreased intentionally to give a grave harm to Russian economy, which partly had success in this. (Thijs Van de Graaf, 2017, p. 62) Since January 2014, the currency depreciated from about 33 rubles for 1 US dollar to its lowest value of nearly 70 rubles at the end of January 2015 and in the same period, the oil prices fell dramatically from 70 Dollars to 30 Dollars. (Dreger, Kholodilin, Ulbricht, & Fidrmuc, 2016, p. 307).

As a result, the Commonwealth of Independent States could not create an adequate structure to meet the needs of the countries in the region for their development goals, due to the economic inadequacies of the member countries of the Community at the time of its establishment, and the emergence of different priorities, especially security, of Russia, the dominating power of the community.

While the CIS continued, there were other economic integration efforts, but it was not possible to obtain an important and concrete structure from these efforts. As a result of these initiatives, with the Eurasian Economic Union, which came to life in 2010, a structure suitable for the first concrete and real economic integration model was established. The Eurasian Economic Union has also been seen as an important opportunity for Central Asian countries in terms of securing relations with Russia. The Union is also important in terms of showing the direction of political cooperation in the post-Soviet geography. Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova, with which Moscow has problematic relations and which have turned their faces to the west, were excluded from this union, and Russia's sphere of influence was registered in a geography extending to Belarus in the west and Kyrgyzstan in the east.

## **4.2.2. Eurasian Economic Union**

The establishment of the customs union between Russia-Belarus-Kazakhstan, which was put into practice on January 1, 2010, under the leadership of the Russian Federation, which has taken more stable steps towards economic and political stability again under the leadership of Vladimir Putin since the 2000s, and subsequently, since the beginning of 2015, Eurasia With the establishment of the economic union (EAEU), it is seen that for the first time in the region, a seriously institutionalized international organization has been put into practice.

As stated in detail in the previous section, the Commonwealth of Independent States was established with the agreement signed by Belarus, Russia and Ukraine on December 8, 1991, and then the agreement was adopted by other former Soviet Republics. The said agreement also includes the establishment of institutions for the establishment of a common economic area among the member states and the establishment of related cooperation. The aim here is to create a common economic space based on free trade and to ensure cooperation in economic and humanitarian fields.

As a geopolitical instrument, the Eurasian Economic Union increases Russia's dominant power among member states. (Mostafa & Mahmood, Eurasian Economic Union: Evolution, challenges and possible future directions., 2018, p. 169) It might have emerged as a rational choice for the countries in the region, since Russia pays much importance for security in Central Asian countries with making strong ties with them to keep them away from outer threats. (Khan H. , 2019, p. 9)

### **4.2.2.1. History and structure**

It is possible to summarize the history of the Eurasian Economic Union as follows: (Eurasian Economic Commission, 2019)

In 1995, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia prepared an agreement to establish a customs union. In 1996, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia and Kyrgyzstan signed the "Treaty on Increased Integration in the Economic and Humanitarian Fields ", and with this agreement, the foundation was laid for the creation of a common market in the fields

of goods, services, capital, workers and developing transportation, energy and information systems.

For this purpose, the Customs Union and Single Economic Area Agreement were signed between Russia, Kazakhstan, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in 1999. In 2000, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan established the Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEc). Uzbekistan joined this community in 2006. The priorities of the organization were determined as supporting cooperation and integration. They formed the EurAsEc with the aim of establishment of a customs union and common economic space among the members and signed the agreement in Astana, Kazakhstan, on October 10, 2000. In 2002, Moldova and Ukraine joined this integration movement which, in Nazarbaev's words, "aimed to facilitate integration to the international trade system and world economy" (Şanlı, 2008, p. 24), as observer countries. Armenia also became observer in 2003, which later in 2016 became a full member. In 2003, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia and Ukraine decided to establish a Single Economic Space (SES). Ukraine later left this project. In 2003, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia and Ukraine decided to establish a Single Economic Space (SES). Ukraine later left this project.

At the EurAsEc unofficial summit meeting in 2006, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia decided to establish a customs union, and Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan were also decided to join the organization when they were ready. In this context, The decision of "Preparation of Necessary Documents for Establishing the Legal Basis of the Customs Union and the Common Economic Area within the framework of EURASEC" dated August 16, 2006 was signed between Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia. In 2007, following the decision above, Agreement on the establishment of a Single Customs Zone and the Establishment of a Customs Union, dated 6 October 2007 was signed. Also the Agreement on the Customs Union Commission" dated 6 October 2007 accompanied with the Agreement.

In 2009, the integration stages for The Supreme Body of the Customs Union were determined for the customs union, and accordingly, it was decided that the CU would be valid as of January 1, 2010. At the same meeting, the leaders of the three countries

stated their intentions for the future transformation of the CU into the Eurasian Economic Union.

Common Customs Tariff (Common External Tariff-CET-) dated 27 November 2009; Decision of the Board of Presidents of the Customs Union on the Customs Code was also made to determine the framework of common tariffs.

25 March 2010, Decision on the approval of the "Mechanism for the Distribution of Customs Duties on Imports Between Members". At the meeting held on 18 November 2011, the Eurasian Economic Commission, which is the permanent regulatory body of the customs union, was established. Accordingly, as of February 2, 2012, the Eurasian Economic Commission started to function as a supranational regulatory body, and a date of January 1, 2015, was determined for the codification of the international agreements, which will be the legal and regulatory basis of the Eurasian Economic Union.

Finally, at the summit dated on 29th May 2014, leaders of Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus signed the founding agreement of Eurasian Economic Union which aims to provide free movement of goods, services, capital and workforce (Eurasian Economic Union, 2019) among the nations that have 184.3 million population, 2,2 trillion dollars GDP and 1 trillion Dollars trade volume.<sup>34</sup> The aforementioned countries gathered in Minsk, the capital of Belarus, on October 10, 2014 and signed the agreement that ended the activities of the EEC, and decided that the Union would enter into force as of January 1, 2015. (Document No: 76, Annex 1) At the said meeting, the agreement regarding the full membership of Armenia to the Union was also signed. Membership of Armenia entered into force as of 02/01/2015. (Gharabegian, 2015) In addition, membership of Kyrgyzstan to the said Union was accepted on 23 December 2014, and the country became the 5th member of the Union as of 1 May. (Eurasian Economic Commission, 2019)

The "Inter-State Council", the highest organ of the Customs Union, is at the level of Heads of State and Government and consists of 3 Heads of State and 3 Prime Ministers. It is a platform where visionary issues such as the strategy and future of the GB are

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<sup>34</sup>Calculated by author, based on data retrieved from World Bank.



discussed, and the decisions here are taken "unanimously". The main body of the functioning of the Customs Union, which was first established with the establishment of the Customs Union, where the decisions were taken by "unanimity" or "majority of votes" at 2/3, and the votes were taken by RF 57%, Kazakhstan 21.5% and Belarus 21.5%. It was the Customs Union Commission, which was disbanded. Parallel to the entry into force of the CU, the CU Commission was also transformed and its powers were transferred to the newly established Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC) from the effective date. (Eurasian Economic Union, 2021)

The main objectives of the Customs Union are; establishment of the Common Market; free movement of goods, persons and capital; improvement of trade, business and investment conditions in all three countries, and the application of a common customs tariff for products from third countries.

The Eurasian Economic Community emerged as the real integrative force in the post-Soviet space, which sheltered this kind of integration tools. Until the formation of the Customs Union, EurAsEC represented the highest level of integration in the post-Soviet space.

The Customs Union and its institutions were converted into the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) in the summit on May 29, 2014 as the single institution representing the Customs Union members with a sort of single economic space (Treaty on Eurasian Economic Union). The EEU consisted 175 million people living in a 20.206.350 km<sup>2</sup> territory. With the membership of Armenia and Kyrgyzstan, the number of people increased to 183,8 million and the area increased to 20.406.044 km<sup>2</sup> (Eurasian Economic Union, 2021)

#### **4.2.2.2. Economic cooperation and EEU**

Economic cooperation activities of the Eurasian Economic Union continue not only within the union but also with third parties outside the union. For example, a free trade agreement was signed between the Eurasian Economic Union and Vietnam on May 29, 2015, and the agreement entered into force on October 5, 2016. (World Trade Organization, 2021) This agreement includes cooperation in investments, intellectual property protection, e-commerce and public procurement, as well as the development

of mutual trade between the parties; It also covers the determination of common principles in the fields of protection of competition and harmonization of customs legislation. (World Trade Organization, 2021)

In addition, on 3 April 2016, “Memorandum of understanding on cooperation between Moldova and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU)” was signed in Chisinau by President of Moldova Igor Dodon and President of the Eurasian Economic Union Council Tigran Sarkisyan. (Eurasian Economic Commission, 2021) In the said memorandum of understanding; Establishing a working group on cooperation between the EEA and Moldova, taking measures to increase the volume of joint trade and investment and removing obstacles to investments, and ensuring all kinds of cooperation between Eurasian Economic Union countries and Moldova. (Eurasian Economic Commission, 2021)

Likewise, the signing of a free trade area agreement between the EEU and Iran came to the fore in 2017, and the process continues. (Goble, 2021) The Eurasian Economic Union currently conducts trade negotiations with many countries, including China and India, as well as Burundi, Columbia, Iceland and Turkmenistan. (Russia Briefing, 2017)

In terms of commercial and economic relations, trade between Central Asia and Russia has shown a rapid decline since the 1990s. Russia has lost its position as the first commercial partner for the countries in the region to China.

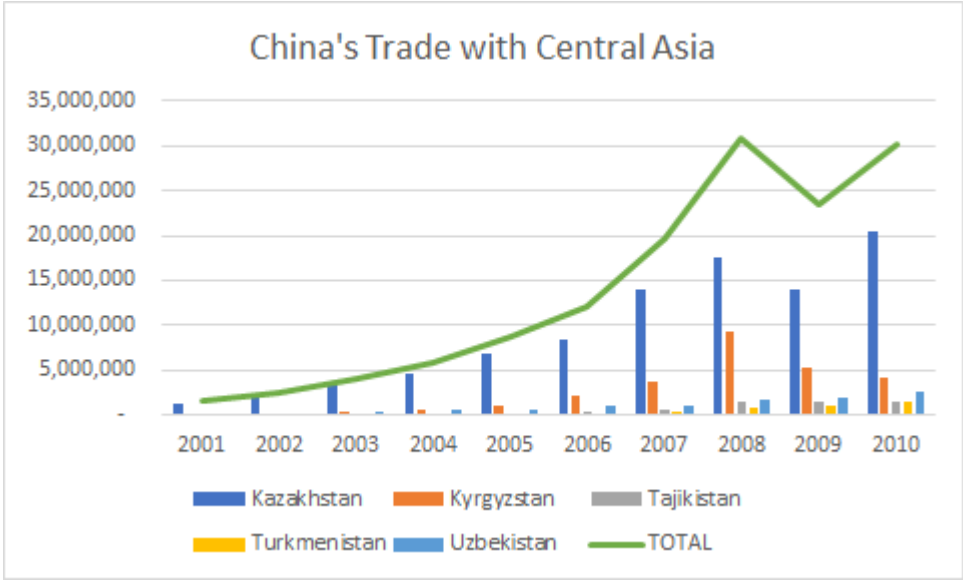


Figure 22: China's trade with Central Asia (2001-2010)

Data retrieved from Trademap.org, April 27, 2021

In 2001, the 10th anniversary of independence, the trade volume between Central Asian countries (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan) and Russia was 6.3 billion dollars, while in the same year the trade volume of these countries with China was 1.5 billion dollars. However, the increasing trend in trade with China in the following years was much faster than the increasing trend in trade with Russia, and by 2008, while the trade with China reached 30.8 billion dollars, the trade volume with Russia remained at 26 billion dollars. 2008 was the first year that China surpassed Russia. In the following years, the rate of increase in trade with China continued.

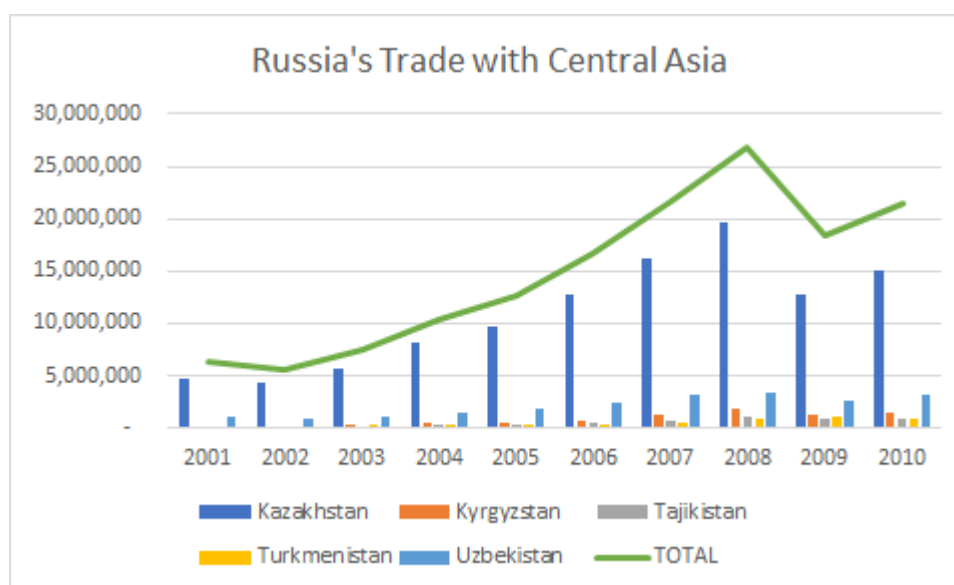


Figure 23: Russia's trade with Central Asia (2001-2010)

Source: Based on data retrieved from Trademap.org April 27, 2021

Table 8: Trade Volume of Central Asian Countries with Russia

Countries	2018	2019	2020
Kazakhstan	18,219,255	19,621,839	18,995,576
Kyrgyzstan	1,883,733	1,866,268	1,691,427
Tajikistan	893,863	990,007	838,169
Turkmenistan	444,034	694,797	969,927

*table cont'd*

Uzbekistan	4,383,845	5,085,846	5,881,358
<b>TOTAL Russia Trade</b>	<b>25,824,730</b>	<b>28,258,757</b>	<b>28,376,457</b>

Source: Data retrieved from Trademap.org, April 27, 2021

After the Eurasian Customs Union came into effect in 2010, the situation in Central Asia did not change for China and Russia, and the role of China in World trade was directly reflected in its trade with Central Asia. During this period, China was ahead of Russia. In 2020, the region's trade volume with Russia was 28.3 billion dollars, while the trade volume with China was 38.5 billion dollars. Kazakhstan plays the dominant role in trade in Central Asian countries.

*Table 9: Trade Volume of Central Asian Countries with China*

<b>Countries</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>
Kazakhstan	19,856,135	22,065,796	21,446,608
Kyrgyzstan	5,601,314	6,378,052	2,900,898
Tajikistan	1,502,738	1,696,866	1,063,089
Turkmenistan	8,436,149	9,116,722	6,515,879
Uzbekistan	6,266,491	7,225,205	6,628,697
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>41,662,827</b>	<b>46,482,641</b>	<b>38,555,171</b>

Source: Data retrieved from Trademap.org, April 27, 2021

It is noteworthy that the situation is not different in Belarus, one of the founding members of CIS.

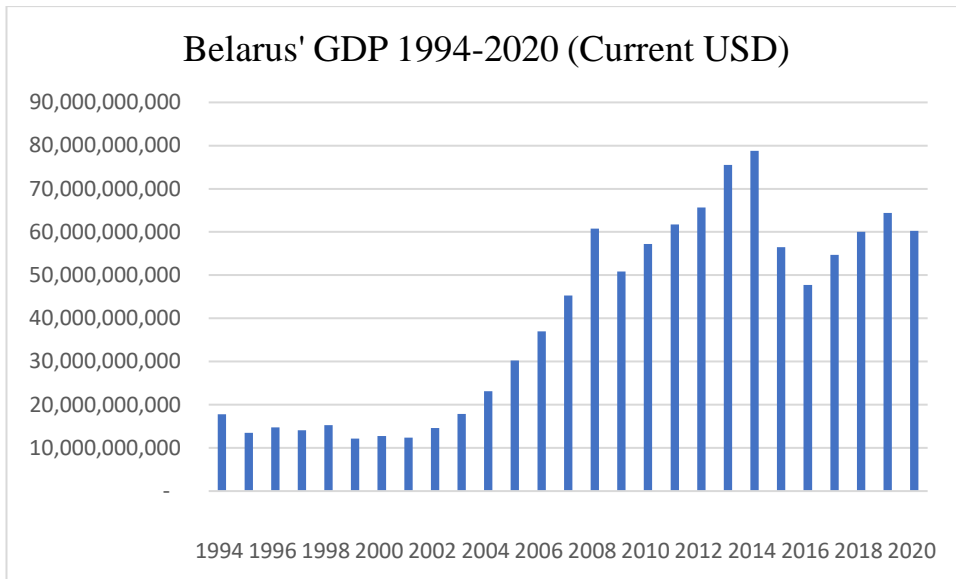


Figure 24: Belarus' GDP (1994-2020)

Source: World Bank, 2021

In this regard, the importance of China for the EEU is getting more apparent with China's grand project of Silk Road Economic Belt. The Silk Road Economic Belt (SREB) initiative, launched by Xi Jinping in 2013 as the Central Asian component of the Eurasian Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), is presented as a trade and infrastructural developmental initiative that benefits all to deliver stability and consolidates Beijing's existing economic investments and security-building measures, while launching new projects to link the regions of Central Asia and South Asia more closely with China as a transport corridor linking China to Europe. (Dave & Kobayashi, 2018, p. 267) Members of the EEU adapted themselves quickly to Chinese project; for example Kazakhstan embraced that belt and has aligned its 'Nurly Zhol' domestic stimulus programme with that initiative. (Pieper, 2021, p. 462) This new shape of partnership in central Asia makes Türkiye's efforts on developing new mechanisms of trade diplomacy meaningful for its own future in the region.

#### 4.2.3. Organization of Turkic States

The Turkic Council, which was established with the Nakhchivan Agreement dated October 3, 2009. Since the beginning of the establishment, the main founders have been Türkiye, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. (Organization of Turkic

States, 2022) The organization later expanded with the full membership of Hungary in 2017. At the Baku summit held on 15 October 2019, Uzbekistan officially became a member of the organization. (Organization of Turkic States, 2021) As a result of the summit meeting held on November 12, 2021, the name of the organization was changed to the Organization of Turkic states and Turkmenistan became an observer member. (T.C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı, 2021) The organization itself defines its main pillars as common history, common language, common identity and common culture and it draws a perspective of broadening the existing bilateral cooperation areas such as economy, science, education, transportation, customs, tourism etc. (Organization of Turkic States, 2021)

#### **4.2.4. Joint Economic Commissions with Türkiye**

Türkiye's political relations with Central Asian countries have developed in parallel with its economic and commercial relations. It is noteworthy that during the political visits to Central Asian countries, texts such as trade agreements, agreements, cooperation protocols, and memorandums of understanding were also signed. In the relations developed with these countries, the Joint Economic Commission mechanism, the infrastructure of which was established with the economic and technical cooperation agreements signed in the first years of independence, has formed an important basis, as it is deeply analyzed in the following chapters. This mechanism, which includes many areas not directly related to the economy under an economic roof, was seen as an important and roadmap in terms of fully discussing bilateral relations and making mutual promises and commitments under each heading, and this issue was also expressed by senior officials. (Anadolu Ajansı, 2019)<sup>35</sup>

JEC mechanism has been established in all of Türkiye's Central Asian Turkic states. The name of the mechanism established with Turkmenistan was determined as "Intergovernmental Turkish-Turkmen Commission on Commercial and Economic Cooperation" (HEK), and the name of the mechanisms established with Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan was "Joint Economic Commission" (KEK). When examined as a mechanism, it is seen that there is no difference between KEK

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<sup>35</sup> <https://www.haberler.com/turkiye-kazakistan-hukumetlerarasi-kek-11-donem-12604069-haberi/>

and HEK in terms of functioning or international law.

*Table 10: Main Agreements with Turkic states*

<b>Country</b>	<b>Mechanism</b>	<b>Grounds</b>	<b>Date of Signing</b>
Kazakhstan	Joint Economic Commission	Protocol on the Establishment of an Intergovernmental Joint Economic Cooperation Commission between the Government of the Republic of Türkiye and the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan	September 2, 1993
Kyrgyzstan	Joint Economic Commission	Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Türkiye and the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic on the Establishment of the Turkish-Kyrgyz Joint Economic Commission on Commercial and Economic Cooperation	August 16, 1995
Turkmenistan	Intergovernmental Turkish-Turkmen Commission on Economic Cooperation	Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Türkiye and the Government of Turkmenistan on the Intergovernmental Turko-Turkmen Commission on Economic Cooperation	December 6, 2007
Azerbaijan	Joint Economic Commission	Agreement on Trade and Economic Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Türkiye and the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan	November 2, 1992
Uzbekistan	Joint Economic Commission	Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Türkiye and the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan on the Establishment of the Turkish-Uzbek Joint Economic Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation	July 9, 1995

(Source: Ministry of Trade of the Republic of Türkiye)

While Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan carry out the trade and economy agenda with

Türkiye within the framework of the JEC mechanism, on the other hand, they have entered into a deep commercial engagement within the scope of the Russian centered Eurasian Economic Union. (Kudaibergenova, 2016, p. 89) Türkiye, which had the opportunity to develop special relations regarding trade with both countries during the period when the trade regime established within the framework of the Commonwealth of Independent States formed a relatively weaker bond, had to deal with a different actor in its bilateral relations with the establishment of the customs union with the Eurasian Economic Union. As a matter of fact, for example, the proposals of Türkiye to sign a Service Trade and Investment Agreement in the Protocols of the Joint Economic Commission meeting with Kazakhstan were left unanswered by the Kazakh side.<sup>36</sup>

Although the Joint Economic Commission Meeting was not held between Türkiye and Kyrgyzstan after Kyrgyzstan's membership to the Eurasian Economic Union, it would not be surprising that Kyrgyzstan, with its membership in the Eurasian Economic Union, would respond in the same direction as Kazakhstan to a proposal that could be in this direction. In fact, it is a fact that the EAEU membership of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan weakened Türkiye's economic and trade diplomacy tools, but it seems that there is no obstacle for revitalizing these tools directly in parallel with political relations.

However, considering that it is necessary to stay within the framework of this study, it would be beneficial to focus on the influence of various elements of trade diplomacy. Trade diplomacy tools are used for the purposes of harmonizing trade in services, investments and mutual tax regulations as well as trade in goods. Ensuring that the flow of trade stays within the general rules of the economy can also be counted as a success in terms of trade diplomacy. As a matter of fact, the sanctions imposed by Russia in the relations between Russia and Türkiye, which deteriorated after the aircraft crisis in 2015, directly affected the economic and trade relations. (Demir, 2015, p. 4) In the said period, the use of trade diplomacy tools was also restricted. However, after the crisis, even though no sanctions were lifted yet, the first mechanism that was

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<sup>36</sup> Türkiye-Kazakhstan JEC 9th Term Meeting Protocol, Official Gazette no: 29988 dated on February 23, 2017



put into action was the Joint Economic Commission mechanism. (Anadolu Ajansı, 2016) This shows the importance of using trade diplomacy tools in times of crisis.

In the form of Türkiye's relationship with the Turkic states, trade and the mechanisms for the development of trade have progressed as a whole with political relations. In this context, trade diplomacy tools have played an important role in relations with the Turkic states, and the Joint Economic Commission Protocols, which go far beyond the scope of trade and economy, have become the main policy documents that determine Türkiye's agenda with these countries on a bilateral basis. These texts have emerged as documents that contain economic issues such as bilateral trade, investments, cooperation in the field of industry, cooperation in the field of agriculture, which are directly related to economic and commercial relations, as well as many subjects that are outside the economic and commercial agenda such as education, culture, sports, environment and urban affairs.

#### **4.2.5. Other Legal Mechanisms with Türkiye**

In addition to the Joint Economic Commission, infrastructure agreements with more technical and more specific legal frameworks such as customs cooperation agreements, mutual promotion and protection agreements of investments, agreements for the prevention of double taxation, which were signed with these countries, have also been important tools of trade diplomacy.

The agreements that constitute the infrastructure regarding the trade that Türkiye has signed with the Central Asian Turkic states are given in the table below. Since the Joint Economic Commission mechanism will be included separately, agreements establishing the said mechanism are excluded in this table.

Table 11: Agreements on establishing infrastructure for trade relations

Name of the Country	Name of the Agreement	Date of Signing
Azerbaijan	Protocol on Cooperation and Mutual Assistance in the Field of Customs	9-Feb-1994
	Regulation of the Joint Customs Committee	15-Jan-2015
	Agreement on the Establishment of a Preliminary Information Exchange System on Transit Transportation by Road	19-Jul-2017
	Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Republic of Türkiye and the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the Establishment of a Simplified Customs Line	11-Oct-2019
	Agreement on Prevention of Double Taxation	9-Feb-1994
	Türkiye-Azerbaijan Long-Term Economic and Commercial Cooperation Program and Execution Plan	6-Nov-2007
	Partnership and Cooperation Agreement	6-Nov-2007
	Agreement on Mutual Promotion and Protection of Investments	25-Oct-2011
	Agreement on the Establishment of a Preliminary Information Exchange System on Transit Transportation by Road	19-Jul-2017
	Preferential Trade Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Türkiye and the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan	25-Feb-2020
Kazakhstan	Agreement on Mutual Administrative Assistance and Cooperation in Customs Matters	22-May-2003
	Trade and Economic Technical Cooperation Agreement	10-Sep-1997
	Agreement on Mutual Administrative Assistance and Cooperation in Customs Matters	22-May-2003

table cont'd

	Agreement on Mutual Promotion and Protection of Investments	1-May-1992
	Agreement on Prevention of Double Taxation	15-Aug-1995
	Long Term Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreement	22-May-2003
	Long Term Trade and Economic Cooperation Program and Execution Plan	13-Dec-2007
	Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Customs and Trade of the Republic of Türkiye and the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Kazakhstan on the Establishment of a Joint Customs Committee	23-Dec-2017
	JEC XI. Term Meeting Protocol and Action Plan	11-Nov-2019
	New Synergy Joint Economy Program 2019-2020 Action Plan	11-Nov-2019
Kyrgyzstan	Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreement	24-Oct-1997
	Agreement on Mutual Administrative Assistance and Cooperation in Customs Matters	14-Apr-1998
	Agreement on Prevention of Double Taxation	2-Jul-1999
	Agreement on Mutual Promotion and Protection of Investments	9-Apr-2018
	Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Republic of Türkiye and the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic on the Establishment of the Joint Customs Council	1-Sep-2018
	9th Term Protocol of the Joint Economic Commission	22-Nov-2019
Uzbekistan	Agreement on Mutual Promotion and Protection of Investments	25-Oct-2017
	Agreement on Prevention of Double Taxation	25-Oct-2017
	Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreement	13-Apr-1998
	Agreement on Mutual Administrative Assistance and Cooperation in Customs Matters	18-Nov-1997

*table cont'd*

Turkmenistan	Agreement on Mutual Administrative Assistance and Cooperation in Customs Matters	28-Dec-1997
	Agreement on Mutual Promotion and Protection of Investments	2-May-1992
	Agreement on Prevention of Double Taxation	17-Aug-1995
	Agreement on Commercial and Economic Cooperation	24-Mar-2008
	Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Türkiye and the Government of Turkmenistan on the Expansion and Deepening of Commercial and Economic Cooperation	7-Nov-2014

Source: Republic of Türkiye, Ministry of Trade

The cooperation mechanisms that Türkiye has developed with the Central Asian countries have been established with the Agreement on Commercial and Economic Cooperation signed as a priority or with the agreements on the establishment of the Joint Economic Commission, which was formed with a founding agreement text signed as a continuation of these Agreements.

While the economic integration efforts of the Russian Federation and the Central Asian states continued after the Soviet Union, Türkiye, which has common historical and cultural ties with those states, aimed to develop special commercial and economic relations. These efforts were long-term, and concrete steps were taken in this process, up to the signing of a preferential trade agreement with Azerbaijan. Bilateral mechanisms have been established with each Central Asian country of a similar nature, often with almost identical texts of treaties. The most striking and the most stable of these mechanisms has been the Joint Economic Commission mechanisms. This mechanism, which was established with some countries under different names, continues its vitality as a concrete mechanism where bilateral trade and economic relations are discussed in the widest extent and issues such as education and health that are not directly related to trade are also on the agenda from time to time.

In this context, it is useful to examine the agreements listed above in terms of countries. While examining these agreements, agreements that establish a mechanism in terms of trade diplomacy or that are the basis for establishing a mechanism will be discussed. For this reason, more technical and detailed agreement texts such as customs cooperation agreements, mutual promotion and protection agreements of investments, double taxation agreements will be excluded from the scope of this study, Agreements on Commercial and Economic Cooperation and agreements establishing the infrastructure for the establishment of a Joint Economic Commission will be examined.

#### **4.2. Material and Ideational Aspects of Türkiye's trade diplomacy with Turkic states**

The most important factor determining the bilateral and multilateral relations between Türkiye and the Turkic states is the "brotherhood" discourse, which is expressed at the highest level among these countries and manifests itself in all areas of relations.

The word "brotherhood" is chosen to define Türkiye's attitude towards Turkic states, since it has an official place in Türkiye's Ministry of Foreign Affairs' and Organization of Turkic States' declarations and English language websites<sup>37</sup>. This discourse also manifests itself in the functioning of bilateral and multilateral trade and economic mechanisms, in the high-level visits realized within the framework of these mechanisms, and in the official agreement texts that emerged as a result of these mechanisms. This approach has gone beyond being an approach adopted unilaterally by Türkiye and has turned into a mutually adopted identity construction in relations with these countries. As will be seen in the following sections, although the economic results of the economic and commercial cooperation mechanisms, including the Preferential Trade Agreements established between Türkiye and the Turkic states, are far from creating a surplus in favor of Türkiye from time to time, Türkiye has not ceased to be the driving force of these mechanisms. It is not possible to explain with economic realism the signing of a preferential trade agreement, including these

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<sup>37</sup> For the examples of use of brotherhood or brotherly relations terminology: <https://www.turkkon.org/en/haberler/ots-secretary-general-congratulates-he-kassym-jomart-tokayev-on-the-convincing-victory-in-the-early-presidential-elections-2691> Accessed on December 5, 2022; [https://www.mfa.gov.tr/no\\_-347\\_-kazakistan-da-duzenlenen-erken-cumhurbaskanligi-secimleri-hk.en.mfa](https://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_-347_-kazakistan-da-duzenlenen-erken-cumhurbaskanligi-secimleri-hk.en.mfa) Accessed on December 5, 2022

products, with countries that produce products that rival their own products. Such an approach can only be explained by the search for a mutually constructed common welfare, and it is precisely at this point that the social constructivism expressed in this thesis becomes meaningful.

As stated in the first chapter, the brotherhood discourse expressed by President Turgut Özal since Türkiye gained independence in 1992 has been an approach adopted by high level government officials at all levels since then. President of Türkiye Turgut Özal, in his speech within the scope of the "Summit of Heads of State of the Turkic states", the first of which was held in Ankara between 30-31 October 1992 with the participation of Türkiye, Azerbaijan and other Turkic states (Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan), regarding the six participating countries, used the phrase "brother states". He used the same expression during his visit to Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan on April 4-15, 1993. (Eren, 2022, pp. 68, 74) In his study, in which he made a content analysis of Özal's 19 speeches on the Turkic states, Eren referred to the concept of brotherhood by Özal 8 times regarding these countries; He points out that he emphasized bond/convergence/relationship 20 times. (Eren, 2022, p. 78)

Similarly, the 9th President of Türkiye, Süleyman Demirel, also emphasized brotherhood in his speech at the Friendship, Brotherhood and Cooperation Congress of Turkic states and Communities held in Antalya on March 21-23, 1993. (Limon, 2022, p. 18). In fact, the aforementioned Friendship, Brotherhood and Cooperation Congress of Turkic states and Communities was established in 1993 as a structure where the brotherhood ties between Türkiye and the Turkic states were institutionalized, and the Turkic Council (then Organization of the Turkic states) was established as a result of these summits. (Yalçınkaya, 2010, p. 12)

On the other hand, President Süleyman Demirel's eager and positive policy attitude towards Central Asian Turkic States within cultural and economic perspective and his famous use of "Turkic world from the Adriatic to the Chinese Wall" discourse made Russia cautious about Türkiye's attitude towards Central Asia. However, Demirel managed keeping Türkiye's relations with Turkic world in "brotherly" level, while assuring Russia that this attitude did not mean any geostrategic intentions which would

pose a threat against Russia. (Kürkçü, 2019, p. 67) Demirel frequently emphasized brotherhood in his contacts and speeches with these countries, and addressed the heads of state and senior executives of these countries as "my brother". As a matter of fact, Demirel used the following expressions in his speech at the 6th Summit Meeting of the Heads of State of Turkish-Speaking Countries: (Cumhurbaşkanı Sayın Süleyman Demirel'in Türkçe Konuşan Ülkeler Devlet Başkanları VI. Zirve Toplantısı'nda Yaptıkları Konuşma, 2000)

Dear brother, President of Azerbaijan, Heydar Aliyev, Dear Brother, President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, Dear Brother, President of Kyrgyzstan, Askar Akayev, Dear Brother President of the Supreme Assembly of Uzbekistan, Erkin Khalilov, Dear Brother, Speaker of the Assembly of Turkmenistan, Sahat Muradov

My Dear Brothers,

On the occasion of the 6th Summit of Heads of State of Turkish-Speaking States , I am very happy to be with you once again in the unique city of Baku, the star of the Caspian, which is one of the most important cultural, political and commercial centers of our common civilization.

First of all, on behalf of myself and the Turkish delegation, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks and gratitude to my dear brother President Heydar Aliyev and the brotherly people of Azerbaijan, who host the summit..

.....

My Dear Brothers,

The summit of Turkish-speaking states, which is held for the sixth time, contributes to the strengthening of the unity and solidarity of border countries that share the same history and culture and speak the same language, albeit with different dialects, for the 21st century, and enables them to exchange views on developments that concern their regions and the world.(translated from Turkish by the author) (Cumhurbaşkanı Sayın Süleyman Demirel'in Türkçe Konuşan Ülkeler Devlet Başkanları VI. Zirve Toplantısı'nda Yaptıkları Konuşma, 2000)

The successor of Mr. Demirel, Ahmet Necdet Sezer also emphasized brotherhood in his speeches. Although he did not address each and every head of state as "my brother" by name as Mr. Demirel did, Mr. Sezer also did not hesitate to describe the Turkic states as "brother countries". In the opening speech of the 7th Summit of Heads of State of Turkic Speaking Countries, Sezer used the following expressions: (T.C: Cumhurbaşkanlığı, 2001)

...I respectfully greet the leaders of the Turkic World, the esteemed Presidents of the brother countries and their delegations whom we host in Istanbul for this summit meeting, and welcome them to our country.

...As friendly and brother states, we review regional and international issues at these summit meetings held in a cordial atmosphere, share our evaluations on issues such as strengthening our relations and cooperation, accelerating our economic and social development, reinforcing peace and stability in our region, and discuss possible measures and steps that can be taken.

...We know that all the Presidents with whom we have the honor of being here today share the will and will necessary to raise the cooperation between our countries and our ties of friendship and brotherhood, which derive their strength from history, to higher levels.

On this solid foundation, we sincerely believe that our Seventh Summit meeting and the meetings we will hold during this Summit in the future will contribute to the development of friendship and brotherhood between our countries within the framework of equal relations, and to the strengthening of peace and stability in our region.. (translated from Turkish by the author) (T.C: Cumhurbaşkanlığı, 2001)

This brotherhood rhetoric with Turkic World found its ground in many speeches made by Mr. Sezer from the beginning of his office in 2000 to the end in 2007. In his press statement on the occasion of Nevruz on March 2007, he also made his emphasize on “brother states and communities”, mentioning that the Nevruz is a common celebration and value for Turkic culture and Turkic World for welcoming spring. (Nevruz mesajı, 2007)

Abdullah Gül, the 11<sup>th</sup> President of Türkiye also used that “brotherhood” discourse in many occasions. In his speech at Turkish-Kazakh Business Forum on October 23, 2010, Mr. Gül mentioned that a historical turning point has been achieved by signing Strategic Partnership Agreement between Türkiye and Kazakhstan. (Gül, 2009)

As you know, a historical event took place in Ankara yesterday and we signed the Strategic Cooperation Agreement between Türkiye and Kazakhstan together. Before this agreement was signed, as Mr. Nazarbayev said, we were actually acting as strategic partners. Because we are two brother countries. We are two separate parts of one nation. Our ancestral homeland is Kazakhstan. If we left there and came here, we have never forgotten our ancestral homeland. .... Recently I have made two visits, and on both visits I have received a great deal of hospitality. For this reason, I would like to thank you once again. (translated from Turkish by the author) (Gül, 2009)

Abdullah Gül has adopted this rhetoric of brotherhood as the common discourse of the



business world. As a matter of fact, in his speech at the same business forum, it is seen that he defined the relationship between businesspeople as a brotherhood relationship.

...Mr. President Nazarbayev, when I look at this community, I see Türkiye's distinguished before me. I see the owners of very large companies whose successes have spread not only in Türkiye but also outside of Türkiye. All of them want to do more business with their Kazakh brothers, to be together more, to do business together not only in Türkiye or Kazakhstan, but also in third countries. We are here to encourage you, to do more business. The more work you do, the happier we will be. We build that infrastructure. (translated from Turkish by the author) (Gül, 2009)

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, 12<sup>th</sup> President of Türkiye has been using strongly that brotherhood rhetoric with Turkic states, since the beginning of his office as the Prime Minister in 2003. While Erdogan determined the first framework of his view on relations with the Turkic states at the 1st Summit Meeting of the Eurasian Chambers of Commerce and Industry on April 10, 2003, he started his speech as follows: (Erdoğan R. T., 2019, p. 16)

“Honorable Ministers, Honorable Presidents, Honorable Guests, I greet you all with regards and respect. I would like to begin my speech by expressing my pleasure to see the valuable private sector representatives of our friendly and brotherly countries in my country...

...The relations between Türkiye and the Central Asian and Caucasian countries constitute the building blocks of the unity of history, culture and destiny, which not only tells the past and present of this geography, but also sheds light on the future of a great civilization... Since there are such strong and deep historical ties between our people, no power, no hindrance will have the ability to damage “our friendship, brotherhood and eternal unity. (Erdoğan R. T., 2019, p. 16)

In this speech, Erdogan emphasized that trade and economic relations are the most important issue between brotherly countries and gave an important indication about his future vision.

... At this point, I believe that the most important issue is making a long-term projection of our commercial and economic relations. In order to make a long-term projection of the commercial and economic relations between our countries and to develop the relations within the framework of a strategy, both the political and economic foundations must be determined clearly from this day. (Erdoğan R. T., 2019, p. 16)

Since that date, Erdogan has persistently maintained the rhetoric of brotherhood in all

his visits to these countries and receiving from them, and has shaped the framework of his speeches based on this concept. This discourse continued at the joint press conference he held with the Prime Minister of Kyrgyzstan Nikolay Tanayev on May 14, 2003, and at the DEIK Turkish-Kazakh Business Council dinner held on May 21, 2003, and he used the emphasis of brotherhood in all his subsequent contacts.. (Erdoğan R. T., 2019, pp. 37, 40) Erdogan's visit to Uzbekistan on 19 December 2003 was an important initiative in terms of relations with this country. In his rhetoric there, Erdogan did not hesitate to emphasize brotherhood, as he did in other Turkic states.. (Erdoğan R. T., 2019, p. 137)

It is possible to see that the emphasis on brotherhood and the emphasis on economic and commercial relations complement each other in Erdogan's speeches after he became President in 2014. It is seen that during his visit to Kazakhstan on April 16, 2015, he used the same address as "My Dear Brother", which Süleyman Demirel used in his address to the President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbaev. In his speech, he touched upon the economic and commercial relations immediately after the strategic partnership between the two countries. (Erdoğan R. T., 2015)

It is noteworthy that Erdogan referred to both brotherhood and the economic integration of the Turkic states, especially in his speeches at the Turkic Council summit meetings. The 7th Summit of the Turkic Council, held in Baku on October 15, 2019, has a special importance especially in terms of Uzbekistan's participation as a member of the Turkic Council. In his speech here, Erdogan used the expression "my dear brother" regarding President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev, and stated that he wanted the Turkic Council to have an observer status before the United Nations General Assembly and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and that he supported the proposal to establish a joint fund in the Turkic world. This shows that he builds a direct structure between economic and commercial relations and the discourse of brotherhood. In order to support this, he also refers to the need to develop trade in local currencies among Turkic Council member countries. Another point that draws attention in Erdogan's speech at the Summit is that while he used the phrase "my brother" for President of Azerbaijan Aliev and President of Uzbekistan Mirzioev, he chose a more cautious expression for Hungarian Prime Minister Victor Orban, who attended the Summit, and used the phrase "my dear friend". (Erdoğan R. T., 2019)

This brotherhood rhetoric of the Presidents of Türkiye has not remained one-sided, but has also been adopted by the leaders of the Turkic states. Yılmaz, in his study where he analyzes the speeches of Nursultan Nazarbayev, the first President of Kazakhstan after independence, during his meetings with the Presidents of the Republic of Türkiye at various times, points out that Nazarbayev emphasized the concept of brotherhood intensely, albeit with varying weights. (Yılmaz S. , 2017, p. 503)

The discourse of brotherhood has also been a prominent element in Türkiye's relations with Kyrgyzstan. After being recognized by Türkiye, President of Kyrgyzstan Askar Akayev made his first official visit to Türkiye between 22-26 December 1991 and signed a series of cooperation agreements during this visit. (Yılmaz A. N., 2021, p. 284) Akayev stated that they expect support from Turkey in many areas during the visit. Akayev likened Türkiye to the "morning star", matching Turkey's role as a guide and elder brother in the region. (Yılmaz A. N., 2021, p. 284)

In the first stage of relations with Uzbekistan, it is possible to see the effects of this mutual brotherhood discourse. Although the political conjuncture prevented this discourse from being reflected in the relations in the following stages, we observe that this brotherhood discourse has moved to a very advanced stage in the rapprochement that has taken place since 2017. President of Uzbekistan, Mr. Mirziyoyev also adopted that discourse in his relations with Türkiye, as it is discussed in the relevant chapter<sup>38</sup>.

Türkiye's brotherhood discourse towards the Turkic states has not been limited to being used only by politicians. The emphasis in academic articles on the Turkic states that Türkiye and these countries are "brother" countries has been a style of discourse pointed out by scholars as well.

Bagırzade states that the economic projects based on the partnership of Azerbaijan and Türkiye, the two important brotherly countries of the Black Sea and Caspian basins, have a great strategic importance not only for the economic development of the two countries, but also for the realization of the economic potential of the countries in the region and their integration into the world economy. (Bağırzade, 2014, p. 6) Similarly,

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<sup>38</sup> <https://brightuzbekistan.uz/en/we-have-the-same-historical-roots-and-the-same-aspirations-today-shavkat-mirziyoyev/> Accessed on December 5, 2022.

Askerzade underlines that the bilateral and multilateral relations between the two neighboring countries, while serving the interests of the two brotherly peoples, are of great importance in terms of ensuring peace and stability in the world and in our region. (Askerzade, 2009, p. 1) Aydın also states that the relations between Türkiye and Azerbaijan are defined as brotherly relations at the level of both states and peoples. (Aydın U. , 2018, p. 39) In their analysis on Türkiye and Kazakhstan's economic complementarity, Şimşek, Canaltay and Şimşek mention that underline that Türkiye and Kazakhstan are two leading brotherly countries with their strong geoeconomic potential and opportunities, especially with their young, dynamic and well-educated populations and geostrategic positions. (Şimşek, Canaltay, & Şimşek, 2017, p. 25)

Yılmaz states that Kazakhstan has adopted the discourse of a brotherly country with respect to Türkiye. (Yılmaz S. , 2017, p. 817) Bostancı and Lüleci also draw attention to the emphasis on brotherhood in the relations between Türkiye and Kazakhstan. (Bostancı & Lüleci, 2019) In his doctoral thesis on the image of Türkiye in Kazakhstan, Ametbek states that although the concept of "brother" for Türkiye was not included in the official documents of Kazakhstan, this expression was used in the discourses of President Nazarbayev and senior executives, and that there was a strong image of Türkiye as a friend and partner in the Kazakh official point of view. (Ametbek, 2015, p. 10) Beylur also describes the countries in the former Soviet geography as sister countries for Türkiye. (Beylur, 2012, p. 47) While mentioning about the relations between Turkmenistan and Türkiye, Böke states that there a special type of relations based on balanced, mutual respect and cooperation between two brotherly countries and peoples who share a common history, language, religion and culture, on the basis of "One Nation, Two States". (Böke, 2021, p. 108) Regarding the relations between Türkiye and Uzbekistan, Gürçam states that Türkiye sees Uzbekistan as a brother country. (Gürçam, 2021, p. 78)

Türkiye's rhetoric of brotherhood towards the Turkic states, as stated above, did not remain only as a rhetoric expressed at the political level, but also showed its influence in the trade diplomacy activities carried out by Türkiye with these countries. The discourses used by the Ministers of Economy and Trade of Türkiye in their contacts with the relevant countries are analyzed in detail in the relevant sections.

## CHAPTER 5

### TÜRKİYE’S TRADE DIPLOMACY MECHANISMS WITH AZERBAIJAN

Political relations between Türkiye and Azerbaijan were built in a positive manner after Azerbaijan’s independence from Soviet Union. Two countries began to act as allies. (Öztarsu, 2011, p. 5) In the first years of the independence, nationalist discourse adopted by President Abulfaz Elchibey found a reflection from Türkiye side and in that period, even high level officials from both countries defined the relations between the two countries as “one nation, two states” in their official statements. Türkiye was the first country who recognized Azerbaijan’s independence after its declaration on August 30<sup>th</sup>, 1991. (T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı, 2021) Türkiye’s president Suleyman Demirel triggered the international community on taking action against Armenian aggression during Hodjali massacre as a result of high encouragement of the Turkish public on making an intervention over Armenia. This solidarity identified the shape of the relations afterwards. The relations between the two countries may be defined as a sui generis relations, due to its unique structure in international relations literature, it has rational elements, as well as high emotional closeness between the societies of the both sides. On the other hand, Türkiye’s preference on inviting international community for taking action instead of taking a direct military involvement provided conducting a balanced relationship with Russia in the region. Türkiye did not irritate Russia with taking any direct action. However, Elchibey’s stepping down as a result of a coup and Heydar Aliev’s taking the office met with a negative reaction among Turkish people and politicians at first. On the other hand, both sides managed to conduct the relations in the same manner as it was in Elchibey era in a very short time. (Yesevi & Tiftikcigil, 2015, p. 28) Hence the discourse of one nation two states continued to be at the center in statements of officials. The personal friendship developed between Aliev and Demirel contributed to that rapid transformation.

Basic agendas between the two countries have been the military partnership which emerged as a result of Karabagh problem and Armenian aggression, cooperation on energy and trade and economic cooperation. This thesis' focus is on trade and economic relations, therefore, in the beginning it is important to dwell upon the structure of Azerbaijan's economy after its independence.

### **5.1 Economic Outlook of Azerbaijan**

Azerbaijan had a complex political outlook in the first years of its independence. The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict with Armenia since the first years of independence has become the most critical issue for Azerbaijan and has been the most important factor shaping its foreign and domestic policy. (Khalilzada, 2019, p. 176) Abulfaz Elchibey, the first President of Azerbaijan after independence, was able to maintain this duty for a very short period of time and had to leave the Presidency as a result of the coup led by Heydar Aliyev. (Rookwood, 2022, p. 849)

After Elchibey, Armenia gained a significant superiority in Karabakh and strengthened its occupying position in Azerbaijani lands. (Nesirova, 2022, p. 260) This situation was the beginning of a painful process economically and politically for Aliyev, who came to power after Elchibey, and Aliyev aimed to get out of this situation by increasing the oil revenues of the country. The main element of the negotiations with Western countries has been oil and this has started an important economic transformation for Azerbaijan. (Akhundzada, 2020) In this process, Azerbaijan turned its direction to the west and started to do oil trade with western countries. In 1998, with Aliyev's decision to support the construction of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline, which will transport Baku oil to Türkiye via Georgia, a new route was determined for Azerbaijani oil. (Mikail, 2019, p. 110)

Looking at the general state of the economy of Azerbaijan since its independence, it is seen that the energy sector is the main output of the economy. Azerbaijan, which had a GDP of 1.5 billion dollars in 1992, reached the highest GDP figure in the last 28 years in 2014. (Figure 25: Azerbaijan's GDP (1992-2020). This situation is in parallel

with the volatility in world oil prices. Indeed, as can be seen from the table

The year was a year in which world oil prices were high, and this had a positive impact on the country's economy (Figure 26: World Oil Prices (1992-2022)) The course of Azerbaijan's GDP graph and the graph of the course of oil prices are partially parallel to each other. However, the negative impact of the fall in oil prices on Azerbaijan's GDP is much more apparent. The sharp decline in oil prices after 2014 showed itself as a negative growth in the Azerbaijani economy.

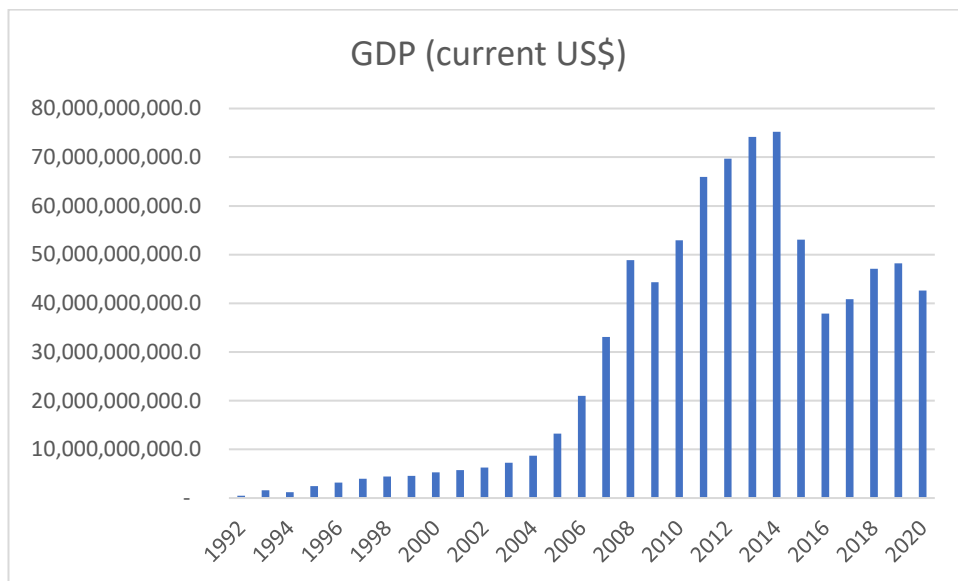


Figure 25: Azerbaijan's GDP (1992-2020)

Source: Created by author based on data retrieved from World Bank

The fact that the economy is highly dependent on natural resources has provided a serious advantage for Azerbaijan in the transformation process. On the other hand, this situation has also caused countries that are rich in natural resources to be affected by the Dutch Disease situation in which they generally fall. As a result of this situation, the development of industries that can produce added value, especially the manufacturing industry, has been prevented in the country. Dutch disease occurs when there is an obvious shift in favor of one sector or more sectors and it ends up with an increase in the price levels of non-tradable goods. In this case, real prices in developing sectors are appreciated as well as the real effective exchange rates, on the other hand, manufacturing goes down due to the lack in industry and at the end, the competition

among the rival sectors exhaust. (Niftiyev, 2020, p. 33) The situation in Azerbaijan reflects exactly this situation. Especially the extreme price increases in oil prices between 2008 and 2011 enabled the country to earn a serious income, but as a result, the national currency caused a chronic overvaluation, which dealt a significant blow to the progress of other sectors in the country, especially the manufacturing industry.

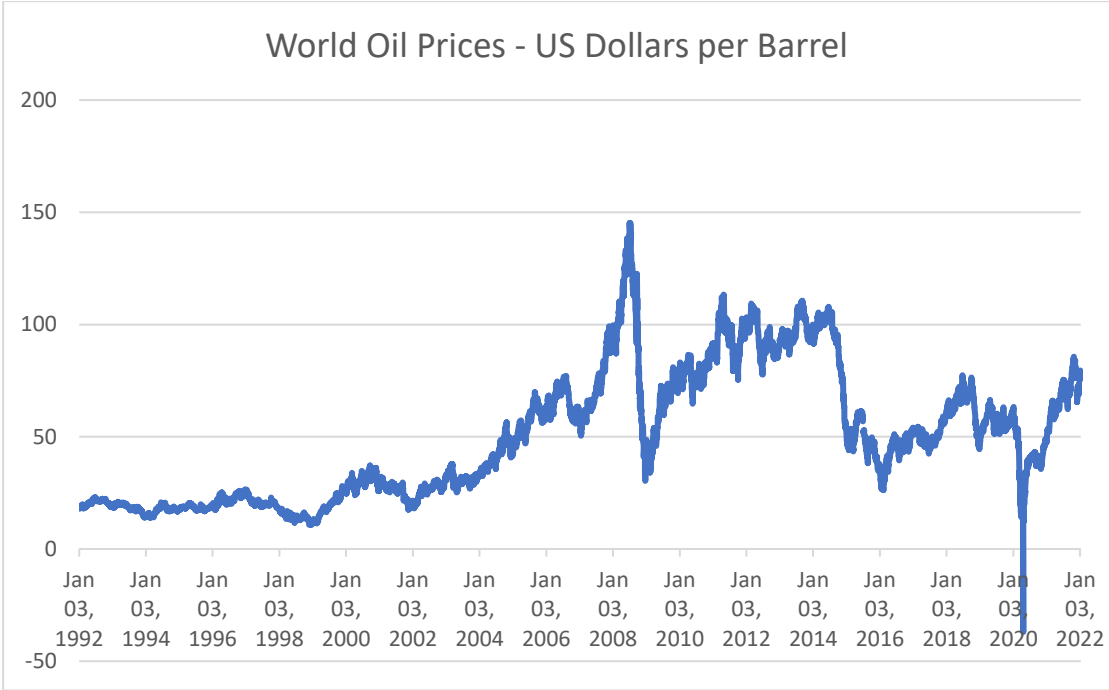


Figure 26: World Oil Prices (1992-2022)

Source: Based on data retrieved from eia.gov

In fact, there are different opinions about whether the problem in the Azerbaijani economy is a resource curse or a Dutch disease. The resource curse was introduced by Sachs and Warner and is based on the assumption that abundance of natural resources is a disadvantage for economic performance. (Sachs & Warner, 1995) Dutch Disease, on the other hand, is defined as the contraction experienced in the production and export of other products with commercial value as a result of the prosperity provided by the increase in exports for a particular product. (Corden & Neary, 1982) The relationship between these two definitions is a widely discussed discussion in the economics literature and is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, it is noteworthy that the rapid increase in welfare experienced in the country as a result of high oil prices, especially in 2011, did not bring with it a product variety in the direction of



export. In this respect, the view that Azerbaijan has an economic view that can be explained by both resource curse and Dutch Disease will be adopted in this thesis.

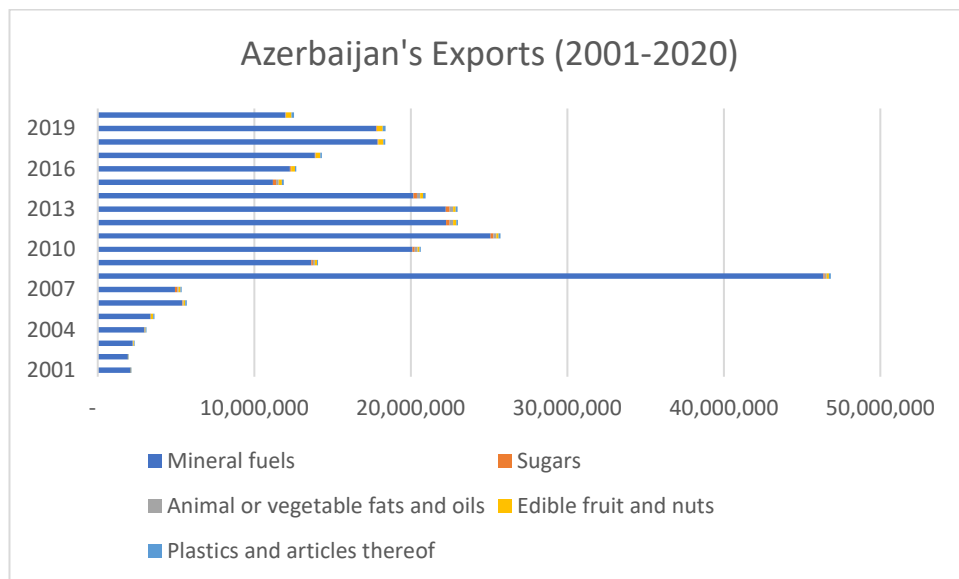


Figure 27: Azerbaijan's exports (2001-2020)

Source: Based on data retrieved from Trademap, 2022

As a matter of fact, when the composition of Azerbaijan's exports between the years 2001-2020 is examined, this situation will be seen more clearly. (Figure 27: Azerbaijan's exports (2001-2020)). The weight of mineral fuels, which is the most important export item of Azerbaijan, in exports has always been preserved, besides, no product that can be considered as a second product has been added.

Despite this situation, which directly affects the production structure of the country, a significant growth has been achieved in the country, especially since 2005. In the aforementioned year, a 34.5% GDP growth was experienced in the country.

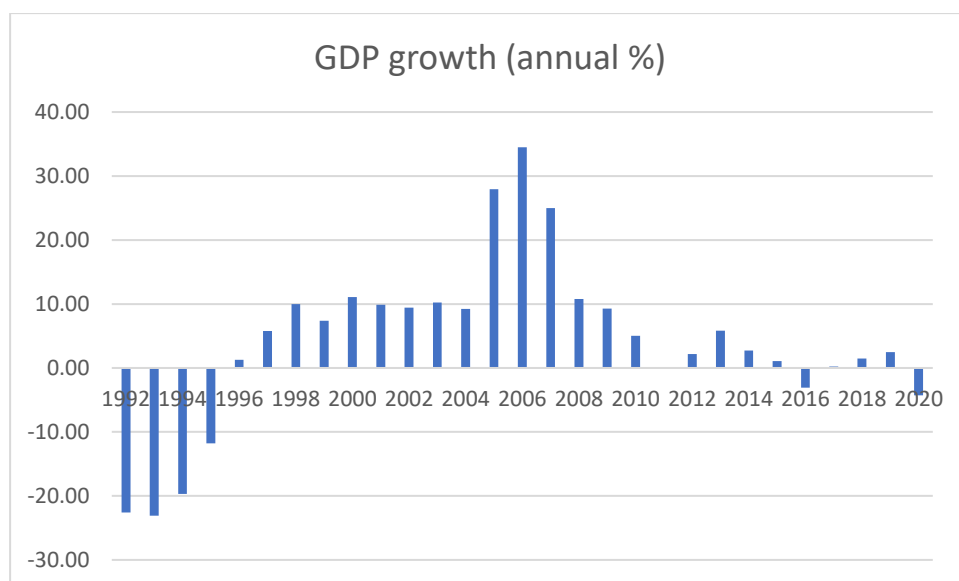


Figure 28: GDP Growth (Annual %)

Source: World Bank, 2022

The economic policies experienced in the country after independence are summarized in the table below. As can be seen here, the main investment of Azerbaijan in the period from independence to today has been in the fields of finding new oil fields, developing the oil industry, and attracting foreign investments to the country for the oil industry. Although reforms and decisions have been taken to liberate the economy, there has been no fundamental change in the country's production structure.

Table 12: Azerbaijan's Economic Transformation after Independence

	<b>Main Developments</b>	<b>Reforms and Decisions</b>
<i>1<sup>st</sup> period after independence 1991-1994</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Loss of the common market</li> <li>– High unemployment and inflation</li> <li>– Political instability</li> <li>– War with Armenia and loss of 20% of territories</li> <li>– Decrease in production</li> <li>– Deficit in state budget and shortcomings from tax collections.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Laws on private property, foreign direct investments, and execution-bankruptcy were enacted</li> <li>– Manat became national currency</li> <li>– Ceasefire with Armenia</li> <li>– Trade liberalization and privatization</li> </ul>

*table cont'd*

<p><i>2<sup>nd</sup> period after independence 1995-2003</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The contract of the century that attracted huge Foreign Direct Investments on the oil and gas industry</li> <li>– Agricultural lands were rapidly privatized and excluded from taxes (with the exception of land tax);</li> <li>– Infrastructural modernization.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– State Program on Poverty Reduction was adopted;</li> <li>– Various laws such as Land Reform and Public Procurement;</li> <li>– Tax code.</li> </ul>
<p><i>3<sup>rd</sup> period after independence (from 2003)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The oil extraction, refinery, chemical industry, petrochemical and electricity industry gained big share in the economy;</li> <li>– Reconstruction of the energy sector via the privatization;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The State Program on the Socio-Economic Development of Regions.</li> </ul>

Source: (Niftiyev, 2020, p. 42)

In this context, it is seen that sectors other than the energy sector do not play a fundamental role in Azerbaijan's commercial and economic relations. As a result of this, it is understandable that Azerbaijan has not developed trade diplomacy tools with neighboring and surrounding countries. At this point, as will be seen in prevailing sections, the mechanisms developed and the Preferential Trade Agreement signed with Türkiye mean a completely new concept for Azerbaijan.

The fact that Azerbaijan was able to take further steps in the Karabakh conflict by 2021 also showed that the country was able to develop its defense infrastructure as a result of the steps taken in the economy, albeit based on the oil sector. While it is seen that Türkiye's political support plays an important role here, it also shows the transformation experienced in the country in the 20-year period after independence.

## 5.2 Economic and Trade Relations Between Türkiye and Azerbaijan

The relations between Türkiye and Azerbaijan, especially with the development of the Karabakh issue, have progressed on a very different path from the relations with other Central Asian countries. Türkiye not only gave economic development support to the country, but also there have been close military cooperation in terms of training, joint exercises and arms sales. (Yavuz & Huseynov, 2020)

On the trade side, both sides established active trade diplomacy mechanisms over the years. The most important and tangible mechanism was established by signing of the Preferential Trade Agreement on 2020. It was the first free trade regime for Azerbaijan other than the regime established among the CIS states. It is also important for Türkiye since it is the first preferential regime of Türkiye with Turkic states, with whom Türkiye has been making many attempts to do so. The mechanisms regarding trade diplomacy between the two countries are shown in Table 13.

*Table 13: Türkiye-Azerbaijan Trade Agreements*

<b>Name of the Agreement</b>	<b>Date of Signing</b>	<b>Official Gazette Date and Number</b>
Agreement on Trade and Economic Cooperation between the Republic of Türkiye and the Republic of Azerbaijan	<b>2.11.1992</b>	<b>23.01.1993 / 21474</b>
Agreement on Prevention of Double Taxation	9.02.1994	<b>27.06.1997 / 23032</b>
Türkiye-Azerbaijan Long-Term Economic and Commercial Cooperation Program and Execution Plan	6.11.2007	<b>20.01.2012 / 28179</b>
Long Term Economic and Commercial Cooperation Agreement	13.4.2004	4.4.2005 / 25776
Partnership and Cooperation Agreement	6.11.2007	<b>27.04.2013 / 28630</b>
Agreement on Mutual Promotion and Protection of Investments	25.10.2011	<b>02.05.2013 / 28635</b>
8th Term Protocol of the Joint Economic Commission between the Republic of Türkiye and the Republic of Azerbaijan and the 1st Action Plan	16.09.2019	<b>03.01.2020 / 30997</b>
Preferential Trade Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Türkiye and the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan	25.02.2020	19.01.2021 / 31369

table cont'd

8th Term Protocol of the Joint Economic Commission between the Republic of Türkiye and the Republic of Azerbaijan	19.02.2021	Not published yet
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Source: Republic of Türkiye, Ministry of Trade

Those mechanism will be examined in details. Before that, it is necessary to overview the structure of trade between the two countries by years after the independence of Azerbaijan.

### 5.2.1 Bilateral Trade

Looking at the structure of trade between Türkiye and Azerbaijan, it is seen that Türkiye mainly imports mineral fuels, aluminum and cotton from Azerbaijan. Machinery, electrical equipment, iron and steel and vehicles are the leading products in Azerbaijan's import from Türkiye. The point that draws attention here is when the trade structure between 2001 and 2020 is examined, it is seen that there is no significant change in terms of product diversity in the trade between the two countries.

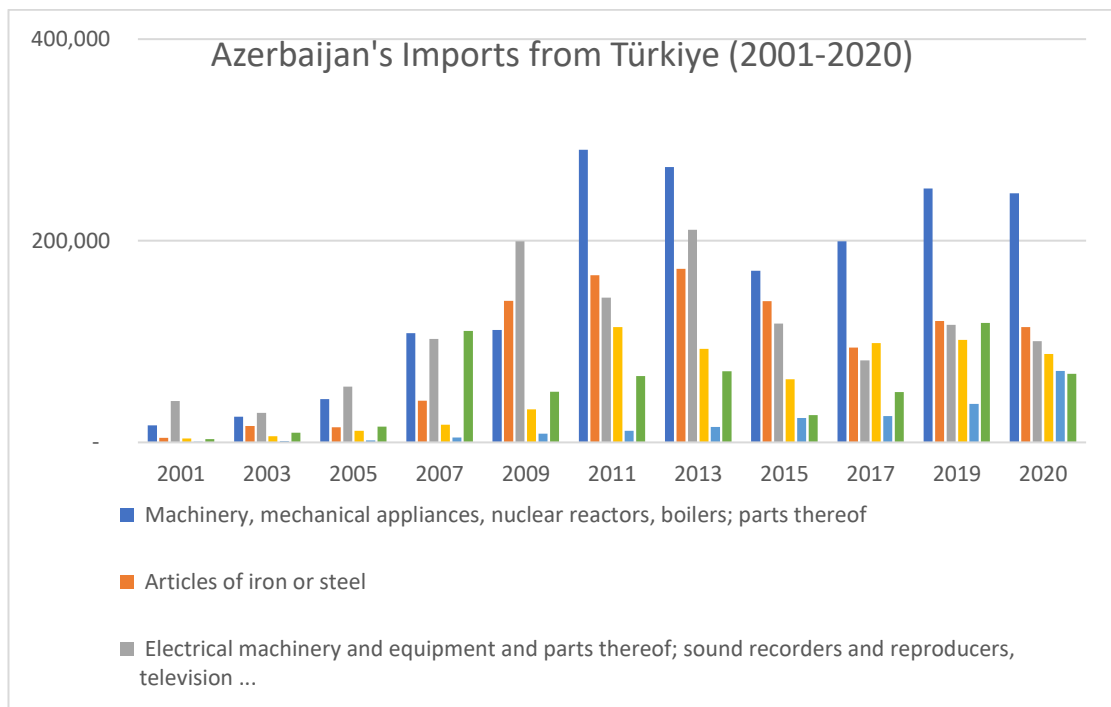


Figure 29: Azerbaijan's Imports from Türkiye (2001-2020)

Source: Created by the author based on data retrieved from Trademap, 2021

In the last twenty years, the most basic products in Türkiye's exports to Azerbaijan have been machines. In the period from 2001 to 2020, Azerbaijan's imports from Türkiye increased from 148 million dollars to 1.5 billion dollars.

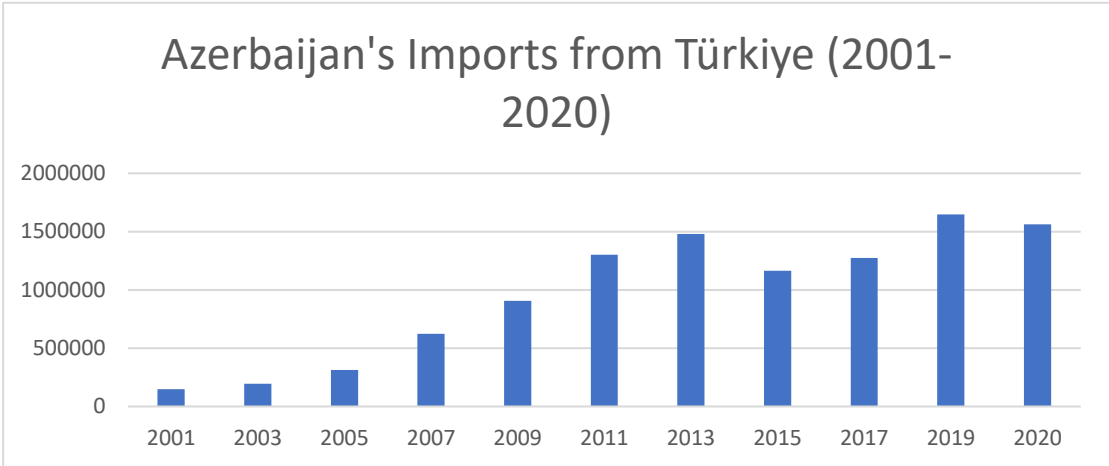


Figure 30: Azerbaijan's Imports from Türkiye (2001-2020)

Source: Created by the author based on data retrieved from Trademap, 2021

In the same period, a much higher growth was experienced in Azerbaijan's exports to Türkiye. 67.3 million dollars export in 2001, 2.6 billion dollars in 2020.

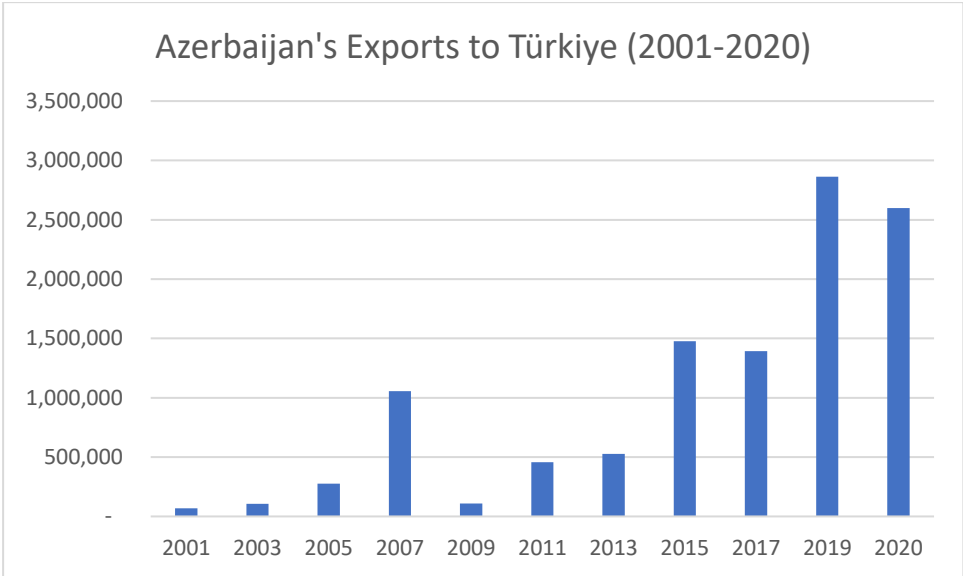


Figure 31: Azerbaijan's Exports to Türkiye (2001-2020)

Source: Created by the author based on data retrieved from Trademap, 2021

When the structure of Azerbaijan's exports to Türkiye is examined, it is seen that mineral fuels are by far the leading product among all other products. Here, it is seen that oil prices are the main determinant in exports to Türkiye, confirming the result that emerged when examining the general situation of the Azerbaijan economy.

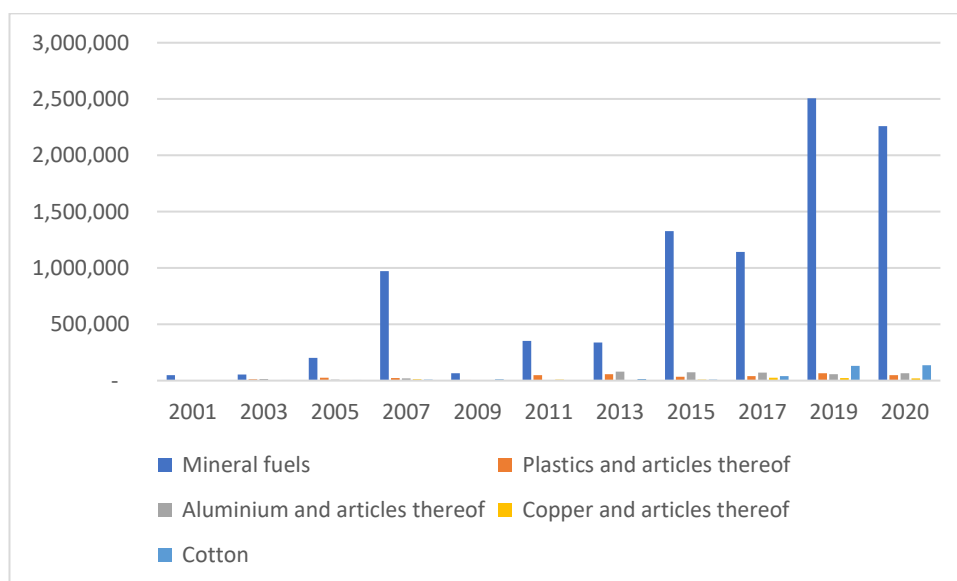


Figure 32: Azerbaijan's export goods to Türkiye (2001-2020)

Source: Created by the author based on data retrieved from Trademap, 2021

The main export product of the country's exports to the world is mineral fuels. Italy was the country's main export country between 2001 and 2020, and Türkiye became one of the top 5 export markets in this process.

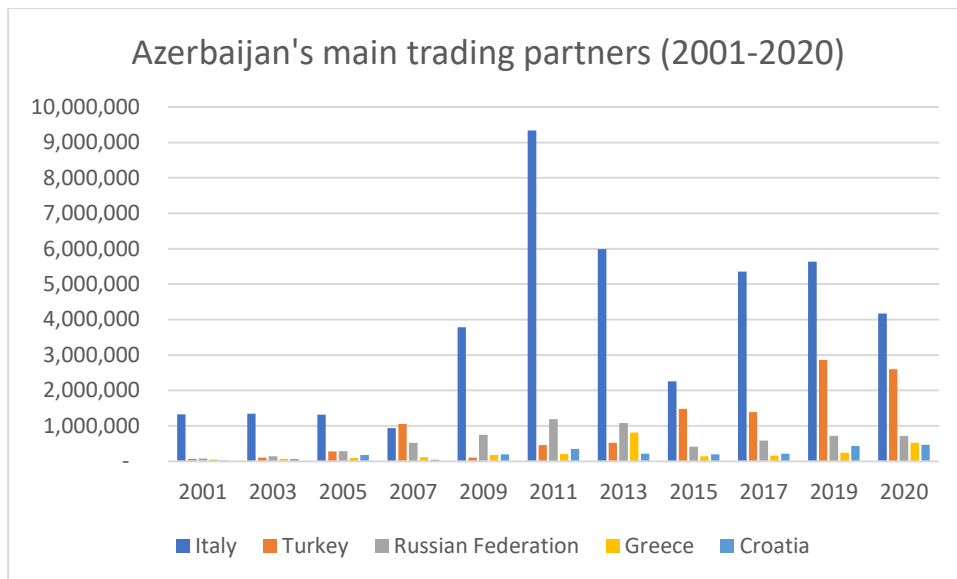


Figure 33: Azerbaijan's main trading partners (2001-2020)

Source: Created by the author based on data retrieved from Trademap, 2021

It is an important issue that the Russian Federation is among the trade partners of Azerbaijan in the first place. This situation, it is possible to say that the regional trade of Azerbaijan continued after independence. However, Türkiye continues to be an important trade partner for Azerbaijan. In the last 20 years, Türkiye has been the country where 6.5% of Azerbaijan's total exports to the world are realized. For Italy, which ranks first, this average is 33.7%.

In this respect, Türkiye is an important partner for Azerbaijan. It would be appropriate to say that it is one of the most important reasons for the active functioning of the trade diplomacy mechanisms between Azerbaijan and Türkiye.

### 5.2.2 Bilateral Business Council

The activities of the Business Council between the two countries officially started on November 3, 1991. The Turkish side of the Türkiye-Azerbaijan Business Council is managed by the Foreign Economic Relations Board (DEIK). On the Azerbaijani side, various organizations constitute the opposite wing. In some cases, the Azerbaijan Export and Investments Promotion Fund (AzPromo) represents the Azerbaijani side, while in some cases the Chamber of Commerce and Industry acts as the cooperation institution.



On the website of the Foreign Economic Relations Board, the purpose of the Business Council is defined as "contributing to the development of mutual commercial relations between the two countries, working for Turkish companies to take more place in Azerbaijan in terms of business and investment, and to participate in the country's important projects". (DEİK, 2021) It is noteworthy that the Business Council has undertaken social tasks such as making aid campaigns for the families of Azerbaijani soldiers in the Karabakh war, in addition to organizing Business Forums during mutual high-level visits.

The Türkiye-Azerbaijan Business Council has another function that goes beyond bilateral relations. A tripartite business forum concept, including Türkiye, Azerbaijan and Georgia, which are important commercial partners in the region, has been adopted since 2012. In this context, the economy ministers of the three countries come together and business circles are included in the business forum with the participation of the ministers. In this respect, the business council activities between the two countries also touch on the multilateral dimension of trade diplomacy. (Anadolu Ajansı, 2021)

Currently, the Business Council is co-chaired by a representative from the business world on the Turkish side and by a parliamentarian on the Azerbaijani side. (DEİK, 2021) Here, an important example of trade diplomacy affecting political relations draws attention. Rufet Quliyev, co-chairman of the Azerbaijani side, served as a parliamentary member for 4 terms and is a member of the Economic Experts Group formed by the Presidency of Azerbaijan in parallel with his continuing membership of Parliament. (DBpedia, 2022) Therefore, it is noteworthy that a strong person in the political field is the co-chairman of the institution where the business world is represented, one of the institutions of trade diplomacy. In conclusion, this situation indicates that trade diplomacy is considered as a central position of bilateral relations for Azerbaijan.

### **5.2.3 Relations in the multilateral platform within the scope of the Organization of Turkic states**

The Turkic Council, which was established with the Nakhchivan Agreement dated October 3, 2009, took the name of the Organization of Turkic States with the summit held in 2021. Since the beginning of the establishment, the main founders have been

Türkiye, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. (Organization of Turkic States, 2022)

It is seen that meetings are held at the level of Ministers under various titles within the organization, and the Ministers responsible for the economy meet regularly under this roof. It is understood from the examination of the final declarations of the Ministerial meetings that no target has been set to create a free trade area or to establish a preferential trade regime within the Organization. (Organization of Turkic States, 2022) On the other hand, it is noteworthy that large-scale business forum organizations were held within the scope of these meetings. In this respect, the organization fulfills an important task in terms of trade diplomacy.

### **5.3. Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreement and Joint Economic Commission Mechanism**

The first economic mechanism established between Azerbaijan and Türkiye is the Agreement on Commercial and Economic Cooperation between the Republic of Türkiye and the Republic of Azerbaijan signed on November 2, 1992.

The agreement was basically written as a text that reflects the desires of the two countries to develop and diversify the commercial and economic relations in a stable and balanced way.

In the agreement, it is stated that the parties will take the necessary measures to develop and diversify their commercial relations in a long-term, stable and balanced manner within the framework of existing possibilities and to expand the economic cooperation and to prepare the necessary conditions to ensure cooperation between the organizations.

In the agreement, it is stated that the two countries will apply the most favored country principle regarding the customs duties, duties, charges and other transactions applied in the import and export of each other, however, with the privileges arising from the agreements to which they are or may be a party, such as a customs union or a free trade zone, and trade with developing countries. It has also signed that it will not be applied to the privileges provided by special arrangements concluded in the field of economic and economic relations.

In this context, the said agreement does not establish a preferential regime between the two countries and does not create a concrete advantageous situation regarding trade in goods or services. However, it is seen that Türkiye has unilaterally made MFN concessions to Azerbaijan. Although this situation is included in the text on the basis of reciprocity, it is noteworthy that Türkiye has accepted the MFN obligation it has undertaken against the parties of the Agreement for Azerbaijan, as Azerbaijan is not a party to the GATT agreement. Therefore, when Türkiye provides any tax relief to Azerbaijan, it undertakes to apply it to all GATT parties. Since Azerbaijan does not have such a bond, it is possible to interpret such a rule as an advantage unilaterally provided by Türkiye.

In Article 9 of the Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreement, a concrete mechanism was established and the Joint Economic Commission mechanism was founded. Since this agreement drew out the Joint Economic Commission mechanism between the two countries, it is also the first legal text in terms of commercial diplomacy activities.

The article below formed the basis of the Joint Economic Commission:

The Contracting Parties have agreed on the use of this Agreement, the review, the research that may arise from its implementation, and the Turkish-Azerbaijani commission to further improve the two economic and commercial partnerships. The Commission will consist of representatives of both Parties and will meet in Türkiye and Azerbaijan respectively on mutually agreed dates. The Commission may invite experts and consultants to attend the Joint Economic Commission meetings when necessary. (T.C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı, 2020)

All Protocols of the Joint Economic Commission Meeting signed thereafter refer to the said Agreement. (T.C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı, 2020)

A total of nine Joint Economic Commission meetings have been held with Azerbaijan so far. The ninth term meeting was held in Ankara on February 19, 2021. (Resmi Gazete, 2021)

Before the Joint Economic Commission mechanism established with Azerbaijan, it is seen that a special mechanism was developed with Azerbaijan as a part of this mechanism within the existing Joint Economic Commission mechanism between the

Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and Türkiye. (Resmi Gazete, 1990)

The first Joint Economic Commission Meeting with Azerbaijan was held on 25-26 February 1997 in Ankara. (Resmi Gazete, 1997) Under the heading of Commercial Relations in the meeting protocol, general evaluation of bilateral economic and commercial relations (Art.1), organization of trade delegation programs (Art.2), realization of business council activities (Art.3), mutual organization of fairs and exhibitions (Art.4), mutual establishment of business centers (Art. 5), expansion of export credits are included in the JEC Protocol. In addition, a specific issue such as the issue of 26.8 million USD receivable arising from the 1 million tons of wheat shipment made to Azerbaijan by the General Directorate of Turkish Grain Board was also included in the text. Similarly, the subject of Türkiye's surveillance practices in textiles is also included in the text. This example is important in that it is one of the examples in which a concrete issue is brought to the agenda within the framework of the JEC mechanism.

#### **5.4. Long Term Economic and Commercial Cooperation Agreement and Partnership and Cooperation Agreement**

It is possible to say that the "Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreement" signed between Türkiye and Azerbaijan on November 2, 1992 is the legal basis that forms the basis of the commercial and economic relations between the two countries. After that, the "Long-Term Economic and Commercial Cooperation Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Türkiye and the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan" dated April 13, 2004, as well as other agreements, protocols and agreements in force have strengthened the legal basis. It is stated in these texts that it was signed with the emphasis of strengthening the strategic cooperation between the two countries by including the trade and economic dimensions, and contributing to the development of relations between the two countries and the strengthening of peace and stability in the region. (T.C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı, 2005)

In the agreement, another agreement text based on concrete projects is mentioned and the purpose of the agreement is to develop the economic and commercial cooperation between the two countries at the highest level and to negatively affect this cooperation within the scope of the "Long-Term Economic Cooperation Program and Execution

Plan between the Republic of Türkiye and the Republic of Azerbaijan". It is defined as the elimination of practices that affect it. (Art.1) It is noteworthy that the references are made to secondary mechanisms such as concrete cooperation areas, execution plans, and Cooperation Programs. As a matter of fact, the agreement transfers the main issues to these secondary mechanisms and limits the validity period to 10 years. (Art.11)

Another commercial and economic agreement signed between the two countries is the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Türkiye and the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan, signed on November 6, 2007. (T.C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı, 2013) This Agreement refers to the further deepening of mechanisms with reference to the previous Long-Term Economic and Trade Cooperation Agreement. Another remarkable point in this agreement was the emphasis on trade liberalization in the light of the World Trade Organization principles. (Preambl). Tariffs, non-tariff barriers, exemptions, freedom of transit, and direct references to the GATT Agreement in the agreement also provided perspective for the next phase of the agreement. (Md.6).

A striking point here is that the parties mutually agreed not to charge customs duty in temporary importation. Although this regulation does not correspond to a large volume in commerce, it is remarkable in that it is a declaration of will for the liberalization of trade. It is also stated in the Agreement that the non-tariff barriers in trade will be removed and no less favorable treatment than national origin goods will be applied to the imported goods in terms of laws, regulations and legislation affecting the sale, offer for sale, purchase, transport, distribution and use under the condition of tariffs and taxes having equivalent effect have been paid. (Art.8) In Article 10 of the agreement, the first signal of the preferential regime is given by stating that "Negotiations will be started in order to complete all necessary legal arrangements, including the Preferential Trade Agreement, with the aim of increasing the trade volume". (Art.10).

In this agreement, matters related to Service Trade are also included and it is stated that necessary arrangements will be made for the provision of market access and transportation services, especially for the development of transportation. (Art.14)

In addition to the provisions of the agreement establishing these advanced institutions

and containing mutual arrangements, cooperation provisions such as joint training programs and expert exchange in fields such as industry, customs, tourism, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), financial services were also included.

### **5.5. Agreements on Prevention of Double Taxation and Mutual Promotion and Protection of Investments**

Double taxation agreements play a very important role in removing barriers to trade between countries. As a basic logic, it is aimed to prevent the citizens of the two countries from being taxed for the same reason in the taxes levied on income in their trade with each other. (Barthel, Busse, Kreyer, Neumayer, 2010, p.3) The model developed by the OECD in order to eliminate double taxation, which has become an important obstacle in the circulation of capital and investment flow between countries, is adopted in the negotiations of double taxation agreements between countries, thus removing an important obstacle to mutual investments. (Baker, 2014, p.3) In the literature, while there is a positive relationship between the prevention of double taxation and investments, there are also opinions that there is a negative relationship, especially because taxation may result in tax evasion. (Egger, Larch, Pfaffermayr, & Winner, 2006) On the other hand, there are opinions that there is no effect between the two situations. (Coupé, Orlova, & Skiba, 2009)

Double taxation agreements are based on the principle of determining when and under what conditions the signatory parties will be taxed, and it is aimed to prevent two or more tax authorities from applying the same tax to the same element in a certain period. In fact, these agreements mean that states compromise their financial sovereignty and taxation rights, and in this respect, negotiations are directly related to economic and political relations. (Dumiter & Jimon, 2016, p. 2)

After the independence of Türkiye, all of the Central Asian Republics signed the double taxation avoidance agreement. Basically, it is envisaged to avoid double taxation in taxes levied on income from capital, technology and services transferred to one of the contracting states within the framework of economic and technical cooperation between Türkiye and third countries, and thus to increase the benefit that may arise from economic and commercial relations and labor movements. Türkiye is an important supplier that brings investments to Central Asian Republics and

especially provides contracting services. For this reason, it has given importance to Double Taxation Prevention agreements in order not to face additional tax burden in the country they go to, and to keep the tax generated by these investors in Türkiye as much as possible. With these signed agreements, how long the contracting services performed in the other state will create a workplace; how real estate income will be taxed; how the commercial profit of the workplace will be determined; the country in which international transport earnings will be taxed; dividend; the maximum rate at which interest and other income will be taxed in the state in which it is derived; The wage incomes of public and private sector employees engaged in dependent activities in the other state and the earnings of those engaged in self-employment activities will be taxed in the other state, provided that the conditions are met. These issues were also included in the agreement with Azerbaijan. (T.C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı, 1997)

Mutual Promotion and Protection of Investments (MPPI) Agreements are fundamental agreements which contain significant provisions which determine the terms of transactions and resorting to international arbitration in case of dispute, the limits of the treatment to be applied by the host country for investors investing in a foreign country, protect fundamental rights and interests in the investee countries on the basis of international law, secure profit transfers, possible expropriation by the host state. (T.C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı, 2013)

In general, the MPPI Agreements allow foreign investors to be treated within the framework of national treatment and the most favored nation (MFN) principles, to pay the real value of the investment without delay in case of expropriation or nationalization, to make transfers without delay, to pay compensation to investors who have been harmed within the framework of the principle of national treatment in cases of war or civil unrest. guarantees the recognition of international arbitration, which is preferred by foreign investors on the grounds that it works more objectively and quickly, in case of any dispute between the investors and the state. (T.C. Sanayi ve Teknoloji Bakanlığı, 2021)

The Agreement on the Mutual Promotion and Protection of Investments, which was signed with Azerbaijan on 25/10/2011 and entered into force on 13/5/2013, is an agreement prepared and signed within this framework. With the agreement, it is aimed

by both parties to guarantee the investments of the investors, with the possibility of international arbitration, and not to prevent capital transfers. (Perkowski & Gruszevska, 2013)

The political side of the YKTK agreements, especially in terms of arbitration, is also important. Many countries find international arbitration contrary to their sovereign rights and avoid signing a YKTK agreement. It would not be wrong to say that by signing these agreements with the Central Asian countries right after their independence, Türkiye aimed to legally secure the investments that are expected to flow from Türkiye to these countries quickly. In particular, securing contracting receivables is a very important issue for Türkiye. Azerbaijan has become one of the leading markets in the world for the Turkish contracting sector and between 1972-2021 Turkish contractors undertook projects worth 15.3 billion dollars in Azerbaijan. A significant part of these projects are projects undertaken as a result of public tenders. In terms of Türkiye, Azerbaijan's share is 3.6% among 1,789 projects with a value of 428 billion dollars in a total of 129 countries undertaken by Türkiye from 1972 to June 2021. With this share, Azerbaijan ranks 9th in the world for the Turkish contracting sector and ranks 4th among CIS countries after Russia, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan.

*Table 14: Türkiye's Construction Projects*

<b>DISTRIBUTION ON COUNTRIES (1972-2021)</b>		
<b>Countries</b>	<b>Total Project Cost (\$)</b>	<b>Share (%)</b>
<b>Russian Federation</b>	84,403,301,601	19,7%
<b>Turkmenistan</b>	48,805,980,090	11,4%
<b>Libya</b>	28,904,053,985	6,8%
<b>Iraq</b>	27,887,803,795	6,5%
<b>Kazakhstan</b>	26,718,118,378	6,2%
<b>S, Arabia</b>	23,928,821,306	5,6%
<b>Algeria</b>	19,496,704,652	4,6%
<b>Qatar</b>	18,624,282,310	4,4%
<b>Azerbaijan</b>	15,314,503,698	3,6%
<b>United Arab Emirates</b>	12,576,901,178	2,9%
<b>Others</b>	<b>121,339,591,838</b>	<b>28,4%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>428,000,062,832</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Republic of Türkiye, Ministry of Trade



In the light of these figures, the importance of the Mutual Promotion and Protection of Investments agreements in Central Asian countries is very important for Türkiye.

The top five countries in foreign direct investments that Azerbaijan received from the world between 2013-2017 are listed below.

*Table 15: Top five countries in foreign direct investments, Azerbaijan*

<b>Partner Country</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>
World	13,750	18,180	22,183	26,446	29,314
United Kingdom	1,962	3,144	4,424	5,565	6,317
Türkiye	2,477	3,293	4,150	5,180	5,797
Norway	2,285	2,949	3,087	3,075	3,063
Iran, Islamic Republic of	1,088	1,510	1,909	2,263	2,523

Source: UNCTAD

As can be seen in the table, Türkiye has been one of the top 5 investors for Azerbaijan in foreign direct investment. On the other hand, it would not be the right approach to evaluate this directly in conjunction with the Mutual Promotion and Protection of Investments Agreement. The increase and course of investments progressed in parallel with the regional and global political preferences of both countries as well as bilateral political relations in the said period.

## **5.6. Preferential Trade Agreement**

The most important mechanism beyond the Joint Economic Commission with Azerbaijan is the Türkiye-Azerbaijan Preferential Trade Agreement signed on January 25, 2020. The agreement is very important for Azerbaijan as it is the first tax exemption agreement signed with a third country other than the Commonwealth of Independent States Free Trade Agreement. Although the economic scale of this agreement is not a high scale for either side, the political cooperation brought by the Agreement is much more advanced than its economic impact.

When the details of the agreement are examined, it is stated in the second article of the agreement that the articles of the agreement will be interpreted in accordance with the customary rules on the interpretation of international states law, taking into account that the contracting parties will implement this agreement in good faith and will not

avoid obligations. (Resmi Gazete, 2021) (Md.2) It seems that this sensitivity is understandable for both parties. As a matter of fact, Türkiye has a customs union with the European Union and Azerbaijan has a free trade agreement with the Commonwealth of Independent States. For Türkiye, the customs union creates a restrictive situation for industrial products. The common customs tariff with the European Union for industrial products in Türkiye; processed agricultural products are subject to a common customs tariff in terms of industry share. (Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Trade, 1995)

For this reason, the products that are mutually compromised in the Preferential Trade Agreement lists are entirely agricultural products for Türkiye; It is understood that the concessions made by Azerbaijan consist of processed agricultural products as well as agricultural products. (Preferential Trade Agreement Annex 1-A and Annex 1-B) Both parties have provided the other party with a 100% tariff reduction in certain amounts.

For Türkiye, the economic value of the products subject to the Preferential Trade Agreement is given below:

According to the calculation made with 2019 data based on Türkiye's import from Azerbaijan that year, when the concessions made by Türkiye to Azerbaijan and the market expansion provided to Azerbaijan in these products are compared, it is seen that Azerbaijan has a higher export potential than Türkiye.

*Table 16: Türkiye-Azerbaijan PTA Trade Volume – Türkiye's imports (2020)*

HS Code	Product name	Unit	Number of unit	Value	Concession in units	Concessions in value
080810800019	Other Apples (Fresh)	KG	129,813	73,815	3,000,000	1,705,877
081070000000	Persimmon (Fresh)	KG	112,558	28,171	30,000,000	7,508,396
180690190000	Chocolate (others)	KG	50,750	154,839	1,250,000	3,813,768
200979190000	Apple Juice (Brix Value greater than 67, others)	KG	140,000	134,470	2,000,000	1,921,000
<b>Total</b>			<b>433,121</b>	<b>391,295</b>	<b>36,250,000</b>	<b>14,949,041</b>

Calculations were made by the author based on data retrieved from Turkish Statistics

Institution, 2021.

Considering Türkiye's imports of these products from the world in 2019, it is seen that there is an import of 8.4 million dollars. As can be seen from here, the concession value provided by Türkiye to Azerbaijan is even higher than Türkiye's total imports from the world in these products. Therefore, it is seen that there is a purpose to develop trade and contribute to the economy of Azerbaijan.

*Table 17: Türkiye-Azerbaijan PTA Volume - Azerbaijan's imports (2020)*

HS Code	Product name	Unit	Number of unit	Value
080810800019	Other Apples (Fresh)	KG	904,954	486,411
081070000000	Persimmon (Fresh)	KG	27,240	15,105
180690190000	Chocolate (others)	KG	693,894	4,827,400
200979190000	Apple Juice (Brix Value greater than 67, others)	KG	3,524,346	3,159,077
<b>Total</b>			<b>5,150,434</b>	<b>8,487,993</b>

Calculations were made by the author based on TÜİK data.

On the other hand, in the products in question, it is seen that Azerbaijan's exports to the world in 2019 are 218 thousand dollars. (Trademap) Therefore, the concession value provided by Türkiye is actually above the export potential of these products to the world for Azerbaijan.

Looking at the list of concessions made by Azerbaijan to Türkiye, a similar situation is striking.

In 2019, Türkiye's exports to Azerbaijan within the scope of PTA lists amounted to 27.4 million dollars. According to the findings obtained by multiplying the concession amount with the unit prices, the total market expansion provided by Azerbaijan to Türkiye in the concession demand list is 50.7 million dollars. Türkiye's exports of these products to the world are at the level of 449 million dollars according to TUIK data.

It was not possible to access trade statistics on the basis of Azerbaijan's 10 HS codes from open sources. For this reason, United Nations statistics were used. (Trademap). Since the Trademap data is given on the basis of the 6-fold HS Code, when we

calculate the products in the concession request lists on a six-fold basis, Azerbaijan's total import of these products from the world is 156,1 million Dollars, and the main supplier is the Russian Federation. (Trademap) Within the scope of the same criteria, Türkiye's exports to the world are calculated as 1.8 billion dollars.

In the light of the concessions made to the Turkish side, it is understood that Azerbaijan has provided a very important market opening to Türkiye within the scope of these products. As one of the symbols of the recent political unity between the two countries, the Preferential Trade Agreement completed the ratification process quickly by both parties. (T.C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı)

In the table drawn on the products subject to the Preferential Trade Agreement, it will be understood that neither Türkiye nor Azerbaijan expect a great economic benefit with this Agreement. Türkiye has made concessions to Azerbaijan well above Azerbaijan's production and export potential, and Azerbaijan has made concessions so as not to change the amount it is already receiving from Türkiye. In this context, it is seen that the aim of the Agreement is not to increase trade, but to institutionalize commercial and economic relations. When we consider this from a social constructivist perspective, the two countries take their relations to the next level by building an institutional structure, and while doing this, they see the preferential trade agreement as a method that contributes to mutual prosperity.

## **5.7. Overview**

In the relations between Türkiye and Azerbaijan, agreements and regulations regulating bilateral economic and commercial relations, especially the Joint Economic Commission, should be evaluated in the context of economic relations rather than diplomatic relations. In the unique political relations between the two countries, the military and political dimension seems to go far beyond the economic and commercial dimension. It is also possible to say that the commercial relations have reached the size of the Preferential Trade Agreement, which is essentially an opportunity provided by these special political relations.

The main factor that determines the economic and commercial relations between Türkiye and Azerbaijan and the institutional structures of these relations is the form of relationship built on the basis of the brotherhood relationship between the two

countries. The tools of trade diplomacy were built on this rhetoric of brotherhood and formed the institutional structures of this brotherhood in terms of its results, as it is mentioned under the relevant title which deals with material and ideational aspects of Türkiye's trade diplomacy with Turkic states. As can be seen in the analysis of the economic and commercial results of the Preferential Trade Agreement, this institutional structure is more important in terms of the message it gives to third parties, rather than its welfare-enhancing aspect for both parties.

It is possible to find this ideational identity emphasis within the trade diplomacy mechanisms and Türkiye's policies in this direction in the discourses of the Ministers of Economy and Trade who carry out these mechanisms. Economy Minister Nihat Zeybekci, in his statement to the press in 2017, announced that they agreed to sign a PTA between the two countries in order to further deepen the trade and economic relations of the sister countries, and this was the first announcement of the preferential trade agreement to be signed. (Trend.az, 2018) It is understood that Zeybekci sees it important to the preferential trade agreement with Azerbaijan within the framework of economic and trade relations of Türkiye with Azerbaijan. (Turkishnews, 2018)

On the other hand, within the framework of social constructivism, it is possible to understand that Türkiye focuses on building a common identity and common interest rather than self-interest in its trade diplomacy relations with Azerbaijan, since the Preferential Trade Agreement does not aim to gain a significant economic benefit for both countries. In fact, this situation was also confirmed by Türkiye's latter Minister of Trade, Ruhsar Pekcan, emphasizing that even though the scope of the PTA is limited with 150 products, the main goal is a future free trade agreement. (Times, 2021) As stated above, TTA does not provide any significant economic benefit for both countries, and considering that the amount of concessions made by Türkiye to Azerbaijan is above the total export potential of Azerbaijan to the world, PTA does not seem realistic for economic realities. It is the existing customs union with the European Union that prevents Türkiye from making PTA on industrial products. Despite this, Türkiye seems to have taken steps to establish a common trade mechanism with Azerbaijan. This shows that it aims to strengthen the relationship structure based on common identity.



## CHAPTER 6

### TÜRKİYE’S TRADE DIPLOMACY MECHANISMS WITH KAZAKHSTAN

Kazakhstan has come to the fore as a country that has shown serious development since independence among the Central Asian Turkic states, both in terms of the advantages of the contribution of its natural resources to the economy and its administrative structure.

#### 6.1. Economic Outlook of Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan, which is the largest country in the region and the 9th largest country in the world, is also an attractive country for foreign investors in many aspects. The multi-faceted foreign policy followed by President Nursultan Nazarbaev became one of the factors that enabled the country to turn outward after independence. (Dzhuraev, 2019, p. 22) While Kazakhstan has an intense bilateral relationship with China, it has also established a deep connection with Russia by forming the Eurasian Economic Union. Kazakhstan's oil sales present a multifaceted structure. Kazakh oil is delivered to many parts of the world, most of which are OECD countries.

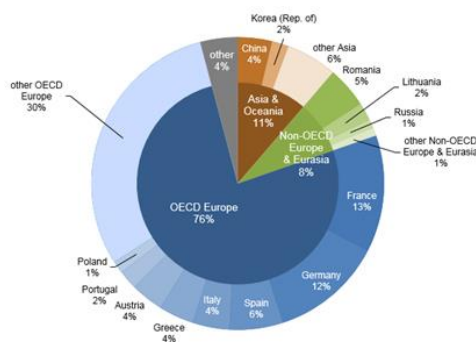


Figure 34: Kazakhstan's Oil Sales, 2020

<https://www.eia.gov/international/analysis/country/KAZ> Accessed on October 14, 2021

However, although Kazakhstan's achievements can be noted as remarkable, it is still not eligible to have a leadership role in Central Asia by itself. Its long border with Russia, its demographic structure which has a large proportion of Russian population (19.3% according to CIA World FactBook, retrieved on 4/8/2021), and close integration in Russian-led economic and military structures all limit Kazakhstan's ability to independently dominate to the region. (Cornell, 2018, p. 6) The economic advantages created by Kazakhstan's wide geography and energy resources have put this country in a very rapid growth phase. The vision of President Nursultan Nazarbaev has pushed Kazakhstan on a path that is sensitive to the balances with Russia and is the driver of regional integration efforts. Nazarbaev became a leader who acted on the basis of Eurasianism and believed that cooperation in Eurasia should be realized under the leadership of Russia. The Commonwealth of Independent States is a project that emerged as Nazarbaev's idea, and the idea of the Eurasian Economic Union was first put forward by Nazarbaev. (Karasar H. A., 2002, p. 215)

The good relations it developed with Russia provided Kazakhstan with a freer development area. It is understood that Nazarbaev, who had the opportunity to focus on his economic and social development without the pressure of the Kremlin, adopted making the country attractive for international investments as his main priority. While doing this, the Nazarbaev administration, which managed to maintain its relations in a balanced manner in regional and global crises, displayed a management style that succeeded to be considered as a reliable partner for the Putin on the one hand, and to establish good relations with other international actors on the other. (Dzhuraev, 2019, p. 23) Radical Islamic movements that pose a threat in Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan have had relatively less influence in Kazakhstan. (Rumer, 2002, p. 5) This provided Kazakhstan with a relatively more favorable political environment for the economic transformation program to be carried out more consistently. Kazakhstan has followed an aggressive liberalization strategy and has been able to effectively implement tools such as privatization and price liberalization. (Alam & Banerji, 2000, p. 1) President Nazarbaev's policy, which prioritized economic growth and development, led to the development of entrepreneurs and a well educated professional class in the country. (Davé, 2009) As a pragmatist leader, Nazarbaev showed an approach that prioritized reforms and development rather than ideology. (Cummings, 2002).



As a result of Nazarbaev's pragmatist approach, Kazakhstan used its instruments to provide a favorable climate for investments, to focus on import substitution, to achieve rapid growth figures, and to create new resources, in addition to the natural resources it possesses as a basis for economic transformation.

Table 18: Kazakhstan's Macroeconomic Data (1991-2003)

MACROECONOMIC DATA														
(a) Output Growth and Inflation (%)														
	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2002 (1989 = 100)
Growth in Real GDP	-11	-5	-9	-13	-8	1	2	-2	3	10	14	10	9	86
Inflation	79	1,381	1,662	1,892	176	39	17	7	8	13	8	6	6	

Notes: 2002 = preliminary actual figures from official government sources; 2003 = EBRD estimates.  
Source: European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, *Transition Report*, 2003, pp. 56 and 58.

(b) Exports and Imports (million US dollars)											
	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Exports	1,107	3,227	5,256	5,926	6,497	5,511	5,598	9,876	9,085	9,670	14,875
Imports	1,704	3,285	3,807	4,247	4,302	4,373	3,686	5,048	6,478	6,584	9,377

Source: International Monetary Fund, *Direction of Trade Statistics*.

(c) Foreign Direct Investment (million US dollars)												
	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
FDI	100	473	635	964	1,137	1,320	1,143	1,584	1,278	2,796	2,138	2,500

Source: (Pomfret, 2005, p. 861), retrieved from European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, *Transition Report 2003*

Kazakhstan, which is rich in natural resources, had no difficulty in finding buyers in the foreign market under the conditions when it gained its independence. Since the production structure of the country was insufficient, it was not possible to talk about any other product that could be offered to the world at that time. (Rumer, 2002, p. 5) Due to this situation, Kazakhstan took care to establish close relations with Russia immediately after independence. At this point, Russia's radical reforms were followed and the basic elements of economic transformation such as liberalization in prices and privatization were applied.

However, the fluctuations in oil prices in the 1990s and the 1998 Asian crisis negatively affected the economic transformation of Kazakhstan. After the devaluation in 1999, the new discoveries in oil reserves revealed large resources and the upward movements in commodity prices had a positive effect on the economy of Kazakhstan. (Pomfret, 2005, p. 860) However, the fact that Kazakhstan became an increasingly oil-dependent country did not fit the model of development and transformation Nazarbaev envisioned. As a matter of fact, the increase in welfare provided by the rise in oil prices has started to lead to an increase in the welfare of certain classes by taking a larger share of these incomes and the inequality in social income distribution to become more evident. (Isaacs, 2010, p. 440) This unjust distribution has created a contradiction with the social development model of Nazarbaev, who states that he prioritizes the economy over politics. For this reason, the development of non-oil sectors has started to be overwhelmed.

The economic recession in the 1990s and the crisis environment in the late 90s also negatively affected agricultural production. The rise in input costs caused the repayment of farmer loans to fail, and agricultural producers were burdened with debt. In order to prevent this, the Kazakhstan government has adopted a strong support package since 1999. In this way, agricultural employment began to rise rapidly; The agricultural population, which was 1.3 million in 1999, reached 2.3 million in 2001. (Pomfret, 2005, p. 869)

Similar to agriculture, the non-oil industry also experienced a negative course in the 1990s. However, the Government's industry-oriented diversification efforts bore fruit. In a report published by the IMF in 2003, besides the fact that oil is the most important export product in Kazakhstan, the diversification of non-oil exports and the increase in the rate are emphasized. (International Monetary Fund, 2003, p. 37) In the report, it is pointed out that Kazakhstan has not caught the Dutch Disease (cessation of growth of countries with natural resources due to these resources) thanks to its tight fiscal stance and monetary policy. However, the development of the non-oil sector was not sufficient to deepen the country's oil-dependent structure, as a result, structural change efforts have been the main element of the country's economic agenda since 2000.

After declaring its independence, Kazakhstan signed a series of documents that formed

the legal basis of its bilateral commercial and economic relations with Türkiye, which was the first country to recognize it. Türkiye has always been an important commercial partner for Kazakhstan.

For example, looking at Kazakhstan's trade between 1995-2000, it is seen that Russia is Kazakhstan's main trading partner and Türkiye is among Kazakhstan's main supplier countries.

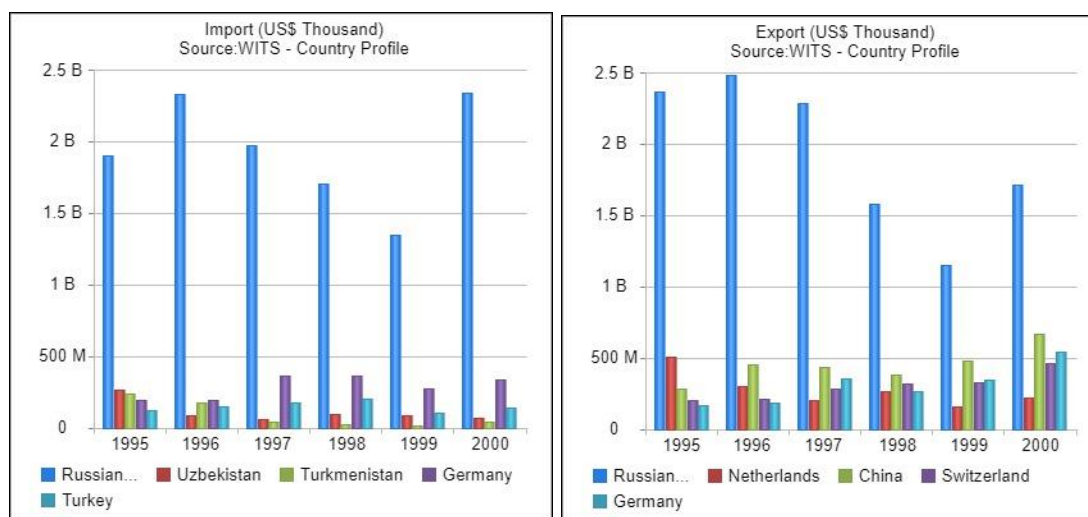


Figure 35: Kazakhstan's Foreign Trade (1995-2000)

Source: World Bank WITS

After Kazakhstan declared its independence on December 16, 1991, Türkiye became the first country to recognize Kazakhstan's independence on the same day, and diplomatic relations were established on March 2, 1992. With the "Strategic Partnership Agreement" signed during the visit of Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbaev to Türkiye in October 2009, the relations between the two countries have been moved to a more advanced stage. (T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı, 2021) As a result of this agreement, the High Level Strategic Cooperation Council was established in 2012.

A similar analysis is made for Kazakhstan in Table 19: Kazakhstan's Exports (thousand USD) and Table 20. It is seen that there has been a rapid increase in Kazakhstan's exports to the world over the years. After the CIS Free Trade Agreement, the increase in exports from the world and the increase in imports from Russia is

remarkable. However, a similar correlation was not observed between the increase in Kazakhstan's exports to the world and the increase in its exports to Russia.

*Table 19: Kazakhstan's Exports (thousand USD)*

<b>Importers</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2018</b>
World	8,486	12,916	27,846	57,244	45,956	60,956
CIS Aggregation (exc. Kazakhstan)	2,527	2,811	3,824	5,527	7,683	9,149
Russian Federation	1,733	1,968	2,927	3,007	4,548	5,162
Uzbekistan	150	138	243	1,101	942	1,643
Tajikistan	61	76	151	260	419	522
Kyrgyzstan	84	156	225	424	519	635
Ukraine	490	426	200	666	1,174	1,064
Belarus	5	13	26	41	53	88
Moldova, Republic of	3	35	52	28	29	36

Unit : US Dollar Million Source: Trademap, 2021

*Table 20: Kazakhstan's Imports (thousand USD)*

<b>Exporters</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2018</b>
World	6,280	8,402	17,333	24,024	30,568	32,534
CIS Aggregation (exc. Kazakhstan)	3,076	3,857	8,038	7,770	12,986	14,791
Russian Federation	2,752	3,278	6,582	5,476	10,529	12,392
Uzbekistan	81	90	254	473	725	845
Belarus	46	95	208	251	488	593
Ukraine	155	324	840	1,359	828	389
Kyrgyzstan	33	55	119	166	190	230
Tajikistan	2	7	17	17	165	324
Moldova	6	9	19	29	61	17

Unit : US Dollar Million Source: Trademap, 2021

Kazakhstan has become one of the most important investment partners in Central Asia for Türkiye. It has become the fourth largest investor country in non-energy sectors, and 17th in terms of capitalization. (Şimşek, Canaltay, & Şimşek, 2017, p. 8) Since the first years, many businesspeople from Türkiye, especially in contracting, went to Kazakhstan and made important investments in this country. (Nurgaliyeva, 2016, p. 158) In addition, Akhmet Yassawi International Turkish-Kazakh University, which

was founded jointly by Türkiye and Kazakhstan governments, and was established in the city of Turkestan, the city where Akhmet Yassawi, a Turkish sufi who lived in 12th century was settled, by referring to the common historical ties of the two countries. One of the most important aspect of this university is being the first international university in Kazakhstan. (Eleuken, 2020, p. 304)

Türkiye's development assistance to Kazakhstan through the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA) from the first years contributed significantly to the close relations developed with this country. (Yılmaz S. , 2022, p. 78)

## 6.2. Economic and Trade Relations Between Türkiye and Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan is an important supplier of minerals and metals such as copper, aluminum and lead for Türkiye, and is also an exporter of grains from food products. About 30% of Kazakhstan's exports to the world in copper and its products are directed to Türkiye. (Trademap.org, 2021) Türkiye also imports 26% of its imports from the whole world in these products from this country.

Türkiye, on the other hand, exports the most machinery and textile products to Kazakhstan. These products are followed by pharmaceutical products, vehicles and parts. While certain products stand out in the composition of Türkiye's exports to Kazakhstan, product diversity draws attention. The great weight in the textile products that Kazakhstan imports from the world is from Türkiye.

*Table 21: Kazakhstan's exports to Türkiye*

<b>Product name</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>
Mineral fuels, mineral oils and their distillation products, bituminous substances, mineral waxes	957,786,304	1,792,882,330	1,396,990,942
Copper and articles of copper	757,448,248	780,754,414	583,751,244
Aluminum and articles of aluminum	109,536,496	223,052,237	203,170,135
Edible vegetables and some roots and tubers	37,470,980	45,605,660	27,043,748
Cereals	82,668,659	45,397,658	6,995,960

table cont'd

Precious or semi-precious stones, precious metals, pearls, imitation jewellery, coins	7,477,543	36,021,426	40,175,424
Organic chemical products	3,108	33,872,207	8,638,165
Lead and articles of lead	38,715,374	14,114,474	23,386,060
Cotton, cotton yarn and cotton fabrics	3,536,212	9,809,570	18,741,040
Salt, sulfur, soils and stones, gypsum, limes and cement	10,939,408	6,287,270	683,387
iron and steel	12,311,324	4,932,973	16,559,044
Zinc and articles thereof	138,924,985	2,174,968	47,085,263
<b>Top 10 Total</b>	<b>2,156,818,641</b>	<b>2,994,905,187</b>	<b>2,373,220,412</b>
<b>General Total</b>	<b>2,181,677,998</b>	<b>3,004,158,776</b>	<b>2,390,168,047</b>

(Source: TÜİK, 2021)

Table 22: Türkiye's Export products to Kazakhstan

Product Name	2018	2019	2020
Boilers, machinery, mechanical devices and tools, nuclear reactors and parts thereof	105,388,531	134,463,875	130,046,837
Electrical machinery and devices, sound recording-making, television video-sound recording-transmitting devices, parts-parts-accessories	60,777,866	97,491,539	77,149,022
Knitted clothing and accessories	51,927,620	87,462,588	113,280,757
Non-knitted articles of clothing and accessories	41,600,115	68,886,403	93,822,635
Articles of iron or steel	40,144,829	61,109,184	37,567,394
pharmaceutical products	5,900,067	50,672,152	65,929,053
Motor vehicles, tractors, bicycles, motorcycles and other land vehicles, their parts, accessories	34,137,551	47,016,388	52,931,684
Furniture, bedding, lighting devices, advertising lamps, illuminated signs, etc., prefabricated structures	32,281,749	39,985,546	39,107,321
Plastics and products	34,212,013	35,935,850	38,227,768

*table cont'd*

Carpets and other textile floor coverings	23,946,048	27,565,851	33,812,103
Top 10 Total	<b>430,316,389</b>	<b>650,589,376</b>	<b>681,874,574</b>
General Total	<b>695,265,278</b>	<b>900,143,608</b>	<b>985,614,991</b>

(Source: TÜİK, 2021)

While the share of the first 10 products exported by Türkiye to Kazakhstan in the total exports is about 67% on a three-year average, the share of the first 10 products in Kazakhstan's exports to Türkiye is 96% on a three-year average. This shows that the product variety in Türkiye's exports to Kazakhstan is higher than the product variety in Kazakhstan's exports to Türkiye.

The economic and commercial agreements signed by Türkiye after independence with Kazakhstan are listed below.

*Table 23: The economic and commercial agreements signed with Türkiye*

<b>Agreement</b>	<b>Signing Date</b>	<b>Official Gazette Date and Number</b>
Agreement on Mutual Protection and Promotion of Investments	01.05.1992	<u>11.02.1995/6460</u>
Protocol on the Establishment of an Intergovernmental Joint Economic Cooperation Commission between the Government of the Republic of Türkiye and the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan	02.10.1993	
Agreement on Trade and Economic Technical Cooperation	10.09.1997	<u>02.06.1998/23360</u>
Agreement on Prevention of Double Taxation	15.08.1995	<u>05.11.1996 No: 22811</u>
Long Term Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreement	22.05.2003	
Long Term Trade and Economic Cooperation Program and Execution Plan	13.12.2007	<u>20.03.2008/13357</u>
Joint Economic Commission XI. Term Meeting Protocol and Action Plan	11.11.2019	<u>17.06.2020/31158</u>
New Synergy Joint Economy Program 2019-2020 Action Plan	11.11.2019	

### **6.3. Joint Economic Commission**

Among these agreements, the Joint Economic Commission mechanism was established by the Protocol on the Establishment of an Intergovernmental Joint Economic Commission between the Government of the Republic of Türkiye and the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The signature date of the protocol is October 2, 1993. (Republic of Türkiye, Ministry of Trade, 2021) This Protocol has also been the legal basis for the Protocols of the Joint Economic Commission made after that. For example, the following statement is included in the Preambl section of the Protocol of the 11th Term Meeting of the Joint Economic Commission held in Istanbul on November 10, 2019.

Türkiye-Kazakhstan Intergovernmental Joint Economic Commission (hereinafter “Commission”), established in accordance with the "Protocol on the Establishment of an Intergovernmental Joint Economic Cooperation Commission between the Government of the Republic of Türkiye and the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan" signed between The Government of the Republic of Türkiye and the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan” (hereinafter “Parties”) on September 2, 1993. The 11th Term Meeting of the Commission was held on 8 November 2019 in Ankara and on 10 November 2019 in Istanbul.” (T.C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı, 2020) Trade Minister of Türkiye also mentions the importance of the mechanism on various occasions. In an interview, he underlines the importance of the mechanism and says that they have accomplished the 11<sup>th</sup> term of the meeting on. November 2019 with signing an Action Plan on Türkiye Kazakhstan Economic Cooperation which consists 68 action items on 11 chapters and adds that they will be organizing the next meeting with a new Action Plan which aims determining steps towards avoiding the negative effects of the pandemic which will contribute to bilateral economic and trade relations. (Timeturk, 2019)

It is understood that the Joint Economic Commission mechanism established with Kazakhstan is basically a mechanism where all issues concerning the economy and trade between the two countries are discussed. However, unlike the example of Azerbaijan, it is noteworthy that resolute provisions suggesting future institutional



infrastructure or advanced trade liberalization are avoided. This situation can be explained by the policy of focusing on integration with the former Soviet republics, especially Russia, which is basically the close geography of Kazakhstan. (Karasar H. A., 2002, p. 6) As a matter of fact, Kazakhstan Eurasianism developed by Nazarbaev has been determined as an approach that focuses on the west with a pragmatic approach and attaches importance to cooperation with Russia, taking into account the demographic structure within itself. (Papava, 2013) This explains the approach in the Joint Economic Commission protocols that is open to cooperation with Türkiye, but not ambitious to take steps to institutionalize cooperation.

This abstention in Kazakhstan JEC Protocols shows itself in the protocol texts. In the texts, it is seen that there are often more expressions starting with "Kazakhstan Side" or "Turkish side" as much as the articles starting with "Parties". From the analysis of the texts, it is seen that some issues that do not have a mutual consensus or that the parties cannot reconcile their positions take place in this way as a unilateral declaration of will. This can be considered as an important indicator that gives an idea about the common will of the parties in an evaluation to be made regarding the JEC Protocols. For example, this spirit has been felt since the first article of the "Türkiye-Kazakhstan Intergovernmental Joint Economic Commission Third Term Meeting Protocol" signed in Ankara on May 4, 2004. There are examples where the proposal of the Kazakh side will be answered later by the Turkish side through diplomatic channels (Art. 1), or the proposal of the Turkish side will be left without comment by the Kazakh side (Art. 2.1). (T.C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı, 2004)

However, the Joint Economic Commission meetings with certain countries may themselves become more important than the JEC Protocols themselves. Kazakhstan is such an example for that. It is seen that Business Forum meetings are held during the visits of the ministers who are the co-chairs of the JEC on the occasion of the Joint Economic Commission meetings and the JEC Protocol, and different agreements can be signed in many areas concerning the economy. (Dünya Gazetesi, 2019) In addition, the Protocols signed after the recent JEC Meetings began to differ formally from the Protocols signed in the previous periods. As a matter of fact, the Eleventh Term Meeting Protocol refers to the cooperation action plan in its annex, and the Action Plan constitutes a structure that mutually defines the institutions and determines the

calendars for each topic. What is expected here is that there is a will that each concrete step will be followed by all parties involved. At this point, it is understood that Türkiye has established a Trade and Economic Relations Coordination and Monitoring Platform (TEKİZ) within the body of the Ministry of Trade and has developed a monitoring mechanism regarding the JEC Protocols through this platform together with the relevant institutions. (Batı Akdeniz İhracatçılar Birliği, 2020)

#### **6.4. Trade and Economic Technical Cooperation Agreement**

At the next stage, a Trade and Economic Technical Cooperation Agreement was signed between Kazakhstan and Türkiye. (T.C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı, 1998) In this agreement, a general framework of cooperation is drawn between the two parties. However, it is useful to point out some remarkable points in the said agreement.

There is no provision in the protocol that establishes any tax exemption, preferential regime or similar arrangement. Despite this, it is noteworthy that there are binding provisions for the Turkish side to support Kazakhstan's participation in an important issue such as the accession to the World Trade Organization, which also concerns third parties. The ninth article of the agreement states: “The parties will continue to cooperate on Kazakhstan's participation in the World Trade Organization. To this end, the Turkish side will support Kazakhstan at the highest level and provide the necessary technical support to Kazakhstan in its efforts to join the WTO.”

Beyond that, with the said agreement, having a more institutional approach, the parties also declared that they have decided to support each other for the establishment of an international organization they call "The Union of Eurasian Chambers of Commerce and Industry".

The text of the agreement contains provisions in many areas, similar to the text of a Joint Economic Commission. Issues under the headings of investments, energy, competition, transportation, labor and social security, agriculture, tourism, financial policies, mutual visits draw a broad economic cooperation framework.

At this point, it is possible to state that various agreement texts containing similar provisions have been signed between Kazakhstan and Türkiye. As a matter of fact, the New Synergy Joint Economy Program, which differs formally from the Protocols of

the Joint Economic Commission, but is not much different in terms of content, can also be evaluated within this scope.

In addition, the aforementioned founding texts and the texts created and signed on the basis of these founding texts or together with the founding texts can be seen as designed to strengthen the political relations between the two countries.

However, what is particularly striking is that in an environment where political relations are held at such a high level and relations are confirmed at the level of strategic partnership, a text that creates a special and privileged situation in commercial relations between the two countries has not been signed.<sup>39</sup> In these economic cooperation agreements, preferential trade regime, free trade agreement or similar economic cooperation is not established, however, the framework of other mechanisms of trade diplomacy is drawn.

At that point, there is a need for evaluation in detail for both parties. Kazakhstan joined the Commonwealth of Independent States in the first stage after independence and became a party to the Free Trade Agreement within this framework. On the other hand, the country was among the first founders of the Eurasian Economic Community and the customs union established by EEU. Due to Kazakhstan's EEU membership, it does not have a free space to establish a new preferential regime as it is under an umbrella of a common customs tariff. Türkiye has a similar restriction due to the Customs Union it has with the European Union. This can be considered as the technical reason why a preferential regime could not be established with Kazakhstan.

On the other hand, it is possible to explain this situation with political reasons beyond technical reasons.

## **6.5. Agreement on Prevention of Double Taxation and Mutual Promotion and Protection of Investments**

Prevention of Double Taxation Agreement between Türkiye and Kazakhstan was

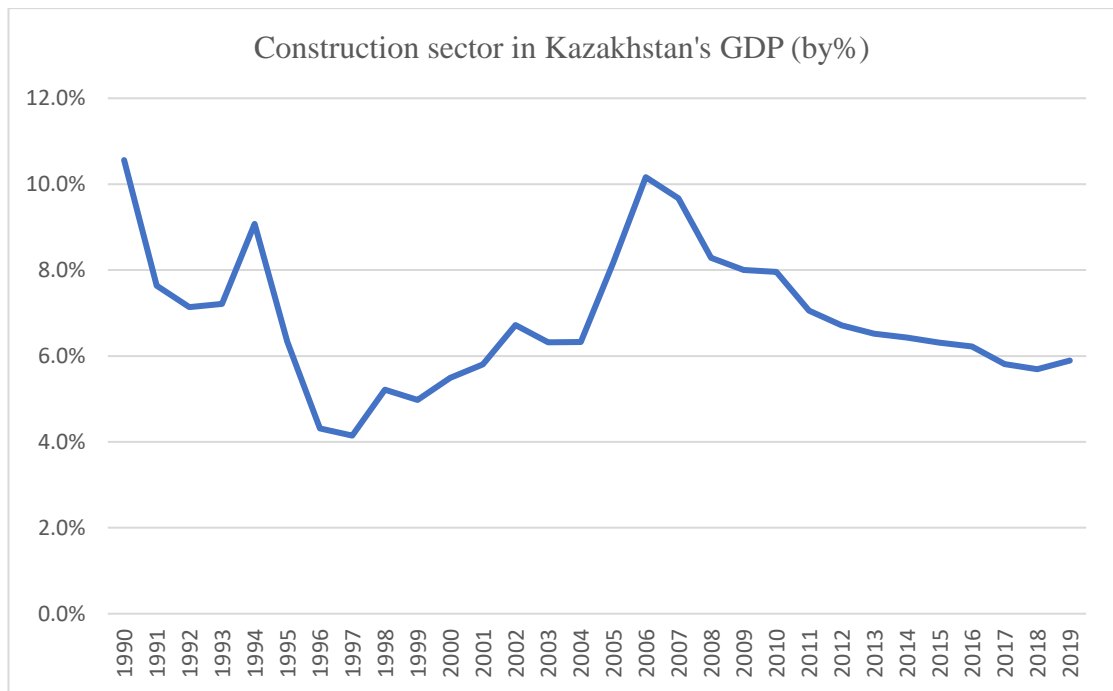
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<sup>39</sup>Kazakistan Cumhurbaşkanı Nursultan Nazarbaev'in 2009 Ekim ayında ülkemize gerçekleştirdiği ziyaret sırasında imzalanan "Stratejik Ortaklık Anlaşması" ile ilişkilerimiz yeni bir boyuta taşınmıştır. Yüksek Düzeyli Stratejik İşbirliği Konseyi 2012 yılında ihdas edilmiştir. [https://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkiye-kazakistan-siyasi-iliskileri\\_tr.mfa](https://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkiye-kazakistan-siyasi-iliskileri_tr.mfa) Accessed on Sept.6, 2021

signed with the same content as the example of Azerbaijan. (T.C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı, 1996) So much so that both agreements consist of 30 articles and there is only a non-significant difference in their 27th article. While regulations under the title of administrative assistance were made in Article 27 in the Azerbaijan text, the limitation of benefits is regulated in Article 27 in the Kazakhstan text. In this context, it is important to evaluate Kazakhstan in terms of Türkiye's contracting sector.

Kazakhstan is one of the countries where the Turkish contracting sector undertakes the most projects. (T.C. Ticaret Bakanlığı, 2021) According to the data from the Ministry of Trade of the Republic of Türkiye, Kazakhstan is the 5th country where Turkish contractors have undertaken the most projects from 1972 to June 2021. It has a 6.2% share with a total of 27.8 billion USD projects. In this context, double taxation agreements, especially for overseas contracting services, are important in many ways. (Ive & Gruneberg, 2000, p. 239) Contracting companies establish construction sites in the countries they invest in, employ personnel and workers from their own countries, from other countries according to their expertise, or from local sources, import machinery and equipment temporarily or permanently, and carry out an activity that affects many areas of the economy for a long time. For this reason, the issue of taxation becomes very important for the construction industry. The construction sector, which is a part of the service sector, has a structure that is particularly affected by the duration of the double taxation agreements, and the biggest expectation of the contracting sector is the prevention of double taxation, the determination of a transparent taxation policy, especially the long exemption periods in the agreements. (Raftery, Pasadilla, Chiang, Hui, & Tang, 1998, p. 733)

Türkiye has been one of the most important economic partners for Kazakhstan after independence. (Nurgaliyeva, 2016, p. 98) Contracting investments occupied an important place in this partnership as well. In this respect, legal infrastructure texts such as prevention of double taxation and mutual incentive and protection of investments are important in this sense.



*Figure 36: Construction sector in Kazakhstan's GDP*

Source: Based on data retrieved from UN Stats <sup>40</sup>

For Kazakhstan, the construction sector has been the driving force of growth since independence. While the share of the construction sector in GDP in Kazakhstan's economy was 10.6% in 1990, this rate was 5.9% in 2019.

The presence of Turkish construction companies in Kazakhstan has a very important place. After Astana became the capital, Turkish companies had the biggest share in the development of this city. (Milliyet Gazetesi, 2005)

Türkiye is also an important country for Kazakhstan in foreign direct investments. For this reason, special attention has been given to the protection of investments within the international system.

As stated in the Agreement on the Mutual Promotion and Protection of Investments signed between the two countries on 01.05.1992, to increase the economic cooperation between them, especially regarding the investments to be made in the country of the other party by the investors of one party, It has been decided to make an agreement for

<sup>40</sup><https://unstats.un.org/unsd/snaama/downloads> Accessed on 7/9/2021

the promotion and mutual protection of investments in order to encourage the economic development of the parties with the flow of technology and technology and to create a stable investment environment. (Preambl)

The text of the agreement has been written in accordance with the agreements Türkiye has made with other commercial partners, and it is understood that it is aimed to create an environment in line with international rules for the mutual protection of investors, including international arbitration. The contents of the agreement include investments, expropriation and compensation, repatriation and transfers, and resolution of disputes.

### **6.6. Other agreements and protocols**

Two agreements were signed between Türkiye and Kazakhstan, namely the Long-Term Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreement and the Long-Term Economic Cooperation Programme. The first of these agreements was signed on 22 May 2003 and the second on 13 December 2007. These agreements, too, are texts of agreements prepared within the logic of the Protocols of the Joint Economic Commission, containing provisions regarding all areas of the economy and expressions that can be interpreted as a general declaration of intent for cooperation. Already in the implementation part of the agreement, monitoring the implementation of the provisions of the agreement has been a task given to the working units of the Joint Economic Commission. (Art..40).

On the other hand, the emphasis on Türkiye's support for Kazakhstan's membership to the World Trade Organization is the highlight of these agreements. As a matter of fact, Kazakhstan became a member of the World Trade Organization on November 30, 2015, after a long negotiation process. (Amirbekova & Madiyarova, 2017, p. 85)

### **6.7. Overview**

Although the Joint Economic Commission has an important place in the commercial and economic relations between Türkiye and Kazakhstan, the weight of these mechanisms in diplomatic relations is not very clear since the relations between the two countries are multidimensional. It is seen that there is a distinct difference in stance between Kazakhstan's view of Türkiye in the first years and its view in recent years. Kazakhstan's natural resources which have an important economic value, Nazarbaev's

multidimensional foreign policy understanding in interaction with Russia, and the political stability achieved within the country show that Kazakhstan aims to achieve a level of relations with Türkiye on equal terms rather than being demanding. In this respect, the place of the JEC mechanism in Kazakhstan-Türkiye relations is evaluated in the context of commercial and economic relations rather than diplomatic relations.

However, after its independence, Kazakhstan became the most important country in the center of "brother country" rhetoric for Türkiye. Akhmet Yassawi University, which was established jointly by Türkiye and Kazakhstan, is structured as an important institution that reflects the historical and cultural ties between the two countries. For Turkish politicians, a special importance has been attached to the relations with from Kazakhstan in terms of Türkiye. Namık Kemal Zeybek, who was a minister in Türkiye at the time when the Turkic Republics gained independence, had an intense interest in Kazakhstan, and he also served as the top manager of the abovementioned university for many years. (Akhmet Yassawi University) Namık Kemal Zeybek's personality was also embraced by Kazakh scholars as a friend of Kazakhstan. (İbraev, 2005, p. 249) The Republic of Türkiye even made various publications to promote Kazakhstan and President Nazarbaev as a state. One of them, "Flying Eagle to the Sun", a very comprehensive publication about Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbaev, with the editing of Hüseyin Erdem, who was the Deputy Undersecretary at the Ministry of Culture in Türkiye, was published with the support of the Prime Ministry Promotion Fund in Türkiye. (Işık Y. , 2020, p. 355)

The discourses of the Ministers of Economy and Trade in Türkiye with Kazakhstan complement the discourses at the Presidential level. Turkish Economy Minister Nihat Zeybekci, who visited Kazakhstan in 2017, said, "*The 21st century will be the Turkish and Kazakh century*" and on the other hand, he had expectations from Kazakhstan, updating the Agreement on the Mutual Protection and Encouragement of Investments signed in 1992, and the fields of investments. He also stated that they want the framework to be determined for an FTA (Free Trade Agreement) including (AİMSAD, 2017) While this essentially points to the special affinity between the two countries on the one hand, it differs from the example of Azerbaijan, on the other hand, as an approach in which it expresses its expectations. Expressing the expectation through a press release essentially means that that expectation has not been met. In the same

press release, the speech of Yerlan Hairov, Deputy Minister of Investments and Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan, does not include any statement regarding the Agreement on Mutual Promotion and Protection of Investments or the Free Trade Agreement. Since 2019, the co-chairmanship of the Joint Economic Commission between Kazakhstan and Türkiye has been carried out at the level of the Vice President, (T.C Cumhurbaşkanlığı, 2019) and it is possible to find expressions of brotherhood in the statements of the Vice President of Türkiye, Fuat Oktay. Oktay's congratulatory message, published on his social media account on December 16, 2021, on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of Kazakhstan's independence, includes the following statements: *"I congratulate the Independence Day of the friendly and brotherly country Kazakhstan. We will continue to strengthen our deep-rooted history and common cultural ties with Kazakhstan and to further our cooperation in every field."*

Oktay also used the following statements in his speech at the Kazakhstan Türkiye Business World Representatives meeting on May 11, 2022: *"We see our friend and brother Kazakhstan, with whom we have long-standing ties, as one of our most important political and economic partners in the Central Asian region. Our trade with Kazakhstan gained a significant momentum in 2021, increasing by 58 percent compared to the previous year and reaching the level of 5.3 billion dollars. In the first month of 2022, our bilateral trade volume increased much more than the same period of the previous year and reached 2.6 billion dollars."*

Despite this intense interest from Türkiye to Kazakhstan, it is not possible to show that Kazakhstan gave the same response. As stated above, it is possible to see a similar situation in the field of trade diplomacy. Türkiye's further partnership proposals which were set out in Joint Economic Commission protocols remained unilateral most of the time and took its place as Türkiye's one sided proposals in the texts. In the Joint Economic Commission meetings, Türkiye's further partnership proposals were generally included in the texts as the Turkish side proposal, the Kazakh side generally remained silent. Therefore, it is possible to say that there is a common identity construction between Türkiye and Kazakhstan at the level of the peoples, that Türkiye has adopted this as a form of foreign policy, but that Kazakhstan has a more cautious approach to this construction process.



## CHAPTER 7

### TÜRKİYE'S TRADE DIPLOMACY MECHANISMS WITH UZBEKISTAN

Türkiye-Uzbekistan relations have developed rapidly since 1991, when Uzbekistan gained its independence from the Soviet Union. More than 90 commercial, economic, educational and cultural agreements were signed between the two countries between 1991 and 2019. (Mazıcı, 2019, p. 2)

Türkiye was the first state to recognize the independence of Uzbekistan (December 16, 1991), as not did for the other Central Asian Republics that declared its independence, and diplomatic relations between the two countries were established on March 4, 1992. (T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı, 2021) While expressing Türkiye's perspective on Uzbekistan on the official website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye, it also highlights the close ties between the Turkish and Uzbek peoples, as well as its population, geostrategic location, deep-rooted historical and rich cultural values and economic potential. In this context, it is seen that the aforementioned close ties come to the fore in Türkiye's foreign policy discourse towards Uzbekistan.

Although the extent to which those close ties are reflected in foreign policy instruments is a separate research topic, Türkiye has supported Uzbekistan through many institutions since independence, and these supports have been realized in a wide range from development aids to student scholarships. It is stated that a total of 718 projects have been carried out until 2018 for the development of development assistance, health, education, administrative and civil infrastructures carried out by the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA) in Uzbekistan. (TİKA, 2018) In addition, the Turkish government has started to provide scholarships for students from Central Asian countries and other former USSR countries, within the scope of the Great Student Project, since the 1992/93 academic year.

In the 1992-1993 academic year, when the project started, a total of 10,000 students, 3000 of whom are secondary school students and 7000 students of higher education, from these countries and communities were brought to Türkiye as state scholarships. (Yanik, 2004); (Dok, 2009)

Türkiye, along with inviting those students from Central Asian countries, it also developed a program which addresses to diplomats from them between 1992 and 1998 in which 297 diplomats were trained. (Yanik, 2004, p. 295)

*Table 24: Students on Scholarship in Türkiye from Eurasia, 1997-2002*

	1997	1999	2000	2001	2002
Azerbaijan	1,793	1,169	815	630	616
Kazakhstan	1,178	775	669	625	617
Kyrgyzstan	804	762	814	721	699
Uzbekistan	438	195	10	6	3
Turkmenistan	2,226	1,368	1,186	970	822
Asian countries	1,710	1,613	1,553	1,384	1,283
Balkan countries	1,396	1,543	1,558	1,701	1,611
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,545</b>	<b>7,425</b>	<b>6,605</b>	<b>6,037</b>	<b>5,651</b>

Source: (Yanik, 2004, p. 296)

However, since 1997, a tension has been observed in relations due to both the dynamics within Uzbekistan itself and the institutional orientations Türkiye has undertaken in Uzbekistan politics.

The Uzbek administration was concerned about the possibility of the opposition leaders Muhammed Salih and Abdurrahim Pulatov living as refugees in Türkiye, by influencing the Uzbek students studying in this country and raising them as anti-regime and decided to withdraw the students. (Türk, 2008) For this reason, Uzbekistan recalled the 2,000 students it sent to Türkiye to study in 1997, regardless of whether they finished their school or not, in order to protect them from fundamentalist

institutions and individuals. (Ergin & Türk, 2010, p. 38)

### **7.1. Economic Outlook of Uzbekistan**

Central Asian countries that declared their independence after 1991 experienced significant changes in domestic and foreign policy. With the excitement of getting rid of the hegemony of the "Communist Party", new political formations started to be built, and international actors from near and far who wanted to penetrate new countries in the region intensified their attempts. The United States of America, which fought against the Soviet Union through Afghanistan, did not hesitate to expand into newly opened areas. The Russian Federation, on the other hand, expected the former Soviet republics to support it in its new structuring, as it was used to. In addition, the region, which is the cultural sphere of influence of Iran and Türkiye, has become an area of interest for these countries with its new structure. In order to build its relations at the international level, China has created the Shanghai Cooperation Organization by leading new formations in the region. The structure, known as the Shanghai Five before Uzbekistan's accession, became an organization with the participation of Uzbekistan in 2002. (SCO, 2021) In addition, Japan, Korea and India have also made their interest in the region public with the agreements they have made with these countries. (Bıçakçı, 2008, p. 2) Special programs carried out by the European Union for the region have also been implemented. In this context, the EU implemented the first Strategy on Central Asia document for the region in 2007, and with this strategy, it explained the cooperation model developed with a regular political dialogue mechanism in many fields, especially the rule of law, education and environmental issues. (EU, 2019)

In the period of Islam Karimov, Uzbekistan experienced the difficult transformation process brought by the first years of independence. There was a civil war in Tajikistan, which is the border neighbor of Uzbekistan, and there was a severe military intervention of the USA in Afghanistan, especially after the terrorist attacks with planes in New York, USA on September 11, 2001. Especially the problems in Afghanistan triggering the Islamist movements in Uzbekistan's Fergana Valley was an important risk factor, and for this reason, Karimov had to choose to rule the country in a closed way.

The bombings of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan in Tashkent in 1999 and the assassination attempt on President Islam Karimov triggered the determined stance of the Karimov administration against the Islamic movements. (Mann, 2002, p. 294) On the other hand, Uzbekistan decided to withdraw from the 1992 Collective Security Agreement after the Uzbek groups in the region of Afghanistan close to the border with Uzbekistan, which were under the control of Uzbek General Rashid Dostum and Abdul-Malik, came under the control of the Taliban since 1999. (Akimbekov, 2002, p. 91) This was an approach that broke the security circle of Russia in the region, weakened the Russian presence in the region, and displayed an attitude against the interests of Russia and Iran in the region. On the other hand, for the USA, Uzbekistan has become an ally in the Afghanistan war with allocation of significant amounts of funds to Uzbek government in its struggle against Islamist extremism. (Luong, 2002, p. 62)

Tahir Yuldashev, who founded the Islamist Justice Party in the first years of Uzbekistan's independence, determined that the main program of the party was to transform Uzbekistan into an Islamic state governed by sharia, and spread the movement throughout the country with demands ranging from the transfer of government buildings in Namangan to the administration of the country with Islamic rules. After the party's activities were banned by the Karimov administration, Yuldashev moved to Tajikistan, where he sided with the Islamist opposition in the Tajik business war. The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, which they founded together with another Uzbek Islamist, Dzhumbai Hojjayev (also known as Juma Namangani) in Tajikistan in 1998, emerged as an organization established with the call for jihad to overthrow the President of Uzbekistan. (Mann, 2002, pp. 294-295) The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, which believes that the overthrow of Islam Karimov and the subsequent capture of the Fergana region will create a domino effect in Central Asia and that other Central Asian states have been captured by the Islamist ideology, has therefore chosen Uzbekistan as its center. (The Times of Central Asia, 2001, p. 4)

After the September 11 attacks, the USA included the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan in the list of terrorist organizations and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, which sided with the Taliban in the US intervention in Afghanistan, also

lost a great deal, weakening the influence of this movement in the political life of Uzbekistan. (Miller, 2004); (Stanford University, 2018) After that, the IMU changed its focus and settled in Pakistan with small Islamist groups in Central Asia, turned to fight the US forces, especially Afghanistan, and inflicted great losses with the large-scale Zarb-e-Azb operation launched by Pakistan in 2014. (Stanford University, 2018)

The significant decline of the Islamic movement of Uzbekistan after 2002 created an important opportunity for the Uzbekistan administration to prevent Islamist movements in the country, and allowed these movements to weaken. In this way, Uzbekistan was able to free itself from the influence of radical Islamist terrorist organizations in its immediate surroundings. On the other hand, it did not allow Islamist movements to flourish in domestic politics, and it prevented the Fetullahist Terrorist Organization (hereinafter FETÖ ), which has been used to be effective in all countries of Central Asia, from being active in the country by preventing school formations in the early period of independence. (Pulat, 2019, p. 42 and 44) In this respect, even though Kerimov created an iron curtain administration in the country, he can still be considered as a leader who was able to carry his country to the new era by preventing negative influence of the challenges in the region.

Kerimov also took care to maintain a balance policy with Russia. After the weakening of the control of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and the Taliban over the Uzbeks of Afghanistan, since 2006, Uzbekistan has again approached the Collective Security Treaty (restructured as the Collective Security Organization in 2002), which Russia considers strategic for the security structure in the region. (De Haas, 2017, p. 4) The re-mobilization of opposition movements in Uzbekistan and the color revolutions in the countries of the region shifted the security axis of Uzbekistan to Russia again. In this context, Uzbekistan decided to become a CSTO member again in 2008, but it did not approve any agreement signed within the scope of the organization and preferred not to participate in any joint military exercises. Finally, Uzbekistan resigned from membership in 2012. (Tolipov, 2013) During this period, Uzbekistan renewed and announced its own security concept. Accordingly, Uzbekistan has basically declared that it will stay away from four issues: the absence of a foreign military base in Uzbekistan, the absence of any military block membership, not participating in international peacekeeping operations, and not accepting the mediation of any foreign

power in the regional crises in Central Asia. (Tolipov, 2013)

Uzbekistan, which had removed the FETÖ from its country with drastic measures since the mid-1990s, was also careful and attentive in its relations with Türkiye, one of the countries where this structure was most influential at that time, and took care not to infect this structure. (Türk, 2008, p. 78) Because after the assassination attempt on Karimov in 1999, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) was not the only structure that was addressed; Schools and companies belonging to the FETÖ operating in the country were also banned by Uzbekistan. The Karimov administration did not allow the graduates of these schools to work in any field in the public sector in Uzbekistan. (Berberoğlu, 1999, p. 126) Following this, there was a regression in the relations between the two countries, and Uzbekistan also closed the Turkish teaching centers opened in the country by the Ministry of National Education of Türkiye. (Yanik, 2004, p. 296)

However, the developments in Türkiye caused a fluctuating course in the development of relations with Uzbekistan. The 10th President of the Republic of Türkiye, Ahmet Necdet Sezer, during his visit to Central Asian countries on May 16, 2000, refused to visit schools belonging to the FETÖ, unlike the previous Presidents Demirel and Özal. On the contrary, Sezer offered to the President of Kazakhstan Nazarbaev to open a school by the Ministry of National Education of the Republic of Türkiye. It is stated that Sezer made a similar offer to the President of Uzbekistan, Kerimov, and Kerimov gave a positive response to this approach of Sezer, despite the crisis experienced a very short time ago. (Yanik, 2004, p. 301)

On the other hand, the fact that the Justice and Development Party, which came to power in Türkiye in 2002, had warm relations with the FETÖ in the period until 2013, revealed a different situation from the understanding of the state represented by Sezer. (Toruk & Olkun, 2014, p. 383) For this reason, it is possible to evaluate that Uzbekistan may have refrained from taking a further step with Türkiye regarding schools. As a matter of fact, the positive response to Sezer's offer did not find a response in actual practice and an educational institution belonging to the Ministry of National Education of the Republic of Türkiye could not be opened in Uzbekistan.

Türkiye has tended to liquidate this structure from within the state and legal system

since the first FETÖ attempted to topple the government on 17 December 2013 through the judicial system. After the military coup attempt by the members of the FETÖ on July 15, 2016, the elements of this organization were eliminated from all institutions, especially military ones, the members of this structure were banned from public institutions, and they were expropriated by confiscating their schools in Türkiye. (Alkan, 2016, p. 260)

Although there is no concrete data on the extent to which the elimination of the FETÖ from Türkiye contributed to the relations between Türkiye and Uzbekistan, it would not be wrong to argue that the fact that the two countries took similar measures against the same organization, approximately 20 years apart, laid the groundwork for mutual trust. Because Uzbekistan has made the measures taken against this structure permanent from the first moment and has not allowed the existence of this structure in its country in the meantime. The fact that Türkiye started to follow the same attitude towards this structure contributed in every way to filling the trust gap. This situation can be evaluated as a factor that helps Uzbekistan to communicate with Türkiye more easily.

There are comments that the only goal of Uzbekistan since independence is to preserve the existence of the authoritarian regime, and that the prevention of external pressures and interventions is used as a tool to reinforce this goal. (Spechler & Spechler, 2010, p. 159) However, the interpretation that only the preservation of the regime and the continuation of Karimov's personal leadership is the main objective for Uzbekistan is far from being an adequate assessment on its own in explaining the process the country is going through. When we consider Kerimov's management approach and the factors that are experienced in the close geography of Uzbekistan and that directly threaten the existence of Uzbekistan, it is of course possible to evaluate that the main element that Uzbekistan has been trying to maintain since its independence in 1991 is its own existence.

### **7.1.1. The economy of Uzbekistan in the Karimov era**

Uzbekistan is one of the economically self-sufficient countries in Central Asia with its rich natural resources and economic potential. After independence, especially cheap labor, high agricultural potential, resources such as oil and natural gas contributed to

the rapid economic recovery of Uzbekistan. Especially with the "Foreign Investments Law" that came into force in 1998, the process of change in the country's economic structure has accelerated. Uzbekistan, which has also accelerated its multilateral cooperation activities, on the one hand strengthens its economic relations with the CIS countries through free trade agreements, on the other hand, the United Nations and UN affiliates (UNDP, UNCTAD, UNIDO), International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank (WB), It has also developed relations with organizations such as the Asian Development Bank, Islamic Development Bank, Economic Cooperation Organization, Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

Uzbekistan, which is geographically a double landlocked country, has at least two countries between it and the nearest sea. The double landlock location, which is a feature unique to only two countries in the world, emerges as a logistical disadvantage in Uzbekistan's trade. Therefore, it is understandable that one of the most important priorities for Uzbekistan is to develop cooperation with regional and international organizations and to become a center of attraction for investors. However, regional crises emerged as the most important factor that made it difficult for Uzbekistan to make this opening.

In 2011 the World Bank re-classified Uzbekistan from a low-income to a lower middle-income nation. (UNDP, 2021, p. 10); (World Bank, 2021)) Export taxes on gold, cotton and natural gas, which are the main export items of Uzbekistan, became the most important economic resources of this country after independence. (Spechler & Spechler, 2010, p. 160)





*Figure 37: Uzbekistan Map*

The economic policy of Uzbekistan has been a policy that helps to reduce the foreign dependency of the country. Although the fluctuating course of cotton and gold, which are the main export products, in the world markets increased the pressure on Uzbekistan, the government tried to make the country self-sufficient in the field of grain and energy and was successful in this. At this point, measures were taken to reduce imports, and imports were rendered unattractive with the consumption tax charged only on imported products.



*Figure : World cotton prices: 1990-2020*

Source: <https://www.macrotrends.net/2533/cotton-prices-historical-chart-data>

For Uzbekistan, cotton was used as the most basic means of social state requirements at first. Cotton was collected by the state and all of the cotton revenues were spent by the state. Although it was difficult to introduce cotton to world markets due to the Moscow-based transportation system from the Soviet Union era, Uzbekistan has fulfilled the social state requirements more successfully than all other Central Asian Republics, thanks to cotton production and the revenues arising from it. (Tsereteli, 2018, p. 15)

The depreciation of Uzbekistan's currency Sum against the US dollar and the formation of a dual exchange rate regime in the country emerged as a reaction to the global fluctuation in cotton prices, which was the country's main income source, in the 1990s. The rapid decline in cotton prices in 1996 was met with the decision of the Central Bank of Uzbekistan to control the exchange rate. This situation undermined the confidence in the price mechanism in the country in the long run and resulted in the exchange rate and interest rates being traded in the market at different levels from the levels announced by the Central Bank, resulting in a dominant black market in the country. (Tsereteli, 2018, p. 16) Although the government tried to liberalize the

exchange rate in 2003, it tried to reduce the demand for foreign exchange by putting serious obstacles in front of access to foreign exchange, and this created an important opportunity for the already established black market.

Events in the 1990s were important in establishing what came to be seen as the Uzbek economic model, which combined competent administration with a predilection for control over market mechanisms. Even before the turn of the century, many of the drawbacks of forex controls were evident to senior officials, which caused them to launch discussions on their possible termination. At the same time, many powerful people in the country benefitted from the opportunities for arbitrage and from the corruption inherent in currency controls. Moreover, rising world commodity prices alleviated pressures for change. In 2003, Uzbekistan made its currency convertible, but at the same time maintained many bureaucratic means of limiting access to foreign currency. Nevertheless, as the economy enjoyed steady growth between 2003 and 2008, the currency black-market more or less disappeared.

The official position on economic policy continued to stress that acceptable changes must necessarily be evolutionary in character. Officials acknowledged the need for change but did little to implement reforms in practice. When global demand for most commodities dipped in 2008-9, the government tightened bureaucratic control over foreign exchange access and a substantial black market re-emerged. The premium was about a third between 2009 and 2014, and then blew out in 2015, suggesting renewed resort to controls as commodity prices plummeted again.



*Figure 38: World Gold Prices: 1990-2020*

Source: <https://www.macrotrends.net/1333/historical-gold-prices-100-year-chart>, Accessed on November 12, 2021

Uzbekistan maintained the balanced structure in agriculture and industry, which was also present during the Soviet Union, in the first years of its independence. For this reason, as can be seen in the table below, the annual growth rate of Uzbekistan varying between 5% and 9% showed parallelism with the change in basic export items. However, unlike other Central Asian countries, Uzbekistan entered the 2010s as an economy that has reduced its dependence on natural resources in its exports. It is possible to say that since 2010, manufacturing and exports of products other than basic commodities have made a significant contribution to the country's exports and growth. Especially, the increase in the share of agricultural products and copper products in exports has reduced Uzbekistan's dependence on commodity prices.

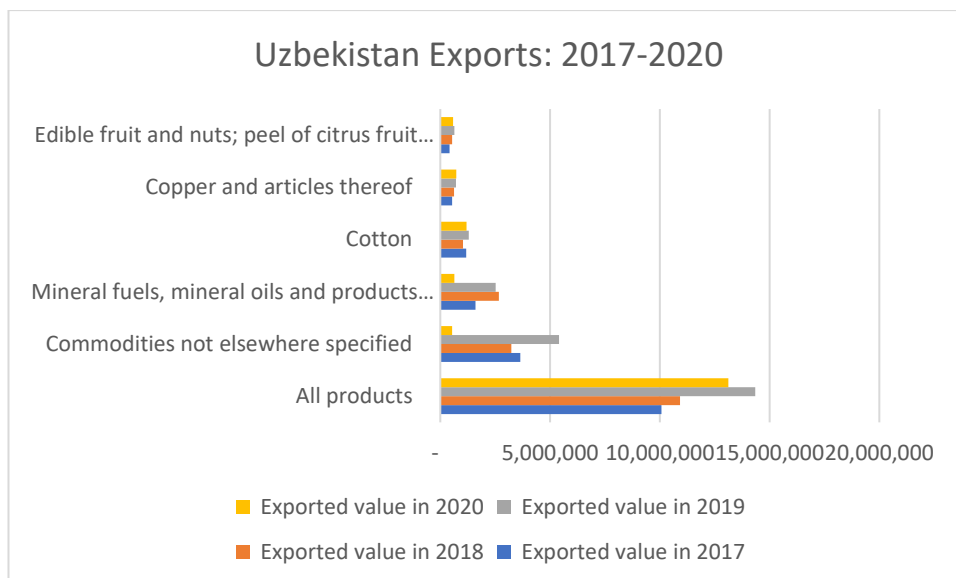


Figure 39: Uzbekistan's Exports: 2017-2020

Source: By author, based on data retrieved from Trademap, 2021

In addition, Uzbekistan attracted a total of 341.4 million USD of Foreign Direct Investment between 2010 and 2020. While it was far from being an attractive country in terms of FDI in the period from 1992 to 2006, FDI entry to the country increased rapidly since 2007, and by 2019, it became a country with an annual FDI inflow of 2.4 billion dollars. It is not just the post-Karimov period that FDI entry has increased. In the Karimov period, an increase in FDI has been observed, especially since 2010. The American car manufacturer, GM established a production facility in Asaka, which is 400 km. away from Tashkent in 2011, and this facility is Central Asia's only manufacturing plant capable of producing finished machined components such as cylinder heads, cylinder blocks and crankshafts. (GM Corporate Newsroom, 2011) It is stated that within the framework of the agreement signed by the company with the government of Uzbekistan in 2007, the amount of the investment made by half partnership is approximately 266 million dollars. (Uzbekistan Investment Agency, 2021)

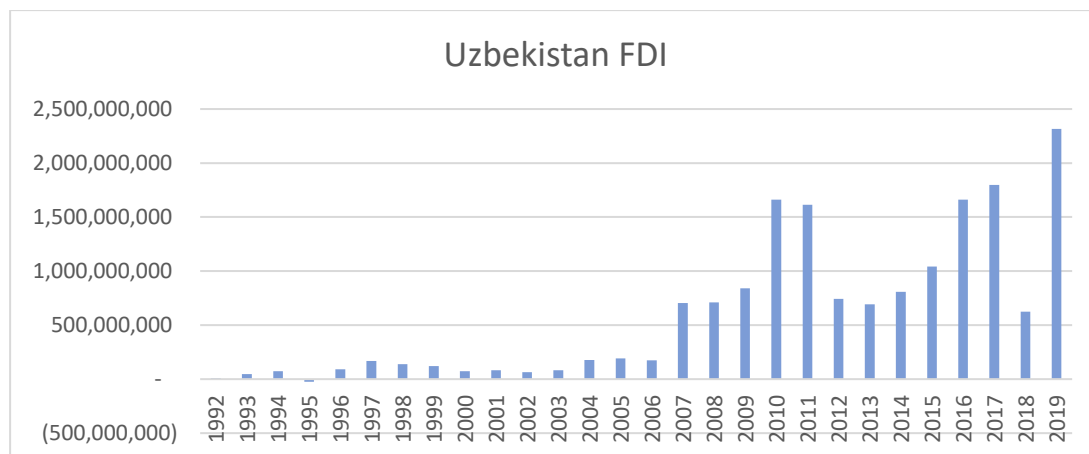


Figure 40: FDI Flow to Uzbekistan :

Source: Created by the author based on data retrieved from World Bank, 2021

The general economic situation for the Central Asian republics is that the rich natural resources of the region are the main driving force of economic development. This situation has often led to the formation of the so-called Dutch Disease, which was mentioned in the previous chapters. Despite the industrialization and development-oriented approach of Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbaev, the prosperity brought by the country's main export product, oil and natural gas, continued to hinder the country's expected development move. Gold in Kyrgyzstan and natural gas in Turkmenistan have been the main source of income for these countries. Although Kazakhstan has made relatively intensive efforts to ease its dependence on natural resources, since these two countries have not been able to make such an effort, there has been no significant change in the economic structure of these two countries in the intervening 20 years.

However, the situation in Uzbekistan is different. Although there is a self-sufficient wealth of natural resources, these natural resources are not in a position to provide welfare to the country through export, as in the case of Kazakhstan. On the other hand, as a self-sufficient country in agricultural production, Uzbekistan is distinguished from the others by being an attractive country for investors in terms of providing a relative security in its region, although it has a double landlocked situation in terms of its geographical location. In this way, Uzbekistan has succeeded in attracting Korean, Russian, European and American investors to its country. The rich historical texture

of the country has provided a suitable investment opportunity for tourism, gold mines have attracted the attention of western mining companies, and it has been seen as attractive for the investment of telecommunication companies with its 30 million population. As mentioned before, as the production base in Central Asia, Uzbekistan was preferred for investment by the US automotive manufacturer GM for production and distribution. The world's best quality gold (99.99% purity) is produced in Uzbekistan. Annual production capacity is around 70 tons. It is among the top 10 gold producers in the world. (Budulgan, 2020, p. 273)

Another important example of US investments in Uzbekistan is the production facility of Coca Cola. The history of this investment dates back to 1997, it was established as a joint venture of the US company and the state of Uzbekistan, but then experienced a turbulent political and trade process. (Eckel, 2021) In the last stage, the company was purchased by the Turkish company, which carries out and operates Coca Cola investments in many states in Central Asia. CCI company, which belongs to Anadolu Group originating from Türkiye, became the owner of 57,1% shares of Coca Cola Bottlers Uzbekistan of the Republic of Uzbekistan State Asset Management Agency (UzSAMA) for 252.28 million dollars. The remaining shares of CCBU are indirectly owned by The Coca-Cola Company. (Anadolu Ajansı, 2021)

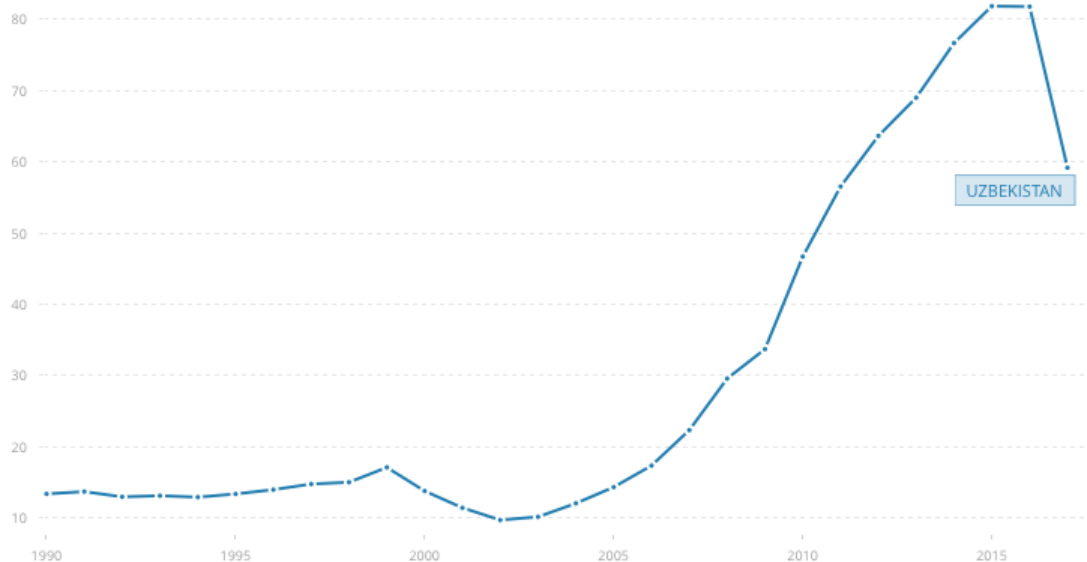


Figure 41: GDP Growth in Uzbekistan (1990-2017)

Source: World Bank, 2021

Looking at the GDP development of Uzbekistan since independence, a stability draws attention in the first years. In this period, the implementation of internal transformation efforts with a stable management approach has an important contribution. In Uzbekistan, which did not experience a remarkable growth with an average of 13 billion dollars in GDP between 1990 and 1999, regional political developments, especially the US operation in Afghanistan, and the assassination attempt against Karimov in the country, from that date onwards. The risky environment it has brought has also negatively affected the country's economy. The total GDP of the country decreased to 9.8 billion dollars in 2002, and it was only possible since 2004 for the country's GDP to return to the level of the 1990s.

However, a rapid GDP growth has been observed in the country since 2004. In 2004, the country experienced a rapid growth of 7.4%. After that, the growth chart of the country continued in a positive direction. By 2016, it has reached a GDP figure of 81.7 billion dollars.

In the 3-year period from 2017 to 2020, significant economic transformations were experienced in the country.



Figure 42: GDP Growth (2017-2020)

Source: Worldbank



As it is mentioned here, after a strong leader like Kerimov, managing an important country in a sensitive geography like Uzbekistan in a healthy transition process without causing confusion can be considered as an important achievement of the new administration. As a matter of fact, from 2017 to 2018, the GDP experienced a sharp decline, falling from \$59 billion to \$50 billion at current prices. It should be noted here that the devaluation of the Uzbekistan government and the transition from the double exchange rate regime to the free exchange regime had a great impact. In Karimov's period, in addition to the rate valid in official transactions in Uzbekistan, the rate valid in the market was applied at different levels. The elites of the administration saw this double exchange rate regime as indispensable for the country's economy, and they thought that foreign debts of the public sector were more sustainable. Since the country's banking system did not operate in a free market order, the exchange rate system determined by the central administration was based on banking transactions, but a very different exchange rate was applied over cash in the market. This system was not a sustainable system for an economy trying to integrate with the world, and was seen as the most important obstacle in front of the new administration's project to open up to the world.

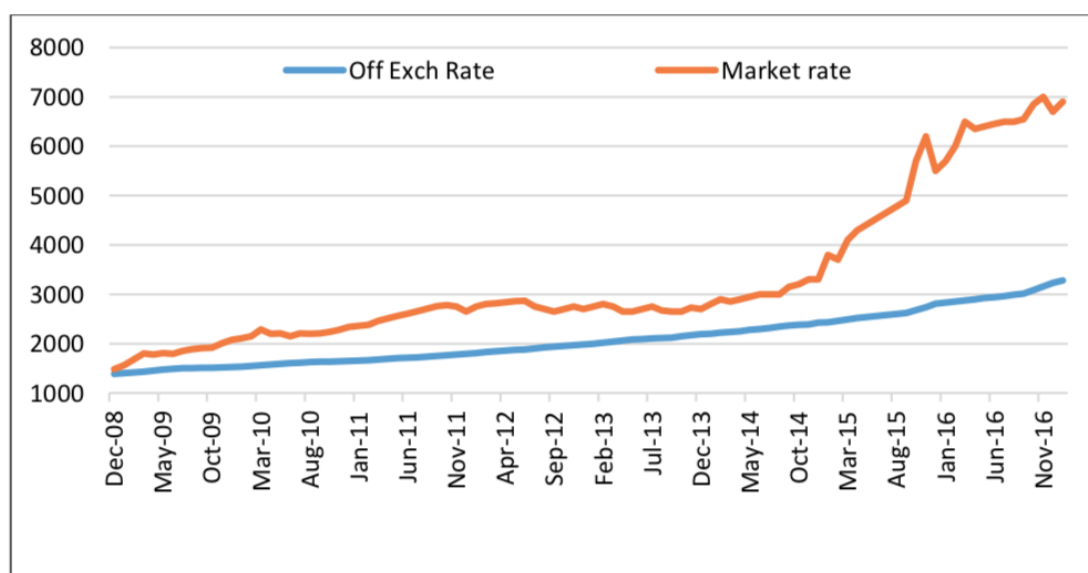


Figure 43: Exchange rate, sum/USD December 2008 – December 2016.

Source: Ben Slay, based on Central Bank of Uzbekistan data and UNDP calculations.

In the process of adapting to the free market, especially between 1992 and 2000, the

foreign debt stock of Uzbekistan increased. As can be seen from the chart, although there was a decrease in the external debt stock between 2000 and 2007, both the increase in the country's openness to foreign markets and the positive development in the economy after 2008 contributed to the increase in the debt. Even though the external debt has increased during this period, it is important that it is sustainable. This trend increased even more rapidly after 2016. Here, it is seen that both the effect of the devaluation in 2018 and the economic development moves made following the opening of the country to the outside. The external debt stock, which was 6.6 billion dollars in 2016, increased to 17 billion dollars by 2020.

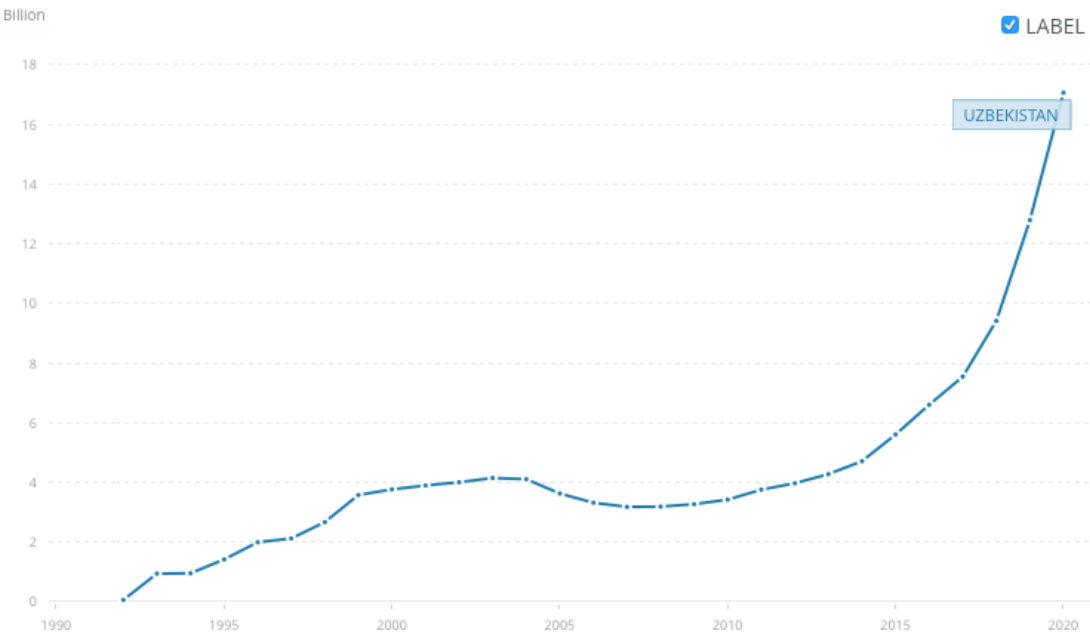
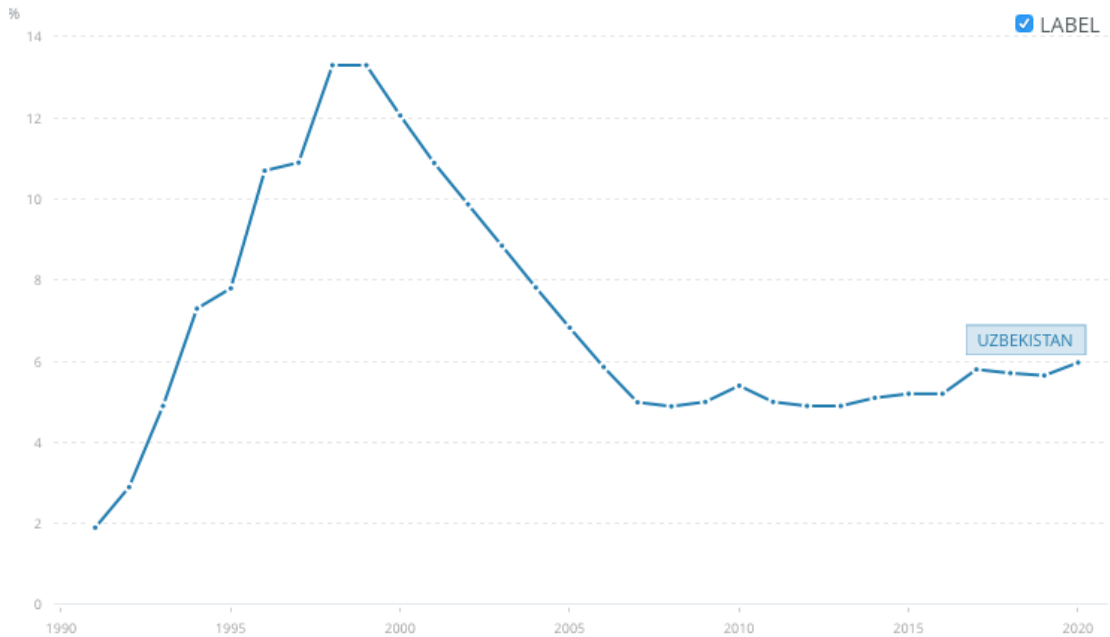


Figure 44: Uzbekistan’s Foreign Debt

Unemployment, which increased rapidly in the first years of independence in Uzbekistan, reached 13% by the year 2000, but then showed a rapid decline. By 2017, the unemployment rate in the country was below 6%.



*Figure 45: Unemployment in Uzbekistan*

Source: World Bank data, International Labour Organization, ILOSTAT database. Data retrieved on June 15, 2021.

In this context, the economy of Uzbekistan was directly affected by the economic turmoil of the transition period, the regional political conjuncture and the domestic political agenda during the Karimov period. However, it had a relatively successful development process thanks to the efforts to ensure diversity in the economy, to strengthen production items and to provide suitable environments for foreign investors, as well as the fact that the radical elements in the country were cleared, especially with the support of the USA, along with the Afghanistan war.

However, the double exchange rate regime implemented in the country destabilized the country's currency and transformed the economy on the street into a parallel structure. In addition, although a certain amount of legal action was taken to take attention of foreign investors, the operation in practice remained far from attracting business environment. (Tsereteli, 2018, p. 8)

### **7.1.2. Change in Uzbekistan After Karimov**

After the Karimov passed away, the transition of the administration in Uzbekistan took

place peacefully and the new administration determined the direction of the country as an economic cooperation and development move. Rather than making rapid reforms in the political field, it has become the country's most important priority to prepare an attractive environment for foreign investors, especially in the economic field. At this point, the struggle against the FETÖ, especially after the July 15 coup attempt in Türkiye in 2016, has created another element of trust that contributes to the development of relations for Uzbekistan.

Since 2017, the development of commercial and economic relations with Türkiye is considered an important breakthrough at the Uzbek state level. In addition to this, the new Uzbek administration has a balanced approach in its region. While it is negotiating a Preferential Trade Agreement with Türkiye on a bilateral basis, it continues the membership process to the World Trade Organization, and in parallel, (Umarov, Eshonqulova, & Gaziyeva, 2019, p. 11) gives the green light to full membership to the Russia-based Eurasian Economic Union. (Ziyadullaev & Ziyadullaev, 2020, p. 905) At this point, it is seen that Uzbekistan uses the mechanisms of trade and economic relations as a foreign policy tool. Uzbekistan multiplies its alternatives instead of leaning towards one side, while advancing on the basis of regional and global balances.

#### *7.1.2.1. Economic Reforms*

Uzbekistan entered into a rapid economic transformation program in the post-Karimov period.

The Central Bank of Uzbekistan, by rearranging the exchange rates of Uzbekistan, ended the double exchange rate regime in the country, and a floating exchange rate regime was introduced in 2017. This step is considered as the most important economic breakthrough of the country. (EBRD, 2018) The transition to currency liberalization has created a devaluation effect in Uzbekistan. Because the exchange rate in the market is much lower than the exchange rate in official transactions, the new exchange rate regime, which was left to fluctuate freely, was aligned with the exchange rate in the market, resulting in a rapid decline in the exchange rate. As a result of the devaluation, the currency lost its value by half. As of September 5, 2017, when the devaluation decision was taken, 1 Dollar increased from 4,210 Som to 8100 Som. (RFE/RL's Uzbek Service, 2017) This value actually corresponded to a lower

value than the market value of Uzbekistan in the double exchange rate regime (approximately 7,700 som). However, the transition to the free exchange rate regime allowed the official currency of Uzbekistan, Sum, to become convertible. Simultaneously, the restrictions on the use of foreign currency for legal entities and individuals were lifted, and this allowed the development of relations with foreign financial institutions. In this way, Uzbekistan signed an agreement of 1 billion dollars with international financial institutions such as Deutsche Bank, Commerzbank, and the EBRD in one year. (Khan, 2019, p. 67)

Table 25: Overview to Uzbekistan Economy after Karimov

	2016 <sup>a</sup>	2017 <sup>a</sup>	2018 <sup>a</sup>	2019 <sup>a</sup>	2020 <sup>b</sup>	2021 <sup>c</sup>	2022 <sup>c</sup>
<b>GDP at market prices</b>							
Nominal GDP (US\$ m)	81,741	59,072	50,378	57,723	57,709	63,632	70,815
Nominal GDP (Som m)	242,496	302,537	406,649	510,117	580,203	678,092	791,684
Real GDP (Som bn at 1997 prices)	112,639.9	117,665.3	124,073.9	131,268.2	133,431.2	141,549.9	149,829.8
<b>Expenditure on GDP (% real change)</b>							
GDP	6.1	4.5 <sup>b</sup>	5.4 <sup>b</sup>	5.8	1.6	6.1	5.8
<b>Origin of GDP (% real change)</b>							
Agriculture	6.6	5.2 <sup>b</sup>	1.1 <sup>b</sup>	2.5 <sup>b</sup>	3.0	3.0	2.5
Industry	6.7	4.5 <sup>b</sup>	9.5 <sup>b</sup>	8.9 <sup>b</sup>	0.7	6.2	7.0
Services	3.0	5.5 <sup>b</sup>	5.5 <sup>b</sup>	5.2 <sup>b</sup>	2.3	5.7	6.0
<b>Ratios, GDP at market prices (%)</b>							
Gross fixed investment/GDP	22.8	25.6	32.9	40.9	37.1	37.8	38.6
Exports of goods & services/GDP	14.9	21.8	28.0	30.3	26.3	29.0	28.6
Imports of goods & services/GDP	14.9	23.9	38.6	42.0	36.7	39.0	38.7
Gross national savings/investment	101.0	108.5	81.1	87.1	85.8	83.5	84.6
<b>Ratios, GDP at factor cost (%)</b>							
Agriculture/GDP	17.9	17.9 <sup>b</sup>	17.1 <sup>b</sup>	16.6 <sup>b</sup>	16.8	16.5	16.0
Industry/GDP	33.9	33.7 <sup>b</sup>	35.0 <sup>b</sup>	36.1 <sup>b</sup>	35.6	36.0	36.5
Services/GDP	48.3	48.5 <sup>b</sup>	47.9 <sup>b</sup>	47.3 <sup>b</sup>	47.6	47.5	47.5
<b>Population and income</b>							
Population (m)	31.4	32.0	32.5	33.0	33.5	33.9	34.4
Population growth (%)	1.7	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.5	1.4	1.3
Labour force (m)	17.5 <sup>b</sup>	17.7 <sup>b</sup>	18.0 <sup>b</sup>	18.3 <sup>b</sup>	18.6	18.8	19.1
GDP per head (US\$ at PPP)	7,256 <sup>b</sup>	7,597	8,073	8,560 <sup>b</sup>	8,678	9,279	9,908

<sup>a</sup> Actual. <sup>b</sup> Economist Intelligence Unit estimates. <sup>c</sup> Economist Intelligence Unit forecasts.

Source: Economist Intelligence Unit, 2021

President Mirziyoyev inherited a relatively stable economy. It would not be wrong to state that he has a high level of knowledge of the realities of the economy, since the economy he took over is an economic order that he has also served as the Prime Minister since 2003 and is familiar with. It will be more comfortable for him to implement many of the reform policies he designed during his prime ministry as the President from now on.

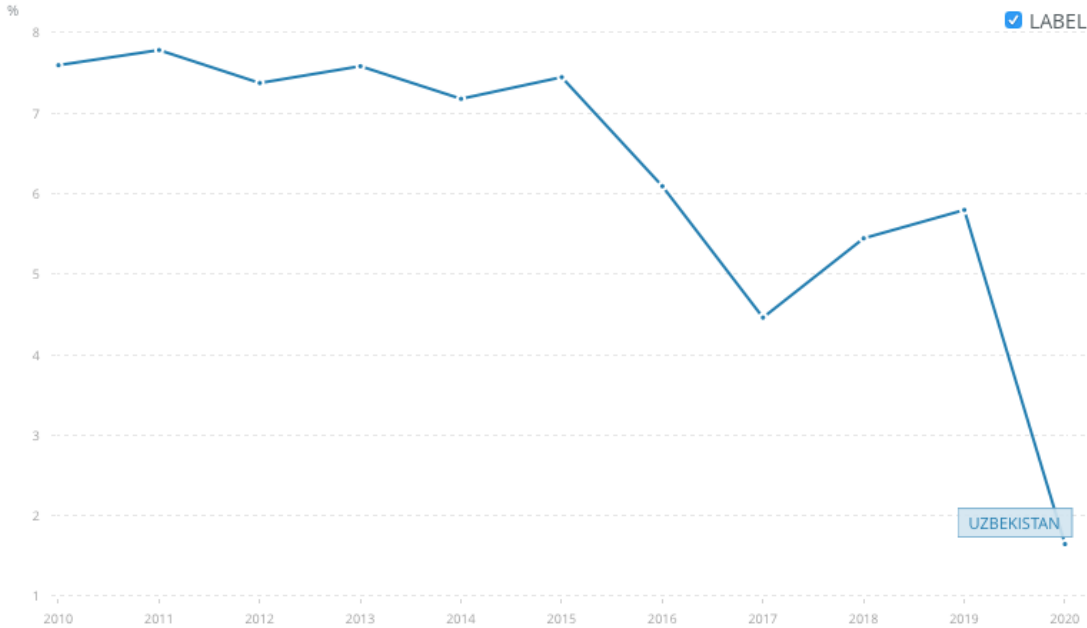
The most important policy implemented by Mirziyoyev was the radical change he made in the exchange rate regime in the country, as mentioned above. The reform agenda in the economic field, as in other reform efforts, is comprehensive, ambitious

and strongly articulated in relevant government documents. In February 2017, Uzbekistan published a comprehensive reform manifesto: 2017-2021 National Development Strategy. The strategy covers reforms in five key areas: (Khan M. U., 2019, pp. 66-67)

- (a) public administration reform
- (b) judicial reform, strengthening the rule of law and parliamentary reform
- (c) ensuring competitiveness in the agriculture and industry and services sector of Uzbekistan through economic development and liberalization
- (d) social reforms
- (e) security and foreign policy reforms

Concerning economic development and liberalization, the Strategy again adopts five basic policies. The first of these is to strengthen macroeconomic stability and strengthen macroeconomic stability and achieve high growth.

In terms of growth, which is the first target, Uzbekistan has continued to grow steadily during the Karimov period, especially since 2010. Considering its growth since Mirziyoyev's period, it is seen that this stable growth continues.



*Figure 46: GDP Annual Growth (%)*

Source: World Bank Data, 2021

Although the growth has continued, a significant decrease is observed in the growth rate. It should be emphasized that the reason for this is not the failure of the reforms. The devaluation experienced in 2017 was a risky decision that could have a negative impact on growth. There are signs to suggest that this is known to be so, and that it was taken for granted. It is seen that a stable exchange rate regime is the most important condition for the country to attract investors.

The second policy is to increase competitiveness in the national economy by deepening structural reforms and diversifying and modernizing the leading industry. In this regard, the reforms are evaluated in the report for the year 2017-2018 prepared by the EBRD. At this point, the report states that Uzbekistan has made one of the most important advances within the scope of the World Bank's Doing Business 2018 report, and thanks to the implemented reforms, it has managed to be among the 10 economies showing the most development in the Europe and Central Asia region. (EBRD, 2018) Uzbekistan was 69 out of 190 countries in the latest Doing Business Report ranking. (World Bank, 2020) This is essentially a significant improvement when compared to 2017 and 2018. Because Uzbekistan ranked 87th in the said report in 2017; In 2018, it was ranked 74th. It is an important development that Uzbekistan, which was in the 76th place in the 2019 report, jumped to the 69th place.

In the report in 2020, the most prominent areas in which Uzbekistan has reformed are listed as follows.

✓ Protecting minority investors

Uzbekistan strengthened minority investor protections by increasing shareholders' rights and role in major corporate decisions, clarifying ownership and control structures, and requiring greater corporate transparency.

✓ Paying taxes

Uzbekistan made paying taxes easier by merging the infrastructure tax with the corporate income tax.

✓ Trading across borders

Uzbekistan made trading across borders easier by introducing risk-based inspections and simplifying import documentary compliance.

✓ Enforcing contracts

Uzbekistan made enforcing contracts easier by introducing a consolidated law on voluntary mediation, establishing financial incentives for the parties to attempt mediation, and publishing performance measurement reports on local commercial courts.”

The rapid progress in the first year after Kerimov is explained in the Doing Business Report for the following reasons:

“✓ Starting a business

Uzbekistan made starting a business easier by rolling out a new platform for business registration, starting with name verification as the first step.

✓ Dealing with construction permits Uzbekistan made dealing with construction permits easier by streamlining the process of obtaining approvals of land plot allocations from various agencies.

✓ Getting electricity

Uzbekistan streamlined the process of obtaining an electricity connection by introducing a turnkey service at the utility that fulfills all connection-related services, including the design and completion of the external connection.

✓ Protecting minority investors Uzbekistan strengthened minority investor protections by increasing corporate transparency requirements.

✓ Paying taxes

Uzbekistan made paying taxes easier and less costly by introducing an electronic system for filing and paying value added tax, land tax, unified social payments, corporate income tax, infrastructure development tax, environmental tax, personal pension fund contributions and cumulative pension contributions. However, increases in land tax rates made paying taxes more costly. (World Bank, 2020)

In the EBRD report, it is stated that among the most important reforms of the country, significant progress has been made in areas such as ease of doing business as well as facilitating access to electricity, facilitating tax payment, facilitating construction permits and protecting small investors. In this context, the establishment of electronic payment systems to facilitate tax payment is expressed as an important step in the report.

The report also attaches special importance to the liberalization of the exchange rate regime and states that after the official control over the exchange rate was ended on September 5, 2017, the official exchange rate was devalued by 48%, and the removal of capital control facilitated international payments and increased confidence in the system.

The third objective of the economic pillar of the strategy is modernization with an intensive development move in the agricultural sector. The fourth is the continuation of institutional and structural reforms aimed at reducing the state's presence in the



economy, further strengthening the protection of rights and private property, and stimulating the development of small business and private entrepreneurship. The fifth is the comprehensive and balanced social and economic development of regions, districts and cities. (Tsereteli, 2018, p. 25)

#### *7.1.2.2. Political Reforms*

The field of economy is not the only field in which the new era has reformed. In the political field, a different path was started to be followed from the Karimov period, and important steps were taken in domestic and foreign policy. A different wind started to make itself felt in the country compared to the previous period, and positive developments began to occur in many areas from economy to social life, from freedom of expression to developments in tourism. (Budulgan, 2020, p. 177)

Mirziyoyev, who took radical decisions in domestic politics, also made important breakthroughs in regional relations. (Khan M. U., 2019, p. 67) (Khan, 2019, p.67) Visiting Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan in 2017, Mirziyoyev signed many agreements with Kazakhstan. (Putz, 2017) Visiting Moscow in the same year, Mirziyoyev signed agreements with Russia that included a financial-focused investment of 12 billion dollars and a trade of 3.8 billion dollars. (Putz, 2017). Mirziyoyev attended the US-Arab and Islamic Countries Summit, and after his visit to Kyrgyzstan in 2017, the border gates that Uzbekistan had unilaterally closed since 2010 were opened to Kyrgyzstan. (Devonshire-Ellis, 2021) In addition, important steps have been taken to solve the border problems of the two countries. It is noteworthy that the Patar-Andarhan border gate on the Tajikistan-Uzbekistan border was opened to crossings and a 30-day visa exemption was introduced between the two countries. (Budulgan, 2020, p. 178)

Uzbekistan's resolution of the border problems that have been going on for a long time with its border neighbors by making dialogue and preliminary concessions has been an important turning point for Uzbekistan's foreign policy of the new period. Opinions have also begun to emerge that these agreements will provide important commercial, economic, cultural and humanitarian cooperation opportunities for Uzbekistan, and new initiatives in border trade in public policies. (Sadibakosev, 2021, p. 138)

As mentioned in detail in the economic reforms section, in 2017, Uzbekistan published a national development strategy for 2017-2021.

The goal of the strategy for 2017-2021 is defined as to radically increase the efficiency of ongoing reforms, create conditions for the comprehensive and accelerated development of the state and society, implement priority areas for modernizing the country and liberalize all spheres of life. (Devonshire-Ellis, 2021)

In addition to the aforementioned reforms, it is seen that the government has invested and announced projects worth 40 billion dollars in 5 years, including energy, infrastructure, chemicals, pharmaceuticals and other sectors. Within this, it is seen that the government also plans to establish four new Free Economic Zones in Samarkand, Bukhara, Fergana and Khorezm regions in order to attract foreign investments and advanced technologies to the country. (EBRD, 2018, p. 3)

## **7.2. Economic and Trade Relations Between Türkiye and Uzbekistan**

Following the end of the Karimov era, a new window of opportunity has been opened for Türkiye to regulate relations with Uzbekistan. From this window, Türkiye tried to take with fast steps and can be considered to be significantly successful in this.

Uzbekistan is considered as the key partner state in Central Asia for Türkiye, whereas Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are more involved in the Russian integration project, Turkmenistan still believes in the success of its policy of isolation, and Tajikistan cannot yet be regarded as a reliable and long-term partner. As a result, Türkiye as one of the biggest economies of the world has a good investment potential for the Uzbek economy. (Salomov, 2019, p. 12)

Türkiye's last contact with Uzbekistan at the Presidential level was in 2000, when its 10th President Ahmet Necdet Sezer visited Uzbekistan in 2000. The last high-level visit after that was made in 2003 by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who was the Prime Minister of the Republic of Türkiye at that time, and there has been no high-level visit between the two countries since then. (Göksedef, 2016)

However, the issue of sending an independent observer requested by the United Nations regarding the events in Andijan city of Uzbekistan on 13 May 2005 was

rejected by the Uzbek administration. Following this, the fact that Türkiye also voted against Uzbekistan in the session held by the UN General Assembly to react to the Andijan events led to a return to the pre-2003 relations. (Human Rights Watch, 2005); (Edel & Josua, 2018, p. 888)

After this process, although the Turkish authorities tried to establish contact with the Uzbek authorities on many occasions. these contacts did not have a serious effect on the improvement of relations. The first high-level meeting with Uzbekistan was held in February 2014 during the Sochi Winter Olympics at that time. It took place between Erdogan, who was the Prime Minister, and Kerimov, the President of Uzbekistan. This is the first meeting held after 2003. (Cumhuriyet, 2014) Immediately afterwards, Ankara appointed Namık Güner Erpul as the long-held Tashkent Embassy. (UZ Daily, 2014) After the ambassador was appointed to Tashkent, then Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu made his first official visit on July 10, 2014, first at the level of foreign minister in years. (Taşkömür, 2017)

After this period, the most important step taken for the normalization of relations between the two countries was the visit of Turkish President Erdogan to the cemetery of Islam Karimov on November 18, 2016, following the death of Islam Karimov, who passed away on September 2, 2016. (Anadolu Ajansı, 2016) This visit was the most important sign in terms of the course of relations between Türkiye and Uzbekistan after Karimov. After that, with the Joint Declaration signed by the two Presidents within the scope of the visit of Mirziyoyev, who was elected as the President of Uzbekistan, to Türkiye on October 25, 2017, the perspective on the future relations of the two countries, especially the economic and commercial relations, was drawn. (Yalınkılıçlı, 2018, p. 33)

After this process, a rapid transformation began to be experienced in the economic field, especially in the trade volume.

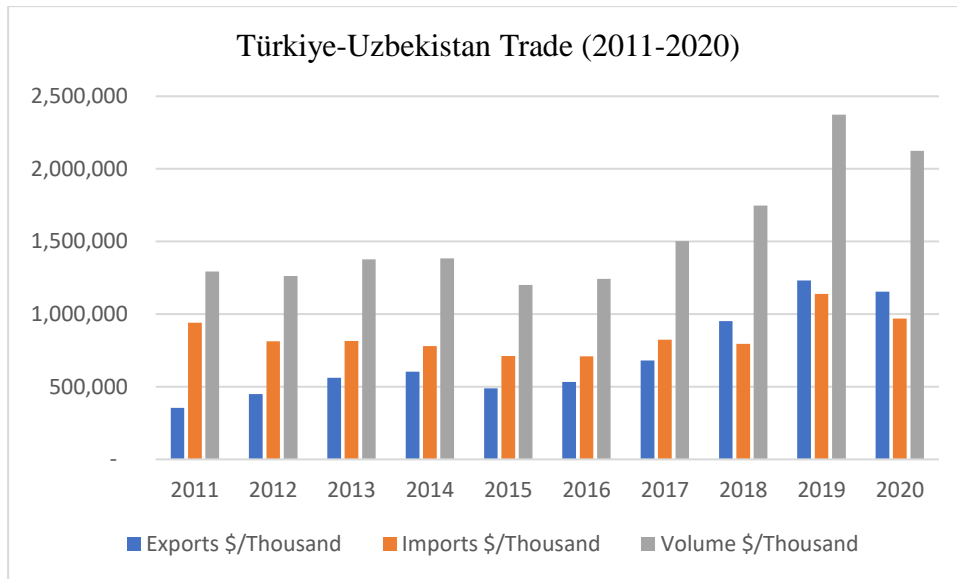


Figure 47: Türkiye-Uzbekistan Trade (2011-2020)

Source: Created by author based on data retrieved from TÜİK

Bilateral relations and contacts have increased since the autumn months of 2016, and in parallel, a significant movement is observed in the bilateral trade volume. As a matter of fact, when the last ten years of the trade volume between the two countries are examined, an average increase of 1.7% was observed until 2016, while a very rapid increase has been observed since 2017. It is not possible to think that this is independent of the change in the political climate.

It will not be wrong to determine that another factor in the rapid increase in this trade volume is the effect of bilateral commercial and economic mechanisms between the two countries, whose activities have been frozen for a long time, within the scope of the positive atmosphere created after Erdogan's visit.

Table 26: Türkiye-Uzbekistan Trade

Year	Exports \$/Thousand	% Change in Exports	Imports \$/Thousand	% Change in Imports	Volume \$/Thousand	% Change in Volume
2011	354,490	25.4%	939,882	9.1%	1,294,372	13.1%
2012	449,883	26.9%	813,287	-13.5%	1,263,171	-2.4%
2013	562,526	25.0%	815,417	0.3%	1,377,943	9.1%

*table cont'd*

<b>2014</b>	603,013	7.2%	780,707	-4.3%	1,383,720	0.4%
<b>2015</b>	488,580	-19.0%	711,555	-8.9%	1,200,135	-13.3%
<b>2016</b>	533,018	9.1%	709,292	-0.3%	1,242,311	3.5%
<b>2017</b>	680,104	27.6%	823,275	16.1%	1,503,379	21.0%
<b>2018</b>	951,458	39.9%	795,545	-3.4%	1,747,003	16.2%
<b>2019</b>	1,232,077	29.5%	1,140,193	43.3%	2,372,270	35.8%
<b>2020</b>	1,154,082	-6.3%	969,981	-14.9%	2,124,063	-10.5%

Source: TÜİK, 2021

One of the most important steps in these accelerating relations is the implementation of the Joint Economic Commission mechanism, which has been inactive since 2007 and co-chaired by the Deputy Prime Ministers of the two countries.

After the aforementioned grave visit of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Uzbekistan President Mirziyoyev made his first Presidential visit to Türkiye after 21 years on 25 October 2017. During that visit, the leaders of the two countries made a joint statement focusing on trade, investments, business forum and tourism. (Anadolu Ajansı, 2017)

Afterwards, the Joint Economic Commission meeting co-chaired by Deputy Prime Minister Yıldırım Tuğrul Türkeş and his Uzbek counterpart Deputy Prime Minister Rustam Azimov and the high-level visit to which Minister of Economy Nihat Zeybekci and Minister of Culture and Tourism Nabi Avcı also attended. (Anadolu Ajansı, 2017)

The Joint Economic Commission Meeting held on May 25, 2017 (Anadolu Ajansı, 2017) included important agenda items in terms of Uzbekistan-Türkiye relations in many fields. In parallel with the Protocol of the Joint Economic Commission Meeting signed on this date, the Agreement on the Prevention of Double Taxation and the Mutual Promotion and Protection of Investments, which are of great importance in terms of economic and commercial relations between the two countries, were also signed in the presence of the Deputy Prime Ministers. (Anadolu Ajansı, 2017)

Chart: Bilateral Economic and Trade Related Agreements between Türkiye and Uzbekistan

Table 27: Türkiye-Uzbekistan Agreements

Name of the Agreement	Date of Signing	Türkiye's Official Gazette Date and Number
Agreement on the Establishment of a Joint Economic Commission	09.07.1995	07.01.1996/22516
Agreement on Mutual Administrative Assistance and Cooperation in Customs Matters	18.11.1997	22.12.1997/23208
Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreement	13.04.1998	16.05.2000/24051
Agreement on Mutual Promotion and Protection of Investments	25.10.2017	02.04.2020/31087
Agreement on Prevention of Double Taxation	25.10.2017	28.03.2020/31082
5th Term Meeting of the Joint Economic Commission	23.07.2019	25.12.2019/30989
Agreement on the Action Plan Prepared within the framework of 5th Term Joint Economic Commission Meeting	19.02.2020	10.12.2020/31330
6th Term Meeting of the Joint Economic Commission	28.06.2021	31.08.2021/31584

Source: Compiled from Official Gazette of the Republic of Türkiye

### 7.3. Joint Economic Commission Meetings and Action Plans

In the Joint Economic Meeting held after this date, a draft action plan was mentioned by taking steps that make the legal infrastructure of the relations more concrete, and they mutually committed to complete their work on this action plan until the next High Level Strategic Cooperation Council meeting to be convened under the chairmanship of the Presidents. (T.C Cumhurbaşkanlığı, 2019)<sup>41</sup>

As a matter of fact, unlike the Joint Economic Commission Meeting Protocols with other Central Asian countries, an Action Plan was also signed on 19 February 2020, following the 5th Term JEC meeting with Uzbekistan on 23 July 2019, related to this

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<sup>41</sup> Protocol of the 5th Term Joint Economic Commission Meeting

JEC Meeting Protocol.<sup>42</sup> This Action Plan, which was signed by the Vice President of Türkiye, the Co-Chairs of the Joint Economic Commission, and by the Deputy Prime Minister of Uzbekistan, emerged as an ambitious action plan that envisages signing a Preferential Trade Agreement in its first article. Although the Preferential Trade Agreement will be mentioned in the future, a text that sets such a concrete and ambitious target when compared to similar agreements signed between Central Asian countries and Türkiye is an indicator of the importance given to the subject by the two countries.

The text also draws attention to the contribution of Türkiye to the transformation process of Uzbekistan. For example, Article 45 of the Action Plan includes cooperation for the modernization of the land registry, cadastre and mapping system of Uzbekistan, and the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization of the Republic of Türkiye is determined as the responsible institution in this regard. Similarly, the development of the tourism potential of Uzbekistan is included in the article 47 and the Turkish Cooperation and Development Agency (TİKA), a state institution of Türkiye, has been appointed as the authorized institution. Strengthening the educational infrastructure of Uzbekistan, ensuring the modernization of agriculture and similar issues that will contribute to the development of Uzbekistan are included in the action plan as Türkiye's duties.

This shows that the Joint Economic Commission protocol signed with Uzbekistan and the action plan attached to it is a text in which the contribution to be made by Türkiye in the transformation process of Uzbekistan is discussed in detail, beyond the development of commercial relations. Therefore, the JEC mechanism emerges not only as an economic mechanism but also as a political mechanism in Uzbekistan-Türkiye relations, and turns into a ground on which the mutual targets of the Presidents of the two countries are embodied. The action plan has been prepared and signed with a very broad perspective, from the steps to be taken in the field of education to the path to be followed in the fight against doping, to the preferential trade agreement in cooperation in the field of defense industry. Issues that are not directly related to the

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<sup>42</sup> Agreement on the Action Plan Prepared within the framework of 5th Term Joint Economic Commission Meeting, Article 1. Official Gazette of the Republic of Türkiye, December 10, 2020, No: 31330

economy, such as rural planning, use of chip concrete in buildings, unregistered employment and labor are also included in the action plan.

The action plan system was also taken as a basis at the next Joint Economic Commission meeting. The 6th term JEC meeting protocol, which was signed by the Vice President of the Republic of Türkiye and the Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Uzbekistan on 28 June 2021 in Tashkent, consists of the protocol text and the action plan.<sup>43</sup>

The most striking point in this Action Plan is that the signing of the Preferential Trade Agreement is included as an action in the first article. (Article 1)

Similarly, it is understood that the main spirit in the Action Plan is to support Uzbekistan by Türkiye, such as development trainings and supports to be given to Uzbekistan by Türkiye beyond bilateral and mutual cooperation. Similarly, in this Action Plan, it is noteworthy that there are mutual actions in many fields that do not directly concern the economy, such as sports, human resources, and urbanism.

#### **7.4. Preferential Trade Agreement**

Article 1 of the Action Plan of the Fifth Term Joint Economic Commission Meeting held in 2019 for the conclusion of a Preferential Trade Agreement between the two countries includes the following provision: “A Joint Working Group will be established to actively carry out detailed work on the signing of the Preferential Trade Agreement between the two countries, the Agreement will be expanded to cover a much wider product range.” (Official Gazette of the Republic of Türkiye, August 31, 2021)

Preferential trade agreement is a form of integration that is in the first stage of economic integration models. PTA can be defined as an international treaty with restrictive membership and including any articles that apply only to its members and aim to secure or increase their respective market access. (Limão, 2016, p. 6) Within the framework of this definition, what is expected from the Preferential Trade

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<sup>43</sup> Protocol of the 6th Term Joint Economic Commission Meeting, Official Gazette of the Republic of Türkiye, August 31, 2021, No: 31584



Agreement, if such an agreement is made bilaterally, is to adopt an integration model in which the parties mutually provide tariff reductions to each other at certain rates.

Türkiye is a member of the World Trade Organization. In this respect, it is possible for Türkiye to make an arrangement that can provide advantage to any country in terms of customs tariffs compared to other countries, only within the framework of WTO rules. (Article XXIV of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade 1994)

On the other hand, Türkiye also has a customs union with the European Union. Within the scope of the customs union, which covers with industrial products and industrial shares in agricultural products, Türkiye does not have option to involve in any engagement with third countries regarding the products covered by the customs union. (EU Türkiye Association Council Decision No: 1/95)

Uzbekistan's membership negotiation with the World Trade Organization is continuing, and there are statements by the authorized bodies that it has a high level of will for membership. (WTO, 2021) However, it is not part of a preferential regime other than the current Free Trade Agreement with the Commonwealth of Independent States. Since there is no regulation such as a customs union or common customs tariff within the scope of the CIS Free Trade Agreement, Türkiye does not have the same restrictions as to establish a preferential regime with a third country.

In this framework, it is possible to conclude a preferential trade agreement between Türkiye and Uzbekistan for agricultural products. The fact that Türkiye also sees this as an opportunity to improve its relations with Uzbekistan becomes clear with its inclusion in the Action Plan. It is seen that the provision regarding the Preferential Trade Agreement is also included as the first line of action in the next JEC meeting protocol: “Negotiations on the Preferential Trade Agreement will continue and efforts to prepare the Agreement for signature will be accelerated.” (Official Gazette of the Republic of Türkiye, August 31, 2021)

In the action plans signed at the level of Vice President and Deputy Prime Minister for two consecutive years in 2020 and 2021 and published in the Official Gazette, a common will for the signing of the Preferential Trade Agreement is seen. In addition, the texts refer to the ongoing negotiations on this issue. This situation shows that there

are discussions and negotiations on this issue between the technical delegations of the two countries. As a matter of fact, at the Business Forum meeting organized by DEİK in Ankara simultaneously with the JEC Meeting held on October 25, 2019, Vice President of Türkiye Fuat Oktay stated that the priority target is to expand the scope of the studies on the Preferential Trade Agreement, which the relevant Ministries continue with great effort, and to conclude quickly. (DEİK, 2021) From the expression "expanded and concluded quickly" in this statement, it is understood that there is a certain agreement between the two parties, but efforts are being made to expand the scope. The agreement was signed on March 29, 2022 on the occasion of Presidential visit from Türkiye to Uzbekistan. (Anadolu Ajansı, 2022) However, since there is no publicly announced draft Agreement or a list of mutual concessions, it is not possible to conduct a more detailed analysis as of the date of this thesis.

However, Considering the economic structures of the two countries and the fact that it is technically impossible for Türkiye to enter into an engagement in any product group other than agricultural products due to the customs union with the EU, it is possible to make some inferences. 36% of the economy of Uzbekistan consists of services and 28.7% of agriculture. (Statista, 2022) According to Trademap data, agricultural products have a significant share in the export of Uzbekistan. In 2021, the total exports of Uzbekistan were 14 billion dollars, and the total exports of agricultural products were 1.2 billion dollars.

*Table 28: Uzbekistan's main export goods*

HS Code	Product label	Exported value in 2019	Exported value in 2020	Exported value in 2021
'TOTAL	All products	14,344,696	13,127,295	14,034,977
'08	Edible fruit and nuts; peel of citrus fruit or melons	643,679	577,825	511,759
'07	Edible vegetables and certain roots and tubers	468,064	400,431	404,080
'23	Residues and waste from the food industries; prepared animal fodder	14,215	22,240	46,551
'13	Lac; gums, resins and other vegetable saps and extracts	33,830	35,117	38,579

table cont'd

'20	Preparations of vegetables, fruit, nuts or other parts of plants	47,921	35,353	37,801
'12	Oil seeds and oleaginous fruits; miscellaneous grains, seeds and fruit; industrial or medicinal ...	27,396	30,658	37,546
'22	Beverages, spirits and vinegar	12,855	17,673	18,172
'24	Tobacco and manufactured tobacco substitutes	17,143	10,564	17,825
'05	Products of animal origin, not elsewhere specified or included	6,039	12,298	17,331
'04	Dairy produce; birds' eggs; natural honey; edible products of animal origin, not elsewhere ...	8,762	7,765	14,654
'19	Preparations of cereals, flour, starch or milk; pastrycooks' products	6,366	8,161	10,563
'10	Cereals	26,950	15,212	7,778
'18	Cocoa and cocoa preparations	7,065	4,906	7,145
'15	Animal or vegetable fats and oils and their cleavage products; prepared edible fats; animal ...	16,097	30,865	6,513
'01	Live animals	2,321	4,891	6,383
'17	Sugars and sugar confectionery	4,777	5,600	5,769
'06	Live trees and other plants; bulbs, roots and the like; cut flowers and ornamental foliage	47,886	64,157	3,766
'21	Miscellaneous edible preparations	1,935	2,667	3,438
'14	Vegetable plaiting materials; vegetable products not elsewhere specified or included	412	312	2,828
'03	Fish and crustaceans, molluscs and other aquatic invertebrates	509	595	556
'16	Preparations of meat, of fish or of crustaceans, molluscs or other aquatic invertebrates	196	314	366
'02	Meat and edible meat offal	214	85	204

Source: Trademap, 2022, Thousand USD

Agricultural products have a significant weight in the export of Uzbekistan to Türkiye. While the total export to Türkiye was 1.6 billion dollars in 2021, the share of agricultural products in this export is 2% with 25.2 million dollars. The main export products of Uzbekistan are copper and cotton.

*Table 29: Uzbekistan's main exports to Türkiye*

<b>Product code</b>	<b>Product label</b>	<b>Value in 2019</b>	<b>Value in 2020</b>	<b>Value in 2021</b>
'TOTAL	All products	1,149,658	949,066	1,638,927
'74	Copper and articles thereof	562,892	475,475	777,232
'52	Cotton	210,574	226,885	506,319
'79	Zinc and articles thereof	122,535	114,525	125,133
'39	Plastics and articles thereof	49,091	61,287	86,039
'85	Electrical machinery and equipment and parts thereof; sound recorders and reproducers, television ...	51,741	33,306	39,829
1-'24	Agricultural Products	43,726	21,549	25,214

Source: Trademap, 2022, Thousand USD

The share of agricultural products in Uzbekistan's imports from Türkiye is 3%, corresponding to a total import of 46 million dollars. It is seen that there is a balanced foreign trade structure between the two countries. Agricultural products, which are the scope of TTA, have a similar weight in the trade between the two countries.

*Table 30: Uzbekistan's imports from Türkiye*

<b>Product code</b>	<b>Product label</b>	<b>Value in 2019</b>	<b>Value in 2020</b>	<b>Value in 2021</b>
'TOTAL	All products	1,296,689	1,072,526	1,655,968
'84	Machinery, mechanical appliances, nuclear reactors, boilers; parts thereof	510,453	414,033	689,177
'85	Electrical machinery and equipment and parts thereof; sound recorders and reproducers, television ...	106,105	41,487	125,300

table cont'd

'39	Plastics and articles thereof	76,307	66,508	92,125
'73	Articles of iron or steel	65,421	44,918	84,478
'94	Furniture; bedding, mattresses, mattress supports, cushions and similar stuffed furnishings; ...	97,989	65,855	70,917
'30	Pharmaceutical products	15,415	54,461	66,223
'38	Miscellaneous chemical products	47,390	51,553	55,438
'32	Tanning or dyeing extracts; tannins and their derivatives; dyes, pigments and other colouring ...	40,902	40,904	50,123
1-'12	Agricultural Products	18,204	20,746	46,862
'96	Miscellaneous manufactured articles	25,431	33,890	41,295

Source: Trademap, 2022, Thousand USD

When the share of agricultural products in the trade between the two countries is evaluated, although the lists and concessions rates are not clear yet, it can be evaluated that the Preferential Trade Agreement is not the main objective to create a very advantageous situation for either party. Türkiye's export of agricultural products in 2021 is 25 billion dollars. Uzbekistan's exports to the world in the same products amounted to 1.5 billion dollars. It would not be logical to think that Türkiye competes with Uzbekistan in agricultural products, which exports 16.6 times more than Uzbekistan. In this case, it is understood that Türkiye has made a Preferential Trade Agreement arrangement in order to provide an opening in favor of Uzbekistan. As a matter of fact, Türkiye provides technical training support to Uzbekistan in agricultural production<sup>44</sup>, and Technical support projects are carried out by TIKA for agricultural production in Uzbekistan<sup>45</sup>.

Another point that draws attention in the accelerated relations between the two

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<sup>44</sup> <https://www.tarimorman.gov.tr/TRGM/tamtest/Haber/50/Tamtest-%E2%80%93-Ozbekistan-Qttsm-Test-Merkezi-Egitim-Programi-Gerceklestirildi> Accessed on December 12, 2022

<sup>45</sup> [https://www.tika.gov.tr/tr/haber/tika%27dan\\_ozbekistan%27da\\_tarim\\_egitim\\_projesi-68682](https://www.tika.gov.tr/tr/haber/tika%27dan_ozbekistan%27da_tarim_egitim_projesi-68682) Accessed on December 12, 2022

countries is the assignment of high-level consultants from Türkiye to Uzbekistan. For example, Sadık Badak, who had previously served as a Member of Parliament in Türkiye, was appointed as a consultant to the Minister of Tourism of Uzbekistan in 2017, upon the recommendation of Türkiye. (Uslu, 2020) Similarly, Muhammet Sedat Kolcuoğlu, retired from the Directorate of Agriculture in the city of Isparta, Türkiye was appointed to the consultancy of Uzbekistan Minister of Agriculture Camşid Hocayev and the Director of Farmer Training Center within the ministry, again upon the suggestion of the Turkish side. (Abdülkerimov, 2021)

This special type of relationship has a structure that goes beyond the existing official bilateral trade and economic mechanisms between the two countries and is a research topic that needs to be examined separately.

### **7.5. Agreement on Mutual Promotion and Protection of Investments**

As with other Central Asian Republics, the Agreement on the Mutual Promotion and Protection of Investments (MPPI) was signed with Uzbekistan on April 28, 1992 in the first years of independence. With the rapid acceleration of relations between the two countries since 2017, there has been a rapid flow of business from Türkiye to Uzbekistan. The number of Turkish companies opened in Uzbekistan in the first half of 2019 is 225. (DEİK, 2021)

On the other hand, following the development of relations with Uzbekistan, very important projects have been undertaken in Central Asia and Turkish companies, which constitute the most important contracting companies in the region, have started to make significant investments and undertake projects in Uzbekistan. In this context, T.C. According to the data of the Ministry of Trade, Uzbekistan ranked 8th among the countries where Turkish contractors undertake the most work in 2020, with a 535 million-dollar project, accounting for 3.5% of the total project value received in the world. (T.C. Ticaret Bakanlığı, 2021)

On the other hand, in the transformation process of Uzbekistan, there are efforts to make new regulations for investors to be more integrated with the world and to provide a favorable environment for foreign investors by issuing investment law as mentioned before. In this context, a new agreement has been concluded with Türkiye that will go beyond the current MPPI agreement and create an investment climate in which

international arbitration will be valid. (Article 10) (T.C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı, 2020)

Another agreement signed on the same date as the Agreement on the Mutual Promotion and Protection of Investments and in the presence of the Deputy Prime Ministers on the occasion of the JEC meeting is the Agreement on the Avoidance of Double Taxation. (T.C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı, 2020) This is one of the most important steps to reduce costs and bureaucracy in investments from Türkiye to Uzbekistan, especially in the construction sector.

### **7.6. Uzbekistan's Membership to Turkic Council**

A very important turning point in Uzbekistan's foreign policy, as well as in terms of Uzbekistan-Türkiye relations, is Uzbekistan's membership in the Turkic Council, which was established in 2009. At the Baku summit held on 15 October 2019, Uzbekistan officially became a member of the organization. (Organization of Turkic States, 2021)

At the end of the process which was initiated by Kazakhstan, Turkic Council is an international organization established during the Nakhchivan Agreement between its original four founding countries of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Türkiye on October 3rd, 2009. (Keser, Çütçü, & Eren, 2021) The 2nd article of Nakhchivan Agreement, states that the purpose of the council as 'encouraging effective regional and bilateral cooperation in political, commercial, economic issues and law enforcement, environment, culture, scientific-technical, military-technical, education, energy, transport, credit and finance areas and other fields of common interest' The organization later expanded with the full membership of Hungary in 2017, and the number of members increased to 6 with the membership of Uzbekistan. As a result of the summit meeting held on November 12, 2021, the name of the organization was changed to the Organization of Turkic states and Turkmenistan became an observer member. (T.C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı, 2021)

Uzbekistan participated in the Ministers of Economy meeting at Deputy Minister level for the first time in 2017. It was the very first step which paved the way to accession of Uzbekistan to the organization. (Türk Konseyi, 2017) It was one of the most important turning points in Uzbekistan's history.

Although there are organizations such as TÜRKSÖY and TÜRKPÖ, which the said countries have established within the framework of specific purposes, the only organization that covers all areas of inter-country relations such as economic, political, cultural and education and has cooperation mechanisms at the level of Ministers in each of these areas is the Turkic Council, newly, Organization of Turkic States. (Akili, 2019, p. 3) In this respect, the membership of Uzbekistan to the Turkic Council has a special importance in terms of Uzbekistan's relations with the region. (Salomov, 2019, p. 12)

### **7.7. Overview**

On the official website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye, in the section on Central Asian countries, bilateral political relations are included in the following systematic:

- The date on which the independence of the country was recognized
- Reference to common history and culture,
- Embassies and Consulates General,
- Beginning of Strategic Partnership and establishment of High Level Strategic Cooperation Council (YDSK)
- Cooperation in multilateral organizations based in the Turkic World such as the Turkic Council, TÜRKPÖ,
- The meeting within the scope of the Joint Economic Commission mechanism held recently,
- Mutual last visits of the current Presidents of the two countries
- The most up-to-date visits at the level of Prime Minister and Speaker of the Parliament

In this context, the above system has been followed while discussing the political relations with the Central Asian countries. For example, after it is stated that Kazakhstan declared its independence on December 16, 1991, that Türkiye was the first country to recognize Kazakhstan's independence on the same day, and that diplomatic relations were established with Kazakhstan on March 2, 1992, a common history and culture is mentioned. The "Strategic Partnership Agreement" signed during the visit of Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbaev to Türkiye in October 2009 and



the High Level Strategic Cooperation Council established in 2012 were discussed.

Similarly, it is seen that a similar method is followed on the page about Kyrgyzstan. The "Eternal Friendship and Cooperation Agreement" signed by the Presidents of the two countries in 1997, before the High Level Strategic Cooperation Council (YDSK) with this country, and the "Türkiye and Kyrgyzstan: Together into the 21st Century" statement published in 1999 are mentioned, followed by YDSK and YDSK within the above mentioned systematic framework. other visits. Since a Joint Economic Commission Meeting with Kyrgyzstan has not been held recently, it has been observed that it has not been included.

On the page about Turkmenistan, since there is no YDSK or similar mechanism with this country, mutual visits are mentioned after the first three articles.

Although the presentation of the political relations with Uzbekistan by the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs is made with a similar system, while the political relations with Uzbekistan are mentioned, the visit of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan on 17-18 November 2016 is mentioned in the first sentence. Essentially, this first sentence marks a historical turning point in the reversal of long-standing cold relations. In this respect, the bookmarking of the beginning of political relations with this visit should have a special meaning. It was mentioned before this sentence, "Recently, there has been a great breakthrough in our bilateral relations with Uzbekistan." The expression is considered remarkable in terms of showing that a different point, which goes beyond the systematic, is important in relations with Uzbekistan. On the other hand, after the aforementioned visit, there is another visit by Erdoğan, this time with the expression "state visit", which shows that the previous visit had a different meaning in the relations between the two countries. The first visit was made by Erdoğan on 17-18 November 2016, and the first official visit was made on 25 October 2017 by the President of Uzbekistan, Mirziyoyev. Erdoğan's "state visit" was to Uzbekistan between 29 April-1 May 2018. Within the framework of this visit, it is stated that 25 documents were signed in various fields, including a Joint Statement on the establishment of a High Level Strategic Cooperation Council (YDSK) between the two countries. The number of signed documents is much higher than the documents signed during the relations established with Türkiye in the first years when these

countries gained their independence. Such a large number of agreements, which were signed 26 years after independence, give an important impression that the relations between the two countries are being established from the very beginning.

The development of commercial and economic relations with Türkiye is considered an important breakthrough at the Uzbek state level. However, the new Uzbek administration has an approach that takes care of the balance in its region. While it is negotiating a Preferential Trade Agreement with Türkiye on a bilateral basis, it continues the membership process to the World Trade Organization, and in parallel, gives the green light to full membership to the Russia-based Eurasian Economic Union. At this point, it is seen that Uzbekistan uses the mechanisms of trade and economic relations as a foreign policy tool. Uzbekistan multiplies its alternatives instead of leaning towards one side, while advancing on the basis of regional and global balances.

Regarding the Preferential Trade Agreement, when the scope of the agreement is evaluated, it is understood that the main purpose for both parties is to create a common structure. Considering the possible economic dimensions and consequences of the agreement, it is seen that a constructivist perspective is dominant. In this context, the aim is the understanding of partnership, which includes the conclusion of the agreement itself, rather than the economic and commercial gain that will result from the agreement.

## CHAPTER 8

### CONCLUSION

In this thesis, it is argued that the commercial diplomacy that Türkiye carries out with Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan is a form of relationship that is mutually constructed depending on the common identity, with a social constructivist understanding, in terms of its establishment and results. In the thesis, the relationship with these three countries is evaluated within itself, and this type of relationship does not claim to generalize for the whole of Türkiye's trade diplomacy activities. For example, in the trade diplomacy carried out with the United States of America, a constructivism based on the construction of a common identity will not provide an analysis opportunity as convenient as in the relations with the Turkic Republics.

In this framework, it is shown that the realist perspective prevailing in the literature in Türkiye's relations with the Turkic Republics and the explanations made as a form of relationship based on the balance of power and aiming to increase Türkiye's effectiveness in the region are not sufficient to analyze this relationship. Türkiye's common cultural, historical and linguistic ties with the countries of the region do not necessitate a policy of balance between these countries in order to increase its influence in the region. Therefore, its relations with Kazakhstan do not directly affect its relations with Uzbekistan or Kyrgyzstan, and it can develop relations with each of the three mentioned countries through the construction of a common identity.

This thesis shows that, the preferential trade agreement between Azerbaijan and Türkiye has emerged as a critical text for the relations between the two countries, although it has a very limited scope and a very limited effect on both sides economically. In fact, when making this agreement with Azerbaijan, Türkiye could have asked for more concessions from Azerbaijan, especially in industrial products. For Azerbaijan, there was no customs union or any other multilateral international

agreement restricting itself for certain products.

While Türkiye's customs union with the EU allowed it to expand only on agricultural products, the absence of this constraint for Azerbaijan would have made Türkiye expect more concessions on industrial products by making more concessions in agriculture. However, instead of doing this, Türkiye basically gave importance to making an Agreement. Regardless of the economic outcome of this agreement, the permanent mechanisms it establishes are also important in terms of both being a message on how the relations between the two countries should be interpreted by third parties, and providing a suitable platform for trade to be an issue that will always be on the agenda.

The chapter, in which Türkiye's Preferential Trade Agreement with Uzbekistan is evaluated, states that this agreement will be in a similar scope with Azerbaijan, both due to the statements of the senior officials of the two sides and the restrictions caused by Türkiye's EU membership. In this case, it is an important agreement for both parties, especially in terms of being a product of the rapprochement process after 2016, rather than its economic value.

On the other hand, Türkiye's relations with Russia, which is the biggest actor in the region, has been a factor influencing the process of building a common identity with the Turkic states. Although the idea of “Turkic World from the Adriatic to the Great Wall of China”, which was generally accepted by Turkish politicians in the early 1990s, was not warmly welcomed by Russia at the first stage, nevertheless, Türkiye has adopted an orientation that aims to establish constructive relations in the region rather than an idea that confronts Russia. Russia seems to have been convinced that Türkiye does not have any hegemonic claims over the region. It is also a fact that Türkiye does not carry out trade policies with the aim of ultimately turning the balance of power in the region in its favor and increasing its effectiveness by all means, as the realists claim, but on the contrary, it pioneers a total welfare increase in the region peacefully with a social constructivist perspective that aims to seek for mutual wealth. This situation did not leave the need for vigilance in terms of security for Russia. In this way, Türkiye has been maintaining the rhetoric of brotherhood with these countries for 30 years and has been able to develop strategic partnerships at the highest

level. This claim does not mean that Türkiye does not take care of its own national interests, especially energy, with the countries of the region. This constructivist point of view in itself reveals an approach that supports national interests by providing a permanent and sustainable structure with the countries of the region for Türkiye.

This thesis also analyses the mechanisms used by the states in trade diplomacy in details, within the framework of Türkiye's relations with Turkic states. Türkiye's trade diplomacy with Turkic states is a unique type of relationship, which should be explained in a different manner from the categorizations made by scholars on trade diplomacy. Türkiye was not a member of the same umbrella with those republics, therefore, the story is different from protecting an existing structure to render welfare with developing commercial and business diplomacy, as it is in Udovič's case. (Udovič, 2011, p. 359) Instead, Türkiye constructed a new type of trade diplomacy mechanisms with those countries, which, most of the time could not be explained by economic interests, due to the indistinctness of the mechanisms on their effects on increasing Türkiye's trade benefits. Türkiye exerted effort by all means to conduct all fractions of relations by using all possible tools. In this thesis, it is argued that, diverging from the generally accepted use of trade diplomacy to increase trade and other economic concepts, Türkiye used trade diplomacy mechanisms as a tool of foreign policy, along with its commercial objectives, but independent from their economic outcomes which is mainly based on supporting its brotherhood discourse which corresponds to a social constructivist approach in its relations. In this thesis, the ingredients and outputs of trade diplomacy mechanisms are accepted as the main concern in analyzing Türkiye's trade diplomacy with Turkic states. It is argued that those mechanisms, especially Joint Economic Commission are not limited with supporting commercial activities, they also cover many foreign policy areas which are directly or indirectly related with commercial and business scheme. Moreover, in this thesis, Preferential Trade Agreements of Türkiye with Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan are considered to be the outcomes of trade diplomacy, which have marginal effect on trade volume of the parties but have of great importance for bilateral relations in overall by providing a basis for interaction.

Türkiye's main trade partners among 5 independent Turkic states (Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan), were examined in details in the

previous chapters, with a focus on Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. On the other hand, Türkiye's trade diplomacy mechanisms with the two others, Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan are also in that brotherhood scope. Hence, those two states also faced with a need for an economic transformation process immediately after the collapse of the Soviet Union. However, those two countries had had different experiences from each other and from the others. Turkmenistan has become an economy which relies on its rich natural resources, where Kyrgyzstan became at the center of political controversies while being the less advantageous country among those states. Trade diplomacy mechanisms of these countries with Türkiye remained limited compared to the others. These differences did not affect Türkiye's brotherhood approach to them.

The superiority of the concept of Trade Diplomacy in explaining these relations does not have an absolute advantage, and the fact that some elements of this diplomacy method are not empirically measurable can be considered as a limitation of this method of explanation.

While liberal approaches to trade diplomacy focus on the conflict-preventing effect of trade and increased welfare developed through bilateral and multilateral cooperation, realist approaches focus on the fact that countries increase their power over other countries through trade, and as a result, it is a tool and result of a power struggle. While both approaches contain very strong arguments in explaining the objectives and results of Trade diplomacy, they do not mainly focus on the ideational aspect of Türkiye's policies towards those countries, which aim to construct institutions and mechanisms to increase welfare of those brotherly countries with collaborate working. On the other hand, use of trade diplomacy as a tool for rendering and developing cooperation in various areas of foreign policy independent from the commercial purposes. The mechanisms on trade an economic cooperation that Türkiye developed with the Turkic states in the post-Soviet period primarily included the regulations regarding the determination of the rules of trade and securing the rights of the investors and also to avoid additional duplicating tax burden on businesspeople.

These regulations and mechanisms have been the important sources of the increase in the volume of trade and the welfare as a result of expansion of mutual trade. However, over time, the economic structures, production capacities and competitive situations

of countries have also shown that trade negotiations can go beyond being a welfare-enhancing factor between countries. Trade diplomacy has evolved into a model that accompanies other issues that are on the agenda in international relations and provides a basis for discussing these issues. It has been observed that a ground that contributes to the inclusion of other issues on the agenda can be provided through trade diplomacy.

On the other hand, in this thesis, trade and economic cooperation mechanisms are included in the relations between Türkiye and the Turkic states in parallel with the studies on these relations in the literature. In this context, legal texts that constitute economic and commercial relations as an important element of foreign policy, high-level visits, mechanisms between private sector organizations such as business council and business forum are explained in detail. On the other hand, another contribution of this thesis to the literature on the political and economic relations between Türkiye and the Turkic states is that the subject is handled within the framework of the concept of Trade Diplomacy with a social constructivist view, and the subject is examined from the perspective of the position of trade diplomacy in these relations, rather than the place of these mechanisms in the historical process of relations. In this regard, apart from overall approach in the literature on Türkiye-Turkic states relations trade diplomacy concept is adopted from Susan Strange's approach, who examines the concept in three different dimensions: state-state, state-firm, firm-firm relations which stem from the development by structural changes in World economy and political order. (Strange, 1992, p. 6)

On the other hand, trade diplomacy is at the centre of this thesis as Georgiadou does in his work on trade diplomacy's contribution in Greece foreign policy. (Georgiadou, 2018, p. 26) Similarly, Saner and Yiu's assessment that diplomatic relations have undergone a transformation especially through trade diplomacy with globalization (Saner & Yiu, 2003, p. 11) has been applied to the Trade diplomacy model developed by Türkiye with the Turkic states in this study. (Saner & Yiu, 2003, p. 11) Moreover, Bagozzi and Landis' work on correlation between increase in trade diplomacy services between countries making trade more stable is applied to Türkiye's relations between Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. (Bagozzi & Landis, 2015, p. 2)

Another contribution of this thesis to the literature is being among the scholarly works on Türkiye's trade diplomacy mechanisms with Turkic states, which elaborates

official texts of Joint Economic Commission (JEC) Protocols and the mechanisms established by these Protocols. This aim to contribute filling an important gap in trade diplomacy literature for Türkiye's legal framework on international relations literature. In this regard, Joint Economic Commission mechanism is seen as a driving force for developing trade diplomacy in Türkiye's relations with Central Asia. The thesis also considers Agreements on Mutual Promotion and Protection of Investments and Agreements on Prevention of Double Taxation as legal frameworks of trade diplomacy relations, however, focusing on trade diplomacy, although they create a more binding and detailed legal framework, those agreements play a secondary role in conducting trade diplomacy, after JEC and JEC related mechanisms.

### **8.1. Contributions and constraints**

One of the contributions of this thesis to the literature is to shed light on the changing role of trade diplomacy mechanisms on international relations in divergent scenarios. It is understood that the effects of trade diplomacy on foreign policy are related to various direct and indirect factors. In general, it is important to determine if there is a constant direct relationship between the establishment of a bilateral trade mechanisms and the conduct of high-level strategic partnerships between Türkiye and Turkic states. On the other hand, how those mechanism fostered that strategic partnership is another focus of the discussion.

Another important question was the measurability of the results of the trade mechanisms. Change in trade volume can be an important indicator, however, it cannot be determined as an only variable to understand the empirical effects of trade mechanisms over the foreign relations between two actors. Namely, there is no formula which can be defined as one size fits all. In scenarios where the private sector is very active, the results can vary from the results with Turkic States. In those countries the state is still the main actor in economic activity. This makes trade diplomacy mechanisms more important compared to its role in countries with strong private sector and civil society.

The change in leadership in Turkic States make a total change in the foreign policy approaches of those countries, as it is seen in Uzbekistan. Türkiye has always been an important factor for the Central Asian Republics in their foreign trade, and the



leadership change in Uzbekistan made an important shift in economic, trade and investment relations with Türkiye, which are shown in relevant chapter.

On the other hand, this makes Uzbekistan as a significant case study to strengthen the analysis of the correlation between trade and diplomacy. In this case, geopolitical, strategic, military blocs of those countries have not changed much after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Türkiye was in the Western bloc during the Cold War and has continued to be a member of NATO and candidate country for the European Union after then. Uzbekistan has been following a liberal democratic transformation program, which aims to align itself with the Western world since its independence. Therefore, those geopolitical, military and strategic elements are considered to be constant variable, where the leadership change is considered to be an independent variable. After Karimov, the leader change was inevitable for Uzbekistan, which was not related to another factor. What is important for this analysis is to understand how trade mechanisms affected the transformation of foreign relations of those two countries after the leadership change.

On the other hand, in Kazakhstan, the leadership change has not been that much game changing in terms of its relations with Türkiye. The trade mechanisms are continuing as they were used to be in Nazarbaev era. The role of those mechanisms are not subject to change in their weight on bilateral relations. In Kazakhstan, the most important factor in its trade and economic relations with Türkiye has been its membership to Eurasian Economic Union. Therefore, we cannot put leadership change in one side of our analysis for Kazakhstan, as we can do for Uzbekistan.

There are strict limitations on building the argument for trade diplomacy being how much effective on international relations. First of all, it is not possible to create any empirical measurement method to define the level of foreign policy and international relations. What should the “level” be, how can we convert this level into a data, which “level” would be a threshold to distinct “good foreign policy” from “unsuccessful foreign policy’ are not clear phenomena which can be measured empirically. Hence, it is not clear that how can we understand with numbers if the foreign relations between two countries are in a positive manner or drifting to a crisis atmosphere. Nevertheless, a statement of “the relations between the two sides are continuing in a positive

atmosphere” can give an opinion to researchers on that there is not any revealed conflict between the sides. This positive atmosphere can be verified with spirit in the official statements with positive agenda items. Again, this statement itself cannot be reflected to a mathematical chart or equation. Being unable to measure foreign policy also reveals the difficulty of finding an empirical equivalent of the impact of trade diplomacy mechanisms on foreign policy. However, as it is seen in Türkiye-Uzbekistan relations, trade diplomacy mechanisms had been the very first elements to be revived after the primary move was made by mutual visits of the Presidents after 2016 to start a new type of foreign relations. (Mukhammedova & Shakarboyev, 2021, p. 472) Therefore, the use of trade diplomacy mechanisms confirms their important role in foreign policy making, as is the main argument of this thesis. As a result, the immeasurability problem of foreign relations has a potential to be a new focus for future interdisciplinary scholarly studies.

Along with the measurability issue, there is also the prioritization problem in the analysis. The main question of the thesis is first, evaluating Türkiye’s trade diplomacy activities with Turkic states within the framework of social constructivism, which makes it challenging due to the realism’s dominance in the literature. Second, this thesis aims to reveal the importance of trade diplomacy tools as a part of foreign relations of Türkiye with selected Turkic states. Those tools can be of critical importance in foreign relations in some cases where, like Türkiye-Turkic states relations, the leadership plays a central role for at least one actor. Where an economic imbalance, which creates complementarity, occurs between the parties, the trade diplomacy becomes more into front.

On the other hand, in some cases, the frozen international relations can unfreeze by a triggering force, like a sudden change in leadership and continues to develop initially on trade and economic relations. For example, the first step by Türkiye after Karimov passed away in 2016 was the mutual visits of the Presidents in Türkiye-Uzbekistan relations. Both Presidents emphasized the importance of trade and economic relations in their statements, and they revived the Joint Economic Commission mechanism, which had been suspended for a long time. As a result, those mechanisms played a critical role in development of foreign relations. In fact, it also shows that in this type of leadership-based structures, the priority of foreign policy elements are determined

by political decision-makers, rather than market realities or military or geopolitical necessities. However, this decision for hierarchy of elements also mostly cannot be a very far subject from those economic and political realities and necessities. In Türkiye-Uzbekistan relations, there are rational bases for trade and economic relations coming to the fore in rebuilding foreign relations. That is one of the main arguments of this thesis.

On the other hand, economic and trade mechanisms obviously aim at increasing trade volumes. However, enhancing the trade volume depends on many other factors, besides established trade mechanisms. In liberal economic order, states' role in international trade is supposed to be limited to removing the barriers for the private sector in their commercial activities, making necessary regulations to provide trade facilitation and determination of concessions in trade agreements by negotiations. (Krist, 2021) In this framework, the effects of trade mechanisms, agreements and diplomatic arrangements cannot be measured, as it was stated above. To explain this phenomenon, in a preferential trade agreement or free trade agreement, state representatives negotiate and agree upon certain mutual concessions and tariff rates for specific products. The calculations are made based on trade statistics of previous years. By doing this, each party reach certain assumptions about the future effect of concessions, generally multiplying the trade potential, which is derived from previous years' performance by the level of concessions with regards to tariff reductions. This equation provides the public officials to present memorandums to decision-makers, with many assumptions on potential economic impact of the agreements. However, it is obvious that the real trade is run by the private sector. The tariffs are regarded as unnecessary burden on trade by the private sector. Therefore, the calculations remain purely theoretical. The decisions of the business environment are not only bounded with tariff rates; there are many other factors which have influence on those decisions, such as political risks, economic factors in the target country, such as devaluation, financial debt, investment ranking etc. For instance, in a certain period if we see a devaluation in the exporter country, it may cause a tremendous increase in its exports, and in the meantime, it may cause a demand boom in the importer country. As a result, after the agreement, there would be a high increase in trade volume. The question is, if that increase is a result of the agreement itself or it is caused by other external factors. That's why there is not an accurate measurement method to see the impact of trade

mechanisms over trade volume. However, this thesis provides a path for interdisciplinary future works to search for an empirical analysis method of trade mechanism tools on trade volume and further, on foreign policy.

The effects of trade diplomacy mechanism on foreign policy differs from state to state, mainly due to many factors which build the basis for relations. Trade diplomacy mechanisms seem to be dominant in foreign relations between the countries, where business circles interact with each other more independently from political actors and they may have power to minimize negative effects of political crises. Türkiye-USA relations is an example for that type of relationship. However, those mechanisms can be said to be effective also in countries where state to state relations are at the center and dominant factor on running the economic relations. Türkiye-Uzbekistan relations is that kind of relationship where state mechanisms constitute a locomotive factor for the private sector.

As a result, there are models and types of relationships which determine the effectiveness, or in better terms, the influence potential of trade diplomacy mechanisms. This thesis creates a framework for that kind of analysis by examining this potential in Türkiye-Turkic states relations. For future studies, various other relationships should be examined to create a theory on the effects of trade diplomacy on foreign policy.

What should be also mentioned in Türkiye's social constructivist conducting of trade diplomacy is its relations with Kyrgyzstan. Among the Turkic states that declared their independence after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Kyrgyzstan was one of the countries that fell behind economically due to the lack of natural resources and other socio-economic factors. This stance brought with it the social and political activity in Kyrgyzstan, and after the Tulip Revolution, which took place after the parliamentary elections on March 24, 2005, President Askar Akaev had to flee to Moscow, and this was the first peaceful management change between the five independent republics after independence. (Radnitz, 2006, p. 132).

Kyrgyzstan has determined a position that is more open to international economic and trade partnerships. By becoming a member of the World Trade Organization on 20 December 1998, it became the first member among the Turkic states. (WTO, 2021)

The commercial and economic agreements signed between the two countries are given in the table below:

*Table 31: Türkiye - Kyrgyzstan Signed Agreements*

<b>Name of the Agreement</b>	<b>Signing Date</b>	<b>Official Gazette Date and Number</b>
Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Türkiye and the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic on the Establishment of the Turkish-Kyrgyz Joint Economic Commission on Commercial and Economic Cooperation	August 16, 1995	09.01.1996 22518
Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreement	October 24, 1997	09.05.2001/24397
Agreement on Prevention of Double Taxation	July 2, 1999	09.05.2001/24397
Agreement on Mutual Promotion and Protection of Investments	09.04.2018	22.05.2019/30781

Source: Ministry of Trade, Türkiye

It is noteworthy that the Joint Economic Commission as a mechanism is an important element in Kyrgyzstan's relations with Türkiye. The Kyrgyz Republic has clearly expressed its economic expectations from Türkiye in the JEC Protocols and has shown that it expects a solution from this mechanism. For example, in the Action Plan annexed to the Protocol of the 9th Term Meeting of the Turkish-Kyrgyz Intergovernmental Joint Economic Commission, signed on November 22, 2019, it is seen that a concrete and scheduled cooperation framework was drawn on many issues such as the modernization of the Kyrgyz Chamber of Commerce, the modernization of the customs gates in Kyrgyzstan, and the establishment of businesses in the Kyrgyz Republic.

As a result, the Joint Economic Commission mechanism for Kyrgyzstan can be considered as a part of the country's development project and is considered as an economic roadmap in relations with Türkiye rather than a tool and a part of diplomacy. On the other hand, the JEC mechanism between Kyrgyzstan and Türkiye, which is supposed to be carried out regularly every year in the founding agreement, could not

be implemented within the 5-year period from 2014 to 2019 can be seen as directly related to the political relations between the two countries.

Kyrgyzstan is an exception in Türkiye's effective trade diplomacy missions due to its lacking in economic transformation. This does harm Türkiye's social constructivist approach to Turkic States, including Kyrgyzstan. Türkiye has been making its effort to contribute Kyrgyz Republic's transformation with its technical assistance via TİKA and other institutions. However, it yet has not created a fruitful outcome as it did in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.

## **8.2. Results of the thesis**

In this study, trade diplomacy mechanisms that Türkiye conducts with Turkic states were examined in details within the framework of social constructivism, to conceptualize Türkiye's economic and trade relations, and eventually, overall relations within the framework of the concept of Trade Diplomacy. Türkiye's constructed identity with Turkic states pose a central role in its relations with Turkic states. Trade and economic relations are not exception from this viewpoint.

Although social constructivism is a very popular theoretical approach in social sciences and especially in Sociology, it entered the discipline of International Relations towards the end of the 1980s. However, it has made a huge impact in a short period of time. In the textbook on international relations, social constructivism is being included among the mainstream theories of the discipline, such as Realism and Liberalism. (Uğur, 2022, p. 1)

The basic assumptions and concepts of constructivism have brought up the assumption that states have various identities and that these identities are constructed in the process of interaction with other actors in the analyzes of states' foreign policy or international policy. It has become a widespread acceptance that the identities of states determine their interests, and their interests are the main determinants of what foreign policy they will pursue. Constructivism is based on an understanding of philosophy of science, which argues that while we examine phenomena, we also make sense of them, as discussed in detail in the relevant section. With the transfer of the aforementioned perspective of constructivism to international relations, the understanding that a state carries out different policies depending on whether it puts other states in the category

of friend or enemy identity has become widespread among international relations researchers. (Uğur, 2022, p. 2) In this thesis, this constructivist approach is used to explain Türkiye's trade diplomacy relations with Turkic states, due to its unique type of relations with those states. As it is mentioned and shown in the relevant chapters, Türkiye could have chosen building that relations and establishments in different manner to maximize its economic benefits and influence over those states. However, as it is seen from the agreement texts and economic outputs of preferential trade agreements with Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan, Türkiye seeks a cooperation and joint wealth instead of gaining advantage over them.

On the other hand, trade diplomacy is conceptualized as a factor which has overall effect on bilateral and multilateral relations between states. This conceptualization frees the mechanisms related to trade and economy from being a part of chronological process, instead, it provides those mechanisms to be at the center of analysis to understand the coverage and the contribution of them to international relations. . the contribution of the mechanisms for the development of trade to the strengthening of political relations is examined by considering the relations between the Turkic states, which are located in the close geography of Türkiye and with which they have common historical and cultural ties, and the period after the collapse of the Soviet Union. As a result, it is understood that although there are important restrictions for the developing countries in the region to act completely independently from larger actors, they attach importance to relations with Türkiye and consider it a rational choice to provide an economic opening from there. As Odell stated, (2001, p. 17) trade negotiations and namely trade diplomacy have effect on value creation in international trade, which contributes foreign relations by fostering foreign trade, which is seen in Türkiye and Turkic states relations.

In addition, it is seen that Türkiye is able to evaluate its economic and trade relations with Turkic states independently from many external factors, which is seen in its efforts for establishing bilateral mechanisms with these countries by pushing the boundaries of the customs union with the EU. In this respect, it is observed that trade diplomacy mechanisms can become an important tool in the resolution of diplomatic crises, as can be seen more clearly in the example of Uzbekistan, and even if concrete outputs and preferential regimes are not established, keeping these mechanisms

functioning can be a prominent factor of bilateral relations.

As it is stated above, the impact of trade on diplomacy requires a comparative analysis. This effect may vary depending on several factors. First of all, measuring this effect depends on establishing a meaningful correlation between the diplomatic relations of the countries and their trade relations. Even if this correlation can be established, the effect of trade on diplomacy cannot produce a measurable analysis material with quantitative data. The only thing that can be measured here is the volume of trade between the two parties in a given time frame. The extent to which political factors are effective in the change of this trade volume can only be measured by making a quantitative comparison with the situation before the relevant time period by going back a certain time over that time period and going back at this point.

It should be taken into account that many other factors may be effective in the increase in the trade volume. In this case, in retrospect, factors such as the change in the global prices of tradable products between the two countries, the supply problems of the countries, the differentiation in domestic production capacities, the transformation in consumer preferences and habits, the current account deficits of the countries, the inflation, the change in the purchasing power stemming from the interest rate and exchange rate make this measurement very difficult and could make it more complex. Therefore, effects of trade diplomacy is not a phenomenon that can be explained with empirically observable results.

In addition, one of the outputs of this study is that trade diplomacy is meaningful and central at the point where political relations and diplomatic contacts are at a high level in terms of impact on trade volume. As a result of this, the first step for Türkiye in the form of relations with Uzbekistan was the President's non-commercial visit. The first contact following this visit was made with the commercial agenda within the scope of the Joint Economic Commission meeting and the driving force of the relations was the commercial agenda created here. Therefore, the emergence of trade diplomacy on the scene was only possible with the return of political diplomacy, and trade diplomacy served as a route determined for the bilateral relations to be on track.

On the contrary, it can be observed that it is possible for trade diplomacy to continue at the same pace in an environment where political relations do not continue at the



same level and intensity. However, in the worst scenario, the life of trade diplomacy will be limited to the life of political relations in an environment where countries do not separate trade and politics within a fully liberal order.

In this context, it is possible to state that this approach of liberal theory explains Trade Diplomacy activities more closely compared with realist approaches. When it comes to trade, states refrain from being the main actor and take on a role which mainly fosters the work of other actors. Even there is an ongoing tension between two sides, trade mostly continues on its path. Non-governmental actors come to the fore in those activities and continue to communicate with the other side openly or under scrutiny.

However, in complicated relations such as relations with the countries in which decision-making process has multi-dimensional structures, it is not possible to mention that trade diplomacy alone is adequate and solely effective in the execution of bilateral relations and in solving problems. By 2021, at a time when the political relations between the USA and Türkiye were in a negative atmosphere (Matsumoto, 2021, p. 7) due to many factors mutually (Arısan-Eralp, Aydın-Düzgit, Eralp, Keyman, & Nas, 2021, p. 3) and the economic and commercial mechanisms, were not functioning (USChamber, 2022), it is seen that the USA has become the second country in the ranking of Türkiye's exports. (Trademap, 2022) This shows that it would be a very ambitious approach to consider the tools mentioned in the thesis as the only tools that change the course of trade and direct diplomacy. However, it should be noted that although there is a negative atmosphere in political relations, the relations of the business world with the activities of DEİK and its interlocutors are kept alive despite the pandemic conditions. This partially confirms the thesis of a full liberal order, in which trade and politics are weak in the internal structures of the countries, as in the case of Uzbekistan.

Therefore, this study still suggests that the role of trade relations in bilateral and multilateral relations are increasing, in parallel with increase in trade volume. Even though there are still constraints on calculating direct effect of trade diplomacy mechanisms over the trade volume or investment flow between countries, existence of those mechanisms provide strong basis and appropriate climate for conducting trade, economic and investment relations. This phenomenon is found valuable for further

work to determine how effective are those mechanisms on trade relations with an interdisciplinary perspective. It is found that, staying within the limits of Türkiye-Turkic states relations, as trade volume and economic activities increase, there is an intensifying movement in trade diplomacy mechanisms. The analysis from the opposite side confirms that assertion, namely, if trade diplomacy mechanisms become active, an increase in the numbers is also observed. As it is stated above, there are many external and internal factors which have effect on those numbers; however, it is still the case that trade diplomacy mechanisms accompany to positive developments. Taking this into account, one can say that, trade diplomacy occurs as an item for positive agenda in diplomatic relations. It means that, if the countries are eager to develop their relations and decide to have a fresh start in their relations, they are more willing to begin with trade diplomacy, as it is seen in Uzbekistan example in this thesis. Therefore, trade diplomacy is an item of positive agenda, and also, it is itself a tool for creation of that positive relations.

On the other hand, bilateral relations and common history of the countries which are subject to research are important factors to determine the effect of trade diplomacy mechanisms over foreign relations. Russia's trade diplomacy activities with Turkic states within the framework of the Eurasian Customs Union has many dimensions other than the objective of increasing trade. There are many political, or in realist terms, power struggle issues on that mechanism. Or, the scene we encounter in Türkiye-Turkmenistan relations is that trade and economic mechanisms are evaluated as a tool of diplomacy rather than trade. In this type of relationship, there is a situation where the signing ceremony of these agreements and protocols and the visit made on the occasion of the signing ceremony are more important than the agreements and protocols produced in the content of the mechanism. At this point, although it is possible to say that trade diplomacy has a fully effective function, it is also seen that the purpose of increasing trade, by definition, remains in the background in such a relationship and does not take place on any side of equity.

As a result, although it is still not clear how to empirically measure the effect of institutions and mechanisms related to trade diplomacy on trade or their contribution to diplomacy, this is an area of work which needs to be evaluated with many other factors of international relations. Türkiye is actively conducting its trade diplomacy

mechanisms with Turkic states. It gives valuable results both in economic and political relations. There are examples in which trade diplomacy contributes to increase in volume, like Azerbaijan, in which it plays a role of reviving the frozen relations as it is in Uzbekistan, stays meaningful to conduct relations as it is in order to hold the relations standstill as it is in Kazakhstan. The products of trade diplomacy may create tangible tariff concessions as a result of a preferential trade system as it is in Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan or may create agenda items for further projections as it is in Kazakhstan. The tools for trade diplomacy provide investors a suitable and comfortable atmosphere for their investments by signing a Mutual Promotion and Protection of Investments Agreements, as well as cost reduction effect for taxpayers by signing a Agreements on Prevention of Double Taxation. JEC mechanisms create tangible solutions for business circles by making deals on transportation quotas in some cases, and may only include good intentions for further partnership without framing any tangible outcome. The overall process itself creates a new type of diplomacy, in parallel with globalization, which is valuable to explore.

For the future work, trade diplomacy mechanisms present a fruitful ground to be studied by the scholars. Joint Economic Commission mechanism looks to be an emerging mechanism for developing economic and trade relations with its wide scope of content. This thesis provides a basis for a starting point on that mechanism as well. Türkiye is actively using this mechanism not only with the Turkic states, but also it conducts that meetings on regular basis with its most of the trading partners. Each minister has been appointed as the co-chair of JEC with at least one country. It does not mean that the JEC meetings are being held on schedule with all countries, however, it can be interpreted that Türkiye is eager to use that useful tool of trade diplomacy, which provides a plentiful area of work for academic research.

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## APPENDICES

### A. CURRICULUM VITAE

#### PERSONAL INFORMATION

Surname, Name: Erdem, Ahmet Yavuzhan  
Nationality: Turkish (TC)  
Date and Place of Birth:  
Marital Status: Married with 2 children  
Phone:  
email:

#### EDUCATION

Degree	Institution	Year of Graduation
Master of Public Policy	University of Michigan, Ann Arbor Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy	2012
Master's Degree	Gazi University International Relations	2010
Undergraduate	Gazi University International Relations	2003

#### WORK EXPERIENCE

Year	Place	Enrollment
2020- Present	Consulate General of the Republic of Türkiye in Houston	Commercial Attaché
2016–2020 October	Republic of Türkiye, Ministry of Economy/Ministry of Trade	Head of Department
2012-2016	Ministry of Economy	Chief of Section
2006-2012	Undersecretariat of the Prime Ministry of the for Foreign Trade/Ministry of Economy	Assistant Foreign Trade Specialist/Foreign Trade Specialist

#### FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English, Fluent

#### SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

Professional Classical Turkish Music and Tanbur player

## B. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET

Bu doktora tezi, Türkiye'nin Sovyetler Birliği'nin dağılmasının ardından bağımsızlıklarını ilan eden beş Türk devleti arasında en büyük ticaret hacmine sahip olduğu Azerbaycan, Kazakistan ve Özbekistan ile ilişkilerini uluslararası ilişkiler disiplinindeki sosyal inşacılık üzerinden Ticaret Diplomasisi kavramı etrafında incelemektedir. Kavram, Türkiye'nin kullandığı araçlar kullanılarak açıklanmış ve Türkiye'nin bu beş Türk devleti ile olan ticari ve ekonomik ilişkileri karşılaştırmalı olarak detaylı bir şekilde ele alınmıştır.

Türkiye, bağımsızlıklarından bu yana Türk devletleri ile yakın ilişkiler kurmuş ve bu ilişkilerde ticareti ön planda tutmuştur. Bu ilişkiler, temel olarak, ortak tarihi, kültürel ve sosyal mirasa dayanmakta olup, bu temeller üzerinden ortak bir Zemin bulma amacını taşımaktadır. Türkiye bu devletlerle ilişkilerinde ortak kimlik vurgusunu en üst düzeyde dile getirmektedir. Bu vurgu, bölge üzerinde hegemonik bir iddia veya siyasi etki arayışı taşımaktan uzaktır. Türkiye'nin bu vurgudaki temel amacı, Türk devletleri ile birlikte bir refaha ulaşmak ve ortak faydayı temin edecek güçlü yapılar inşa etmektir. Karma Ekonomik Komisyon toplantıları, İş Konseyleri, İş Forumları gibi özel sektör faaliyetleri ile Yatırımların Karşılıklı Teşviki ve Korunması, Çifte Vergilendirmenin Önlenmesi gibi Anlaşmalar ticari ilişkilerin temel dayanağı olmuştur. Bunun ötesinde Türkiye, bu ülkelerle Tercihli Ticaret Anlaşmaları imzalamak için girişimlerde bulunmuştur. Türkiye'nin bu ülkelerle ve özellikle 2016 yılından sonra Özbekistan ile geliştirdiği ilişkilerde ticari diplomasi araçlarını etkin bir şekilde kullandığı görülmektedir. Farklı mekanizmaların her ülke üzerinde farklı yönlere sahip olduğu da dikkati çekmektedir.

Ticaretin dış politikanın bir aracı olarak kullanılması özellikle son dönemlerde giderek daha fazla artan bir şekilde ikili ve çok taraflı ilişkilerin ve bu alanda yapılan çalışmaların odağına yerleşmektedir. Çin'in tarihi ipek yolu aslında ticaret diplomasinin de yürütülmesinin bir aracıyken bugün de kuşak ve yol projesi ve yeni ipek yolu projeleri gibi doğuyla batıyı ticaret ile bağlamak düşüncesi, ticaret



diplomasinin tarih öncesinden günümüze uzanan yolculuğunun da bir göstergesidir. Bu noktada ticaret ile diplomasi arasındaki ilişkinin hiyerarşik bir ilişki mi olduğu, karşılıklı bağımlılık ilişkisi olarak mı cereyan ettiği hususları araştırmacılar için ufuk açıcı sorular olarak ortaya çıkmaktadır. Ticaret dış politikanın bir unsuru mudur? Yoksa dış politikanın yönünü belirleyen bir faktör müdür? Ticaret diplomasisi, temel amacı ticaretin artırılması olan bir diplomasi yöntemi midir, yoksa ikili ve çok taraflı dış ilişkilerin geliştirilmesi amacına uygun olarak ticareti konu alan bir dış politika aracı mıdır? Ticaret diplomasisi mekanizmalarının somut sonuçları ölçülebilir mi? Türkiye'nin özellikle Sovyetler Birliğinin dağılması sonrasında 1990'lı yıllarda bağımsızlığını ilan etmiş olan Türk devletleri ile ilişkilerinde ticaret diplomasisi araçlarının rolü ne olmuştur?

Türkiye'nin 1990'lardan sonra Türk devletlerinin bağımsızlıklarını kazanmalarını müteakip bu ülkelerle geliştirdiği ilişki biçiminde ticaret ve ticaret diplomasisi mekanizmaları önemli bir rol oynamıştır. Bu ülkelerle ilişkilerde ortak tarih ve kültür temelli olarak geliştirilen söylem yalnızca politik alanda değil, aynı zamanda ticaret alanında da benimsenen bir yaklaşım olmuştur. Bu kapsamda Türkiye bu ülkelerle tek taraflı bir çıkar ilişkisi ya da kâr maksimizasyonu amaçlarını değil, ortak değerler üzerinde birlikte inşa edilecek yapıları amaçlamıştır. Bu yönüyle Ticaret diplomasisi, dış politikanın önemli bir unsuru olarak uluslararası ilişkiler çalışmalarında üzerinde durulmaya değer bir konudur. Uluslararası politik ekonomi karar alıcıların karar alma süreçlerini ve bu süreçlerin sonucunda alınan ekonomik kararların sonuçlarını incelerken, ticaret diplomasisi ise süreçleri tanımlamakta ve ticari kararların müzakeresi, uygulanması ve tüm ilgili tarafların katılımlarıyla dış politikaya uyumlu olarak harekete geçirilmesi aşamalarını temsil etmektedir. Bu nedenle ticaret diplomasisi gerek aktörleri gerekse araçları yönüyle akademik bir merak alanı olarak araştırmacılara giderek daha fazla kaynak sunmaktadır. İkili bazda yürütülen ilişkilerde ticaret diplomasisinin araçları Karma Ekonomik Komisyon gibi mekanizmalar olurken, çok taraflı ticaret diplomasisinin merkezinde 1994 GATT Anlaşması ile kurulmuş olan Dünya Ticaret Örgütü (DTÖ) yer almıştır. Böylece ikili düzeydeki ticaret diplomasisi araçları, çok taraflı mekanizma olan DTÖ'nün kurallarına uyum sağlamak zorunda kalmış, DTÖ'nün temel kuralları ikili ilişkilerin de belirleyicisi olmuştur. Üye ülkelerin DTÖ'de görev yapan en üst düzey temsilcileri Büyükelçi unvanını taşımakta, Büyükelçilerin birlikte çalıştığı diplomatların arasında

ise ticaret ile ilişkili konularda deneyimli olan, Dışişleri meslek memurluğu dışında Ticaret Bakanlığı gibi kurum ve kuruluşlardan atanan takım arkadaşları yer almaktadır. Bu da ticaret diplomasisi faaliyetinin yalnızca geleneksel dışişleri yöntemleriyle yürütülen bir faaliyet olmadığını, ticaret bürokrasisinin etkin bir şekilde sürecin içinde yer aldığını göstermesi bakımından önemlidir.

Ticaret diplomasisi muhtelif akademisyenler tarafından zaman zaman ekonomik karar alma süreçleri başlığı altında ekonomi diplomasisi olarak incelenmiş, bazen de uluslararası politik ekonominin bir alt dalı olarak literatürde yer bulmuştur. Bu çalışmada ise ticaret diplomasisi, karar alma süreçlerinden ziyade aktörleri ve araçları yönüyle ele alınmaktadır. Türkiye’de bu süreçleri yürüten temel aktörler olan devlet kurumları ile özel sektör çatı kuruluşları ticaret diplomasisi kavramını odağına almış görülmektedir. Bu durum, Türkiye’nin 1990’lardan itibaren Türk devletleri ile geliştirdiği ilişkiler ve mekanizmalarını ortaya koymayı ve bu mekanizmalar kapsamında gelişen ilişkiler detaylı olarak incelenmeyi amaçlayan bu çalışmada ticaret diplomasisi kavramını araştırmanın merkezine almayı gerektirmiştir.

Uluslararası ilişkilerin ana akım teorisyenleri ticaret ve dış politika ilişkisine temel olarak iki yönden yaklaşmıştır. Birincisi, realizmin güç ve devlet odaklı yaklaşımı olup, güçlü olan devletlerin ticareti bir araç olarak kullanarak zayıf olan devletler üzerindeki egemenliklerini kuvvetlendiren bir unsur olarak değerlendirmekte olup, bu kapsamda ticaret diplomasisinin temel odağına devleti ve güç dengesini oturtmaktadır. İkinci yaklaşım ise ticaretin liberal kurumlar vasıtasıyla uluslararası işbirliği için imkân yarattığından hareketle ticaret diplomasinin liberalizm ile açıklanması gerektiğine yönelik yaklaşımdır. Her iki yaklaşımın da güçlü yanları bulunmaktadır. Ticaret diplomasisi sonuç olarak devletler tarafından yürütülen ve sonuçları ve yöntemleri bakımından devletler arası ilişkilerin konusu haline gelen bir süreç olarak realist bakış açısıyla açıklanabileceği gibi, devlet dışı aktörlerin bu süreçte devletleri etki altına alarak müzakere süreçlerine fazlasıyla dahil olmaları ve işbirliği arayışlarının özel sektörlerin çıkarları da gözetilerek sürdürülmesi yönüyle liberal bir bakış açısıyla da açıklanabilir görülmektedir. Dünya Ticaret Örgütü kuruluşu ve temel amaçları yönüyle ticaretin liberalleşmesi amacını taşımasıyla liberal bir bakış açısıyla yorumlanabileceği gibi, özellikle müzakerelerde gelişmiş ülkelerin çıkar ve güç odaklı yaklaşımlarının çoğu zaman süreçleri tıkadığı bir ortam sağlaması yönüyle de realist

bakış açısının da doğru bir değerlendirme şansının olduğu bir alan açmaktadır. Bu nedenle teorik kapsamda ticaret diplomasisinin her iki açıdan da incelenebilir bir alan olduğu görülmüştür.

Bununla beraber, Türkiye'nin Türk devletleri ile geliştirmiş olduğu ilişki modeli ne realizmin devlet merkezli güç mücadelesi yaklaşımıyla, ne de liberalizmin devletin yanına diğer aktörleri de katan ancak karşılıklı çıkar maksimizasyonu ve kârlılığın arandığı modeli ile açıklanabilir. Türkiye bu ülkelere sosyal inşacı bir bakış açısıyla yaklaşmış ve tek taraflı çıkar ilişkisinden ziyade bu ülkelerin kalkınma süreçlerinde kendi modeli üzerinden destek vermeyi amaçlamıştır. Bunun örneklerini bu ülkelerle geliştirilen mekanizmaların içeriğinde ve yürütülüş şeklinde görmek mümkündür. Karma Ekonomik Komisyonu toplantılarının çoğunda Türkiye'nin tek taraflı olarak üstlendiği yükümlülükleri görmek mümkündür. Bunun yanı sıra Türkiye'nin ısrarlı bir şekilde daha ileri ekonomik işbirliği mekanizmaları önerdiğini, bunların zaman zaman cevapsız kaldığını ancak Türkiye'nin bunu önermekten vazgeçmediğini de anlamak mümkündür. Bu itibarla, ekonomik olarak Türkiye'nin tek taraflı çıkarlarına ya da bölgesel gücünü artırmaya yönelik olmayan, tam tersine ortak bir kimlik üzerinden birlikte inşa edilmeye çalışılan yapılar Türkiye'nin bu ülkelerle ilişkilerinin özünü oluşturmaktadır. Bunu ticaret diplomasisi faaliyetlerinde de görmek mümkündür.

Uluslararası ilişkiler çalışmalarında kavramsallaştırmanın önemli bir unsuru da mekânsallıktır. Bir kavram bir coğrafyada belli bir ilişkiler bütünü içinde bir anlam ifade ederken, farklı bir coğrafya ya da ilişkiler ağında benzer kavram farklı bir ilişki türüne işaret edebilmektedir. Bu nedenle bu çalışmada ticaret diplomasisi kavramı bir yandan kavram olarak ele alınırken, diğer yandan bu kavramın temsil ettiği alan, Türkiye'nin Türk devletleri ile yürüttüğü ticaret diplomasisi araçları ile sınırlandırılmıştır. Bu da kavramın ve sonuçların daha somut bir şekilde ele alınmasını sağlamıştır. Bu itibarla çalışmada Türkiye'nin Azerbaycan, Kazakistan ve Özbekistan ile 1990'lardan itibaren yürüttüğü ikili ticari ve ekonomik işbirliğine dair mekanizmalar çerçevesinde ele alınmaktadır.

Türk devletleri kavramı bu tezde belirtilen coğrafya için seçilmiş olan kavramdır. Esasen Sovyetler Birliği'nin dağılması sonrasında ortaya çıkan yeni cumhuriyetler için literatürde birbirinden farklı temelleri esas alan tanımlamalar yapılmıştır. Batı

kaynaklarında en yaygın olarak “Orta Asya” ifadesine rastlanırken, coğrafyanın post-Sovyet coğrafya olarak isimlendirildiği örnekler de görülmektedir. Türkiye’de ise bu coğrafyaya ilişkin kullanım yalnızca coğrafya ile sınırlı olmayıp, ortak tarih, kültür, sosyal doku, siyasi eğilimler gibi faktörlerle belirlenen farklı kullanımlar söz konusudur. Bir yandan Avrasya kavramı, diğer yandan Türkistan kavramı, aynı coğrafyayı belirtmek için kullanılan kavramlar olarak karşımıza çıkmıştır. Örneğin Barthold, bölgeyi Türkistan olarak nitelendirir ve bölge hakkındaki ilk bilgilerin, İskender’in düzenlediği seferle edinildiğini ifade etmektedir. (Barthold, 2010, p. 21) Djalili ve Kellner Barthold’a atıfta bulunarak, tarihte bölgeye Maverâünnehir dendiğini belirtirken, Firdevsi’nin atıfla bölgeden Turan olarak bahsettiğini ifade etmektedir. Bu kapsamda, muhtelif kullanımlarda Orta Asya, Türk devletleri, Türki Cumhuriyetler gibi terimlerin de Türkiye’de yayınlanan literatürde sıklıkla kullanıldığı görülmektedir. (Yesevi Ç. G., 2020, p. 330)

Bu noktada tezdeki temel bakış açısı Türkiye’nin bu ülkelerden seçilmiş olan üç ülke ile ticaret diplomasisi mekanizmaları olduğu için, Türkiye’nin resmi kullanımı ve Türkiye’nin ve bu ülkelerin birlikte kurucusu ve üyesi oldukları uluslararası kuruluşların kullanımının esas alınması bir yöntem olarak benimsenmiştir. Bu kapsamda daha önce Türk Konseyi olan, 2021 yılında yapılan tüzük değişikliğiyle adı Türk Devletleri Teşkilatı olarak belirlenmiş olan uluslararası kuruluşun kullanımı, bu çalışmanın da kullanımına rehberlik etmiştir. Bu itibarla, Orta Asya ya da Avrasya ülkeleri gibi ucu daha açık kavramlar yerine, her birisi Türk Devletleri Teşkilatı üyesi olan bu ülkeleri tanımlamak için Türk devletleri kavramı tezde kullanılan kavram olmuştur.

Türkiye Türk devletleri ile ilişkilerinde birlikte yürütülen bir kimlik oluşumunu takip eden kurumsal yapıları inşa eden bir yaklaşım benimsemiştir. Burada realizmin öngördüğü şekilde hegemonik bir yapıdan söz etmek mümkün değildir. Benzer şekilde liberal teorinin önerdiği haliyle Türkiye’nin salt ekonomik beklentilerle bu ilişkiyi tesis ettiğini söylemek de mümkün değildir.

Oluşturulan ortak yapılar, belirlenen ortak kimlik temelinde şekillenmiş, Uluslararası Türk Kültürü Teşkilatı, Türk Devletleri Teşkilatı, Türk Dünyası Parlamenterler Asamblesi gibi yapılarla bir Türk Dünyası fikri etrafında Türk devletleri ile kurumsal

ilişkiler tesis edilmiştir. Türkiye'nin bu ülkelerle yürüttüğü Ticaret diplomasisi kurumlarının işleyişi de güçlü bir çıkar birlikteliğinden ziyade, ilişkilerin çok boyutlu yönünün güçlendirilmesi hedefine odaklanmıştır. Türkiye'nin en büyük Ticaret ortakları Avrupa Birliği, Amerika Birleşik Devletleri, Rusya Federasyonu gibi bloklar ve ülkeler olup, Türk devletleri bu denklemde Türkiye açısından çok büyük Ticaret ortakları değildir. Öte yandan Ticaret ve ticarete ilişkin kurumlar, Türkiye'nin bu ülkelerle ilişkilerinin başlangıcı için ateşleyici unsurlar da olmamıştır, ilişkiler daha ziyade sosyo-kültürel temelde teşekkül etmiş, bunun üzerine bina edilmiştir. Ticari münasebetler ilişkilerin önemli bir tamamlayıcısı olmuştur. Bu nedenle liberal önermenin sunduğu şekliyle ticaretin geliştirilmesi amacıyla oluşan bir ilişkiden söz edilemez. Bu anlamda Türkiye'nin Türk devletleri ile ilişkilerinde konstrüktivist bir bakış açısıyla değerlendirme yapılması daha sağlıklı bir sonuç verecektir.

Türkiye'nin Türkiye, Azerbaycan ve Kazakistan ile ikili siyasi, ekonomik ve ticari ilişkileri Türkiye'de akademik çalışmalarda ilgi çeken bir konu olarak ele alınmıştır. Türkiye'nin Türk devletleri ile ilişkilerinde ekonomik ve ticari faktörlerin dış politika ile ilişkilerinin incelendiği akademik literatürde ticaret, ekonomik mekanizmalar, lojistik gibi faktörlerin faktörün çok önemli bir yer işgal ettiği dikkati çekmektedir. Bu bağlamda özellikle Orta Koridor ve Çin'in kuşak ve yol projesinin Türkiye'nin Orta Asya ile ilişkilerinin değerlendirildiği çalışmalar da son dönemlerde ön plana çıkmaktadır.

Bu çalışmaların bir çoğunda ticari diplomasi araçlarının da ele alındığı, bu kapsamda Karma Ekonomik Komisyon toplantıları, üst düzey ziyaretler, iş insanlarının karşılıklı ziyaretlerinin ikili ilişkilere olan katkısının da önemli bir unsur olarak değerlendirilmiş olduğu da görülmektedir.

Çalışma, Türkiye'nin bahse konu üç ülkeyle olan ilişkilerinde Ticaret diplomasisi kavramını, ilişkilerin diğer boyutlarıyla birlikte sistematik bir şekilde ele almakta ve ilişkilerin yorumlanmasında Ticaret diplomasisini de merkezi bir konuma oturtmaktadır. Bu kapsamda tezde Ticaret diplomasisinin uluslararası politik ekonomi ve Uluslararası İlişkiler disiplini içerisindeki kavramsal tartışmalarına da değinerek bu kavramsal çerçevede Ticaret diplomasisi araçlarının Türkiye'nin Türk devletleri ile ilişkilerinde dış politikayı destekleyici unsur olarak kullanımını açıklanmaktadır.

Yeni kurulan çoğu ülkede gözlendiği gibi, Türk devletleri de kuruldukları ilk dönemde ciddi ekonomik istikrarsızlıkla karşı karşıya bulunmaktaydı. Türk akademik yayınlarında Türkiye'nin Orta Asya ülkeleri ile ilişkilerinde tarihsel sürecin ele alındığı çalışmalar dikkati çekmekte olup, bu kapsamda ikili resmi ziyaretler ve anlaşmaların ele alındığı çalışmalarda Karma Ekonomik Komisyon kurulması gibi ticaret diplomasisi araçlarının kullanımına ilişkin değerlendirmelerin de yer aldığı gözlenmektedir. Bununla beraber, söz konusu çalışmalarda Ticaret Diplomasisi mekanizmaları sistematik olarak dış politika unsuru olarak ele alınmak yerine, ekonomik ve ticari ilişkiler başlığı altında bir faktör olarak değerlendirildiği görülmekte olup, bu tezde ticaret diplomasisi mekanizmalarının bizatihi kendileri dış politika yapımında sistematik faktörler olarak sınanmaktadır.

Türkiye ile Azerbaycan arasındaki ekonomik ilişkileri incelendiği bazı çalışmalarda tarihsel bir çerçevede Azerbaycan ile Türkiye ilişkilerinin tarihsel gelişimi ele alınmakta, benzer şekilde ikili ekonomik ilişkilerin genel analizi kapsamında ekonomik ve ticari nitelikli işbirliği anlaşmalarının önemi de vurgulanmaktadır. Bunu yaparken, bu tezde ticaret diplomasisi mekanizmaları arasında zikredilen bahse konu ikili ekonomik ve ticari işbirliği mekanizmalarının dış politikanın yürütülmesinde kullanılan araçlar olması yönünden ziyade genel anlamda iki ülke ilişkilerinin ekonomik boyutunun hukuki altyapısını oluşturan belgeler olması yönü zikredilmektedir.

Benzer şekilde Türkiye ile Kazakistan'ın ekonomik ilişkilerini inceleyen çalışmalarda da Çifte Vergilendirmenin Önlenmesi Anlaşması, Yatırımların Karşılıklı Teşviki ve Korunması Anlaşması, Ticaret ve Ekonomik İşbirliği Anlaşması gibi metinlerin ikili ticari ve ekonomik işbirliğine olan önemli katkısının üzerinde durulmuştur. Söz konusu anlaşmalar, Türkiye-Kazakistan ilişkilerinin tarihsel süreç içinde açıklanmasında önemli bir boyut ve ikili ilişkileri şekillendiren ana unsurlar olarak zikredilerek, mekanizmaların önemi de ayrıca vurgulanmaktadır.

Bu tezde Türkiye ile Türk devletleri arasındaki ilişkilerde ticari ve ekonomik işbirliği mekanizmalarının önemi, literatürde bu ilişkilere dair yer alan çalışmalarla paralellik göstermekte ve dış politikanın önemli bir unsuru olarak ekonomik ve ticari ilişkileri oluşturan hukuki metinler, üst düzey ziyaretler, iş konseyi ve iş forumu gibi özel sektör kuruluşları arasındaki mekanizmalar detaylı olarak açıklanmaktadır. Öte yandan bu

tezin Türkiye ile Türk devletleri arasındaki siyasi ve ekonomik ilişkilere dair literatüre temel katkısı, konunun Ticaret Diplomasisi konsepti çerçevesinde ele alınarak, bu mekanizmaların ilişkilerin tarihsel süreci içindeki yerinden ziyade, ticaret diplomasisinin bu ilişkilerdeki konumu penceresinden konunun incelenmiş olmasıdır. Bunu yaparken, Türkiye ile Türk devletleri arasındaki ilişkilerin incelendiği literatürdeki genel yaklaşımdan farklı olarak, Susan Strange'in dünya ekonomisindeki ve siyasal düzenindeki yapısal değişimlerin sonucu olarak gelişen ticaret diplomasisi kavramı içerisinde devletler arası, devletler ve şirketler arası ve şirketler arası boyutlarıyla ele aldığı ticaret diplomasisi kavramı, bu kavramsal çerçevede Türkiye'nin Türk devletleri ile ilişkilerinin değerlendirilmesinde model olarak alınmıştır.

Tezde, ticaret diplomasisi analizin merkezine oturtulurken, Georgiadou'nun Yunanistan'ın dış politikasının dönüşümünde ticaret diplomasisinin katkısını değerlendirme biçiminde olduğu gibi ticaret diplomasisi dış politikanın önemli bir unsuru olarak ele alınarak ticaret diplomasisi kavramı merkeze oturtulmaktadır. Benzer şekilde Saner and Yiu'nun küreselleşme ile birlikte diplomatik ilişkilerin özellikle Ticaret diplomasisi üzerinden bir dönüşüm yaşadığına dair değerlendirmesi bu çalışmada Türkiye'nin Türk devletleri ile geliştirdiği Ticaret diplomasisi modeline uygulanmıştır. Öte yandan, Bagozzi, and Landis'in ülkeler arası ticari diplomasi servislerinin artmasının ticareti daha istikrarlı hale getirdiği yönündeki çalışması da yine Türkiye'nin Azerbaycan, Kazakistan ve Özbekistan ile ilişkileri çerçevesinde değerlendirilmiştir.

Bir diğer husus, Türk devletleri ile kurulan ticaret diplomasisi mekanizmaları bir çok yönden benzerlik gösterse de, Türkiye'nin Azerbaycan ile Tercihli Ticaret Anlaşması yoluyla derinleştirdiği ticaret diplomasisi altyapısı, Kazakistan ile düzenli olarak toplanan ve beraberinde yeni bir çok somut projeyi barındıran Yeni Sinerji gibi iddialı bir ortak ekonomi programının hayata geçmesi, Özbekistan ile de özellikle Kerimov sonrası dönemde hızlı bir şekilde ilerletilen ve yine bir Tercihli Ticaret Anlaşması ile sonuçlanan baş döndürücü bir ticaret diplomasisi trafiğinin varlığı, bu üç ülkenin bu çalışma için yeterli kaynak sağlaması sonucunu doğurmuştur. Türkmenistan ve Kırgızistan da esasen Türk devletleri olarak eski Sovyet coğrafyasında Türkiye'nin özel ilgi gösterdiği ülkeler olmakla beraber; Türkmenistan'ın hiçbir resmi istatistik

yayınlanmaması ve Türkiye ile Türkmenistan arasında imzalanan KEK protokolleri gibi önemli ticaret diplomasisi metinlerinin açık kaynaklarda yayınlanmamış olması, bu ülkeye dair Ticaret Diplomasisi yönüyle araştırma yapmak için yeterli kaynak bulunamaması sonucunu doğurmuştur. Öte yandan Türkiye- Kırgızistan ilişkilerinde de ticaret diplomasisi mekanizmalarının işleyişi iki ülke arasındaki siyasi ilişkilerle doğrudan bağlantılı olmuş, ticaret diplomasisi bakımından en önemli araçlardan birisi olduğu değerlendirilen KEK mekanizması da çok uzun aralıklarla çalıştığından yine yeterli veri teşkil etmemiştir. Bu nedenle araştırma, ticaret diplomasisi mekanizmalarının işleyişini detaylı bir şekilde inceleyebilmek için imkân sağlayan ülkeler ile sınırlı tutulmuştur.

Ticaret diplomasisinin ikili ilişkilere olan etkisinin anlaşılması için ülkeler arasındaki ticari ve ekonomik ilişkilerin boyutu ve zaman serisi içindeki değişimlerinin ele alınması önemli bir veri sağlamaktadır. Türkiye düzenli olarak ticaret verilerini uluslararası kuruluşlarla paylaşan bir ülke olduğundan Türkiye'nin istatistikleri bu anlamda önemli bir veri kaynağı sağlamaktadır. Türk devletlerinde ise verilerin sağlıklı olması konusunda, özellikle de bağımsızlıklarının ilk yıllarındaki veriler noktasında Türkiye kadar elverişli koşulların olmadığı görülmekle beraber, sonraki yıllarda kurumsallaşmanın artmasıyla beraber bu sorunun da önemli ölçüde giderilmekte olduğu görülmektedir. Öte yandan, örneğin Trademap, doğrudan kaynağından alınan verileri esas almakta olup, veri bulunmadığı noktada “mirror data” yöntemini kullanarak, verisi bulunan tarafın verilerini kullanma imkânı sunmakta olduğundan çalışmada Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu'nun yanı sıra Trademap verileri de kullanılmıştır. Bunun yanı sıra Dünya Bankası, OECD, IMF gibi dünyada kabul görmüş uluslararası ekonomik ve finansal kuruluşların rapor ve verileri de araştırmaya kaynaklık etmiştir.

İkili ticari ve ekonomik ilişkilerin çerçevesini belirleyen ve çalışmada ticaret diplomasisinin araçları olarak nitelendirilen uluslararası anlaşma metinleri, bu tez çalışmasının en detaylı araştırma alanlarından birisi olmuştur. Özellikle anlaşmaların hukuki statüsü başta olmak üzere anlaşma hükümlerinin doğurduğu sonuçlar ve anlaşmalar ile kurulan mekanizmalar, ticaret diplomasisinin işleyişi açısından önemli veri kaynaklarıdır. Burada metot olarak metin analizi yapılmış, aynı türdeki anlaşmaların benzer ve farklı yönleri de ele alınmıştır. Bu kapsamda ekonomik ve



ticari nitelikteki işbirliği anlaşmaları, karma ekonomik komisyonu protokolleri, yatırımların karşılıklı teşviki ve korunması anlaşmaları, çifte vergilendirmenin önlenmesi anlaşmaları, serbest ticaret anlaşmaları, tercihli ticaret anlaşmaları gibi ekonomik ve ticari nitelikli anlaşmalar ticaret diplomasisinin yasal altyapısını oluşturan mekanizmalar olarak ele alınmıştır.

Ticaret diplomasisinin kavramsallaştırılmasında aktörlerin belirlenmesi, kavramın uluslararası ilişkiler disiplini içinde teorik çerçevede ele alınabilmesinin en önemli unsurlarından birisi olarak görülmektedir. Bu kapsamda aktörler devletler, devlet dışı aktörler ve devletler adına yurtdışında görevlendirilmiş olan diplomatik misyonları ticaret diplomasinin temel aktörleri olarak belirlenmiştir. Burada devlet dışı aktörler olarak Türkiye'nin Türk devletleri ile ilişkilerinde öne çıkan Türkiye Odalar ve Borsalar Birliği, Dış Ekonomik İlişkiler Kurulu, Türkiye Mütahhitler Birliği gibi, bölgede yatırım yapan iş insanlarının oluşturduğu ve etkin olduğu devlet dışı iş örgütleri değerlendirme kapsamına alınmıştır. Ticaret diplomasisinin aktörlerinden birisi olarak ele alınan diplomatik temsilcilikler de zaman içerisinde farklı bir role doğru evrilmiştir. Diplomatik temsilcilikler ülkelerin Dışişleri bakanlıkları tarafından atanan diplomatlardan oluşan ve diplomasinin gerektirdiği görevleri yerine getiren birimler olmanın ötesine geçerek uzmanlaşmış birimler haline dönüşmekte ve Dışişleri bakanlıkları dışındaki kamu kurumlarının da uzman temsilcilerinin görev yaptığı daha geniş yapılar haline dönüşmüştür. Avrupa'da, özellikle Fransa'da ticaret konuları diplomatlar tarafından ilgi gösterilmeyen konular iken özellikle 1960'lardan itibaren ticaretin diplomatlar açısından temel ilgi odağı haline dönüşmeye başladığı görülmektedir. Türkiye'nin yurtdışı misyonları da ticaretin dış ilişkilerde giderek daha merkezi bir konuma sahip olmasıyla buna uyumlu olarak dönüşmeye başlamıştır. Türk devletlerinde Ticaret Müşavirleri ve Ataşelerinin Azerbaycan, Kazakistan ve Özbekistan'da birden fazla sayıda merkezde ya da bir merkezde birden fazla sayıda görevlendirilmiş olduğu görülmektedir. Türkiye'nin diğer ülke ve uluslararası kuruluşlardaki benzer görevlendirmeleri de ticaret diplomasisinin yurtdışı diplomatik temsilcilerdeki temsil ve faaliyet alanının genişliğini göstermektedir. Bu çalışmada söz konusu ülkelerle ilişkiler çerçevesinde Türkiye'nin yurtdışı misyonlarında görev yapan ticaret temsilcilerinin de ticaret diplomasisinin aktörleri arasında olduğu gösterilmiştir. Bu tez çalışmasında Türkiye'nin bahse konu ticaret diplomasisi araçlarını Türk devletleri ile ilişkilerinde etkin bir şekilde kullandığı özgün bir şekilde

ortaya konmuştur.

Türk devletlerinin Sovyetler Birliğinden bağımsızlıklarını kazanmaları sonrasında bölgede oluşan boşluk Rusya'nın öncülük ettiği Bağımsız Devletler Topluluğu ile doldurulmaya çalışılmıştır. Bölgenin siyasi durumu, radikal İslamcı hareketlerin bölgedeki boşluktan istifadeyle güç kazanması ve bunun Amerika Birleşik Devletlerinin özellikle Afganistan ile bağlantılı olarak bölgede etkinliğini artırması sonunu doğurması Türk devletlerini 1990'lı yıllarda ve özellikle 11 Eylül saldırıları sonrasında 2000'li yıllarda bölge jeopolitiğinin en önemli konusu haline gelmiştir. Buradan oluşan ittifaklar ile Rusya, ABD ve son dönemlerde Çin'in bölge üzerindeki rekabetleri bölgede politik faktörleri ön plana çıkarmıştır. Bölgeye ilişkin olarak uluslararası ilişkiler disiplini içinde yapılan çalışmalarda bu jeopolitik risklerin literatürde ağırlıklı ele alındığı görülmektedir. Kazakistan'ın Rusya ile ilişkiler merkezli bir yaklaşım belirlediği gözlenmiştir. Öte yandan Kırgızistan'da doğrudan doğruya ABD askeri varlığının konuşlanması, Özbekistan'ın da ABD'nin Afganistan'a yönelik operasyonlarında lojistik destek sağlaması ABD'nin bölgedeki varlığını güçlendirirken, Rusya'nın da buna karşılık bölgedeki etkinliğini artırmayı ve ABD'nin varlığını dengelemeyi amaçladığı da görülmüştür.

Jeopolitik riskler Türkiye bakımından da bölgeye ilişkin yaklaşımlarda çok önemli bir faktör olmuştur. Bunun yanı sıra Türkiye bölge ile ticaretin geliştirilmesine yönelik olarak yoğun bir diplomasi faaliyeti de yürütmüştür.

Bölgedeki ekonomik entegrasyon çabalarında Türk devletleri Bağımsız Devletler Topluluğunun (BDT) bir parçası olmuş, BDT çerçevesinde kendi aralarında serbest ticaret alanı oluşturulması için ikili düzeyde anlaşmalar imzalamış olmalarına rağmen bu etkin bir ekonomik entegrasyon modeli olamamıştır. Bununla beraber Rusya, Kazakistan ve Belarus arasında kurulan gümrük birliği, post-Sovyet dönemdeki entegrasyon girişimlerinin başarılı bir sonucu olmuştur. Bu birlik, Türkiye açısından bölge ülkeleri ile ticari ve ekonomik ilişkilerini etkileyen bir durum da ortaya çıkarmıştır. Kazakistan birliğin bir üyesi olarak tabii olduğu gümrük birliği kapsamında ticari anlaşmalarda vergi indirimi taahhüdü vermesi mümkün olmayan bir konuma geçmiştir. Türkiye'nin Kazakistan ile geliştirdiği ticari ve ekonomik mekanizmalar ise Kazakistan'ın gümrük birliği üyeliğinden sonra daha çeşitli hale gelmiştir. Bu da tezin

temel argümanlarından birisi olan, ticaret diplomasisinin sonucundan bağımsız olarak bir süreç olduğu ve devletlerarası ilişkilerde ticaretin artırılması amacının yanı sıra sosyal inşacı bir yaklaşımla ortak kimliğe dayalı kurumsal yapılar oluşturmaya yönelik bir araç olarak da kullanıldığını teyit etmektedir. Bu kapsamda ticaret diplomasisi araçlarının ticaret hacminin ya da yatırım miktarlarının artırılmasına olan etkisinin hesaplanabilir olmaması, bu araçların önemini ya da kullanım derecesini etkilememektedir. Ticaret diplomasisi araçları, karşılıklı ticaretin ve yatırımların artırılmasına yönelik somut hedefler içermesinin yanı sıra bir çok durumda bu yapıların birlikte oluşturulması için tercih edilen bir diplomasi yöntemi olarak da ortaya çıkmaktadır.

Bölgede Avrasya Ekonomik Birliği son dönemde en güçlü işbirliği modeli olarak ayakta durmaktadır. Çin'in kuşak ve yol projesi kapsamında yeni ipek yolu projesinin Avrasya gümrük birliği ile entegre edilmesi suretiyle bölgenin büyük bir lojistik ağı haline gelmesi amacını taşımaktadır. Bu entegrasyon Çin'in günümüzde Türk devletleri ve bölge üzerindeki etkinliğinin artmasını sağlamıştır. Türkmenistan için Çin en önemli doğalgaz müşterisi konumuna ulaşmıştır. Çin'in Özbekistan'da önemli yatırımları olduğu görülmektedir.

Türkiye'nin Türk devletleri ile ticari ve ekonomik ilişkileri Sovyetler Birliğinin dağılması sonrasında hızlı bir kurumsallaşma sürecine girmiştir. Başta müteahhitlik sektörü olmak üzere bölge ülkelerine yönelik olarak Türkiye'nin önemli bir ekonomik varlık gösterdiği görülmektedir. Bu noktada çalışmanın zorluklarından birisi özellikle Sovyetler Birliği'nin dağılmasından sonraki ilk yıllara ilişkin olarak bağımsızlığını yeni kazanmış olan Türk devletlerine yönelik istatistiksel veri bulunması olmuştur. Ancak gerek Türkiye'nin istatistik altyapısının kurumsal yapısı, gerekse Dünya Bankası başta olmak üzere uluslararası ticari ve ekonomik kuruluşların bölgeye yönelik çalışmalarının yoğunluğu, o döneme ilişkin veri bulunmasında önemli ölçüde kaynaklık etmiştir. Bölgenin ticari ve ekonomik gelişiminde Türkiye'nin yerini anlayabilmek için bölgedeki en büyük ekonomik aktör olan Rusya Federasyonu ile Türkiye'nin ticari yapısı da tezde ele alınan konulardan birisi olmuştur. Bu kapsamda özellikle enerji kaynaklarıyla öne çıkan bölgenin ekonomisinde petrol ve doğalgaz fiyatlarındaki küresel gelişmeler bu ülkelerin ekonomilerini doğrudan etkilemektedir. Bağımsızlıklarının ilk yıllarında üretim altyapısı yeterli olmayan ve temel geçim

kaynağı petrol ve doğalgaz ihracatı olan Türk devletlerinden özellikle Azerbaycan ve Kazakistan'ın ekonomilerinde bu etki çok daha belirgin bir şekilde görülmektedir. Türkiye'nin bu ülkeler ile ilişkilerinde karşılıklı bir çıkar olduğu da açık bir şekilde ortaya çıkmaktadır. Türkiye açısından önemli ve erişilebilir bir pazar olan Türk devletlerinin ekonomilerinin çeşitlendirilmesi, bu ülkelere gerçekleştirilen uluslararası doğrudan yatırımlarla mümkün olmuştur. Petrol ve doğalgaz ihracatı ile sağlanan gelirlerin altyapı ve üstyapı yatırımlarına harcanması, Türk müteahhitleri için de önemli bir fırsat olarak görülmüştür. Rusya Federasyonu Türk müteahhitlerinin dünyada en fazla proje üstlendiği ülke iken Türkmenistan da bu alanda Rusya'dan sonra ikinci sıraya yükselmiştir. Türkiye açısından önemli bir fırsat yaratmış olan bu dönüşüm sürecinde ticaret diplomasisi araçlarının etkin bir şekilde kullanılmış olduğu bu tezde özgün bir şekilde ortaya konmaya çalışılmıştır. Nitekim Türk devletlerinin ekonomik ve siyasi dönüşüm süreçleri ile Türkiye'nin bu ülkelerle ilişkileri literatürde bir çok yönüyle ele alınırken, bu tez ile bu dönüşüm sürecinde ticaret diplomasisi araçlarının da etkin birer araç olarak kullanıldığının ortaya konması amaçlanmıştır. Bu kapsamda Karma Ekonomik Komisyonu mekanizması, Yatırımların Karşılıklı Teşviki ve Korunması anlaşmaları, Çifte Vergilendirmenin Önlenmesi Anlaşmaları bu ülkelerle geliştirilen ticaret diplomasisi araçlarının yasal altyapı unsurları olarak ele alınmıştır. Bunların yanı sıra özel sektör tarafından yürütülen, ancak özellikle üst düzey devlet yetkililerinin ziyaretlerine eşlik edecek şekilde düzenlenen iş forumları, iş konseyi toplantıları gibi araçlar da ticaret diplomasisinin devlet dışı aktörlerince yürütülen araçlar olarak ortaya konmuştur. Bu yönüyle esasen bahse konu araçların ticaret diplomasisinin unsurları olarak akademik yönden incelenmesi, bu tezin literatüre katkısı olarak değerlendirilebilir.

Türkiye'nin Türk devletleri ile ilişkilerinde Azerbaycan ve Özbekistan ile imzalanmış olan Tercihli Ticaret Anlaşmaları, ticaret diplomasisinin somut sonuçları olması yönüyle özellikle altı çizilen unsurlar olarak değerlendirilmiştir. Azerbaycan ve Özbekistan açısından bu anlaşmalar, BDT serbest ticaret anlaşmaları dışında bu ülkelerin üçüncü ülkelerle oluşturdukları ilk tercihli ticaret düzenlemesi olması bakımından ayrıca önem taşımaktadır. Türkiye açısından da, Türkiye'nin Avrupa Birliği ile mevcut gümrük birliği düzenlemesi dışında ticari bir düzenlemeye girmesi de Türkiye açısından önemli bir açılım olmuştur. Özbekistan burada Türkiye ile siyasi ilişkileri bakımından farklı bir konumda yer almaktadır. 1990'lı yılların sonlarından

itibaren Türkiye ile siyasi yönden olumsuz bir ilişki yapısı bulunan Özbekistan’da 2017 yılında İslam Kerimov’un vefat etmesi sonrasında Türkiye ile hızlı bir şekilde gelişen siyasi ilişkilerinde ticaret diplomasisi araçlarının ne şekilde etkin kullanıldığı da bu tezin amaçlarından birisi olmuştur.

Türkiye Azerbaycan ilişkileri Azerbaycan’ın bağımsızlığını kazanmasından itibaren önemli dönüm noktalarından geçmiştir. Türkiye Azerbaycan’ın bağımsızlığını ilk tanıyan ülke olmuştur. Azerbaycan’ın bağımsızlığının ilk yıllarında yaşanan siyasi çalkantılar Türkiye’de de yankı bulmuş, Elçibey dönemi sonrasında Aliyev ile Türkiye Cumhurbaşkanı Demirel arasında geliştirilen kişisel münasebetler iki ülke arasındaki ilişkilerin olumlu seyrine de katkı sağlamış “bir millet iki devlet” söylemi en üst düzeyde ifade edilir olmuştur. Ermenistan’ın Azerbaycan’ın Karabağ’daki topraklarını işgali sonrasında Türkiye Azerbaycan’a destek vererek Ermenistan ile diplomatik ilişkilerini de kesmiştir 2021 yılında Karabağ’ın Azerbaycan tarafından geri alınmasında Türkiye’nin önemli katkıları olmuş, Türkiye’in sağladığı insansız hava araçlarının savaşta Azerbaycan lehine olan katkısı açıkça ifade edilmiştir. Siyasi ilişkilere paralel olarak ekonomik ve ticari ilişkiler de iki ülke açısından önemli görülmektedir. Azerbaycan, Bakü-Tiflis-Ceyhan boru hattının devreye girmesiyle Türkiye açısından önemli bir enerji kaynağı haline gelmiş, ayrıca bu hat ile Hazar petrolünün Akdeniz’e ulaşmasıyla buradan batı ülkelerine taşınabilir hale gelmesi Azerbaycan’ın stratejik önemini artırmıştır. Öte yandan Azerbaycan Türkiye açısından Bakü-Tiflis-Kars demiryolu hattı ile lojistik yönüyle de öne çıkan bir ülke konumuna gelmiştir.

Azerbaycan ekonomisinin Sovyet sisteminden sonra liberal ekonomiye dönüşüm süreci, diğer Türk devletlerinde olduğu gibi sorunlu bir geçiş olmuştur. Enerji üretimine dayalı ve sanayinin diğer alanlarında yeterli altyapıyı oluşturamamış olan ekonomik yapı bu köklü değişimi yaşamak için hazırlıklı değildi. Ekonomisi temel olarak petrol ve doğalgaz ihracatına dayalı olan Azerbaycan 1992’den bugüne bu yapısında köklü bir değişiklik yapamamıştır. Bu durum, kaynak yönünden zengin olan ülkelerin karşılaşılabildiği, ekonomi literatüründe Hollanda Hastalığı olarak bilinen duruma yol açmıştır. Bu durumda ülke doğal kaynakları karlı gelir kalem alanı olduğundan, kar oranı daha düşük olan sanayi ve tarım yerine devamlı surette doğal kaynaklara yatırım yapılır. Yeni yatırımları çekemeyen sektörler zamanla gelişmemiş

ve zayıf kalmaktadır. Azerbaycan'da kamu sektörünün ekonomi içindeki payı çok büyük olagelmıştır. Büyük işletmelerin çoğu kamuya ait ya da kamu ortaklığındaki firmalardır. Bu durum, Azerbaycan ekonomisini petrol fiyatlarına karşı çok duyarlı hale getirmektedir. 2008-2011 yılları arasında petrol fiyatlarında yaşanan hızlı yükseliş ülke ekonomisine büyüme olarak yansımış, ancak bu dönemde Azerbaycan yerel parasının (Manat) Dolar karşısındaki hızlı yükselişi ülkede imalat sanayiini önemli ölçüde olumsuz etkileyerek üretimi baltalamıştır. Azerbaycan bu büyümeyi petrol dışı sektörlerde üretime dönüştürememiş, petrol gelirlerinin sağladığı refah diğer sektörleri geride bırakmıştır. Buna rağmen Azerbaycan, tarım arazilerinin özelleştirilmesinden toprak reformuna, petrokimya sektörünün geliştirilmesinden ekonomide kamunun payının azaltılmasına bir dizi reformu hayata geçirmiştir. Azerbaycan'da bu dönemde görülen ve bazı dönemlerde %35'lere varan hızlı büyüme imalat sektörüne yansımamış olsa da özellikle altyapı ve üstyapı yatırımları ile müteahhitlik sektörü için önemli fırsatlar oluşturmuştur. Türk müteahhitlik firmaları da Azerbaycan'ın sunduğu bu fırsatlardan istifade etmiş, Azerbaycan'da 15 milyar Dolardan fazla tutarda müteahhitlik projesi üstlenmiştir. İki ülke arasındaki ticaretin yapısına bakıldığında Türkiye'nin Azerbaycan'a temel ihracat ürünleri makinalar ve aksam ve parçaları, Azerbaycan'ın Türkiye'ye ihraç ürünleri ise ekonomi ve üretim yapısına uygun olarak petrol ve petrol yağları olmuştur. Türkiye Azerbaycan için temel ticaret ortaklarından birisi olmuş, Azerbaycan'ın genel ticareti içindeki payı da istikrarlı bir şekilde artmıştır.

Türkiye ile Azerbaycan arasında kurulan ikili ticaret ve ekonomik ilişkilere dair mekanizmalar vasıtasıyla yürütülen ticaret diplomasisi faaliyetleri, siyasi ilişkilere paralel olarak kurumsallaşmış ve gelişmiştir. Yatırımların Karşılıklı Teşviki ve Korunması Anlaşması, Çifte Vergilendirmenin Önlenmesi Anlaşması gibi yasal altyapıyı oluşturan ve karşılıklı uluslararası sorumluluklar doğuran anlaşmaların yanı sıra, Karma Ekonomik Komisyonu mekanizmasını oluşturan ticaret ve ekonomik işbirliği anlaşması da imzalanmıştır. Karma Ekonomik Komisyon (KEK) toplantılarının bu tezin yazıldığı tarih itibariyle 8 defa gerçekleşmiş olduğu görülmektedir. Esasen 2007 yılında imzalanan kurucu anlaşma sonrasında 8 defa KEK toplantısının gerçekleştirilmiş olduğu dikkate alındığında düzenli bir mekanizma olarak işlediği görülmektedir. Bu da, bu tezde ortaya konması amaçlanan, Türkiye'nin Türk devletleri ile ikili ticari ve ekonomik işbirliği ve dolayısıyla ticaret diplomasisi

mekanizmalarının işlerliğinin ikili ilişkilerin genel seyri ile uyumlu olduğu yönündeki önermeyi desteklemektedir.

Öte yandan, iki ülke arasında en son tesis edilen tercihli ticaret anlaşması, ticaret diplomasisi yönüyle değerlendirildiğinde önemli bir adım olarak görülmektedir. Özellikle Azerbaycan açısından Bağımsız Devletler Topluluğu dışında tesis edilmiş olan ilk tercihli rejim olması bakımından çok ileri bir adım olarak değerlendirilmektedir. Anlaşmanın ticari boyutu değerlendirildiğinde esasen iki taraf açısından da mukayeseli olarak büyük bir ticaret hacmine tekabül etmediği görülmektedir. Buna rağmen anlaşmanın imzalanmış olmasının kendisi, ticaret diplomasisi kavramını tam anlamıyla karşılamaktadır.

Türkiye-Azerbaycan ilişkilerinin bir diğer boyutu da Türk Devletleri Teşkilatı içerisindeki çok taraflı işbirliğidir. Türk Konseyi olarak kurulan, 2021 yılında Özbekistan ve Macaristan'ın da katılımıyla üye sayısı 7'ye çıkarak Türk Devletleri Teşkilatı adını alan yapı, bir çok alanda çok taraflı işbirliğini amaçlamakta olup, ticaret de bunlardan bir tanesidir.

Sonuç olarak Türkiye-Azerbaycan ilişkilerinde siyasi ilişkiler ve enerji konusu önde gelen konular olup, ticaret ikili ilişkileri tamamlayan bir unsur olarak ortaya çıkmaktadır. Bununla beraber ticaret diplomasisi, özellikle son dönemde imzalanmış olan Tercihli Ticaret Anlaşması ile birlikte iki ülke arası ilişkilerde, ilişkilerin ulaştığı boyutu gösteren bir araç haline gelmiştir.

Kazakistan Türk devletleri arasında özellikle yabancı yatırımcıların ülkeye çekilmesi yönünde attığı adımlarla ayrışan bir ülke haline gelmiştir. Nazarbayev yönetiminin oluşturduğu istikrarlı görünüm, Nazarbayev'in Rusya ile yürüttüğü dengeli ilişkiler, Avrasya Ekonomik Birliğinde üstlendiği öncü rol ile Avrasya ekseninde kendisini konumlandığı pozisyon, Kazakistan'ı bölgede dengeli dış politika, içeride de istikrarlı bir yönetim yapısı olan bir ülke haline getirmiştir. Kazakistan Rusya ile olduğu kadar batı ile de dengeli ilişkiler geliştirmiş, bu sayede pek çok batı kökenli çok uluslu firmanın yatırımlarını çekmeyi de başarmıştır. Esasen, Azerbaycan örneğinde görüldüğü gibi Kazakistan da sahip olduğu doğal kaynaklar sebebiyle Hollanda Hastalığına maruz kalan bir yapı da arz etmiştir. Her ne kadar uluslararası yatırımlar için elverişli bir yatırım ortamı sağlamayı amaçlayan politikalar yürütmüş

olsa da, gerek ülkenin coğrafi konumunun ülke için avantaj sunmaktan uzak olması, gerekse Sovyet döneminden kalma sistemik alışkanlıkların sonraki süreçte de devam etmesi ülkenin önemli bir sanayi dönüşümü yaşamasının önünde engel olmuştur. Azerbaycan'da olduğu gibi Kazakistan'da da petrol ve doğalgaz kaynaklı gelirler öncelikli olarak ülkenin yeniden imarına yönelik alt ve üstyapı harcamalarında kullanılmış olup, bu durum Türk müteahhitlik firmaları için önemli fırsatlar yaratmıştır. Türk müteahhitlerinin dünyada en fazla proje üstlendiği 5'inci ülke olan Kazakistan'da başkent Nur-Sultan'ın büyük çoğunluğu Türk müteahhitlerince inşa edilmiştir.

İki ülke arasındaki ticaretin yapısına bakıldığında, Türkiye Kazakistan'dan temel olarak bakır ve buğday ürünlerini almakta, Kazakistan'a makine ve tekstil ürünleri ihraç etmektedir. Türkiye'nin Kazakistan'a ihracatının yapısında ürün çeşitliliği dikkati çekmektedir. Kazakistan'ın ihracatında ise Türkiye'nin sanayi üretimi için girdi maddeleri ve petrol dikkati çekmektedir. Türkiye aleyhine dengesiz bir ticaret yapısı olsa da bu durum aslında Kazakistan'ın temel olarak doğal kaynaklar ihracatına bağlı olan ekonomik yapısını göstermektedir.

Türkiye'nin Kazakistan ile ticaret diplomasisi faaliyetlerini yoğun bir şekilde yürüttüğü gözlenmektedir. Karma Ekonomik Komisyonu kuran ikili ticaret ve ekonomik işbirliği anlaşması, yatırımların karşılıklı teşviki ve korunması anlaşması ile çifte vergilendirmenin önlenmesi anlaşmasının dışında Kazakistan ile diğer ülkelerden farklı olarak tesis edilen Yeni Sinerji Ortak Ekonomi Programı adı altındaki eylem planı, ticaret diplomasisinin aktif bir şekilde yürütülmesine zemin hazırlamaktadır. Kazakistan'ın Avrasya Ekonomik Birliğine üyeliği sonrasında Türkiye'nin Kazakistan ile yeni mekanizmalar geliştirme yönünde çaba sarfettiği şeklindeki bir yorumun çok iddialı olmayacağı değerlendirilmektedir. Kazakistan AEB ile kendisini ortak gümrük tarifesi ile bağlamıştır. Bu durum, Türkiye'nin Kazakistan'a ihracatta sahip olduğu ürün çeşitliliği açısından risk yaratan bir unsurdur. Temel ticaret ortağı Rusya olan Kazakistan, Türkiye'den ve Rusya'dan benzer ürünleri ithal etmekte olup, bu alanda Rusya ile gümrüklerin sıfırlanması Türkiye açısından olumsuz bir durum yaratmaktadır. Bu itibarla Türkiye'nin Kazakistan'a yönelik olarak aktif bir ticaret diplomasisi yürütmesi anlaşılır bir durum olup, bu tezin özgün bir şekilde ortaya koymaya çalıştığı şekilde ticaret diplomasisini ikili ilişkilerin merkezi bir konumuna



oturtmaktadır.

Türkiye Özbekistan ilişkileri uluslararası ilişkilerin bir çok boyutu yönüyle özellikle son dönemlerde yaşadığı dönüşüm ile akademik çalışmalar için önemli bir araştırma alanı açmaktadır. Ticaret diplomasisinin Türkiye ile Özbekistan arasındaki ilişkilerde temel bir araç oluşu bu tezin önemli çıktılarında birisidir. 1990'lı yıllardan itibaren önemli bölgesel gelişmelerin odağında olan Özbekistan'da Kerimov yönetimi, bir yandan radikal İslamcı grupların tehdidi, öte yandan Tacikistan'da yaşanan iç savaş ve Kırgızistan ile sınır sorunlarının gölgesinde Özbekistan'ın dönüşüm sürecini yürütmeye çalışmıştır. Kerimov'a yönelik suikast girişimi ve bu süreçte Özbekistan muhalefetinin Türkiye'de bulunması Kerimov yönetiminin Türkiye'ye karşı tavır almasına yol açmış, bir çok alanda ilişkiler dondurulmuştur. 2002'de Türkiye'deki iktidar değişikliği sonrasında ilişkiler yeniden canlandırılmak istense de çok mümkün olamamıştır.

2017'de Kerimov'un vefatı sonrasında Türkiye Cumhurbaşkanı Recep Tayyip Erdoğan'ın Kerimov'un kabrini ziyareti ile başlayan yakınlaşma süreci ise ilişkilerin son 20 yılı dikkate alındığında çok hızlı gelişmiş ve iki ülke arasındaki üst düzey ziyaret trafiği ile imzalanan anlaşma metinlerinin yoğunluğu ticaret diplomasisinin de etkin bir şekilde yürütülmesi için uygun bir zemin oluşturmuştur. İki ülke arasındaki yakınlaşma sürecinde ticaret diplomasisinin müstesna bir yeri olmuştur. Liderler düzeyinde dile getirilen en öncelikli meseleler ticaret alanında olmuş, Karma Ekonomik Komisyonu toplantısını, KEK kapsamında gerçekleştirilen eylem planları, Yatırımların Karşılıklı Teşviki ve Korunması Anlaşması ile Çifte Vergilendirmenin Önlenmesi Anlaşması takip etmiştir. Öte yandan tarım, eğitim, sağlık, güvenlik ve bir çok alanda iki ülke arasında bir çok anlaşma da imzalanmıştır.

Ticaret diplomasisinin Türkiye Özbekistan ilişkilerindeki önemli konumu, karşılıklı heyet ziyaretleri, iş konseyi toplantılarının sıklığı, üst düzey ziyaretlerde düzenlenen iş forumları ve son olarak iki ülke arasında imzalanan Tercihli Ticaret Anlaşması ile daha fazla ön plana çıkmaktadır. Özbekistan'ın yeni yönetiminin Kerimov sonrasında dış politika konularına tamamen farklı bir bakış açısıyla yaklaştığı görülmektedir. Komşu ülkelerle sınır sorunlarının barışçı bir şekilde çözümü yönünde atılan cesur adımların yanı sıra, Özbekistan'ın Dünya Ticaret Örgütüne üyelik başvurusu yapması

dünya ile entegrasyonu açısından önemli göstergeler olmuştur. Öte yandan, Özbekistan'ın ekonomi yönetiminin de bütünüyle farklı bir yöne doğru gitmesiyle ticaret diplomasisi araçları Özbekistan için daha anlamlı hale gelmiştir. Kapalı bir ekonomiden dışa açık bir ekonomiye geçişin sağlanması, milli para biriminin (Sum) konvertibl hale getirilmesi, piyasa ekonomisine geçiş yönünde atılan önemli adımlar olmuştur. Bu hızlı ve kapsamlı dönüşüm süreci Özbekistan makroekonomik dengeler açısından riskli bir durum oluştursa da, esasen uluslararası yatırımcılar açısından ülkeye olan güvenin artmasını sağlayacak önemli adımlar olmuştur. Özbekistan yönetimi yatırımcılara yönelik yeni paketler açıklamış, ayrıca yeni turizm bölgeleri oluşturulması gibi projeleri ilan ederek müteahhitlik başta olmak üzere yurtdışı yatırımcıları ülkeye davet etmiştir.

Özbekistan doğal kaynakları itibariyle Türk devletleri içinde kendi kendine yeterli bir ülke konumundadır. Gerek tarımsal üretimi, gerek enerjide kendine yeterli kaynaklara sahip olması, gerekse 30 milyonluk yaş ortalaması genç olan nüfusu ile dinamik bir ekonomik görünüm arz etmektedir. Bu itibarla Türkiye için Özbekistan ile ticaret diplomasisi faaliyetlerini yoğun bir şekilde yürütmesi anlamlı görülmektedir. Nitekim ticaret ile doğrudan ve dolaylı ilgisi olan bir çok konuyu kapsayan Karma Ekonomik Komisyonu toplantısı sonrasında KEK içinde bir eylem planı mekanizması oluşturulmuştur. Bu da bu çalışmanın ulaştığı sonuçlardan birisi olan, ticaret diplomasisi araçlarının dış politika araçlarından birisi olduğu hususunu doğrulayan bir durumdur.

Özbekistan Türkiye için müteahhitlik sektöründe diğer Türk devletleri kadar öne çıkamamıştır. Bunun doğrudan doğruya iki ülke arasındaki siyasi ilişkilerden kaynaklandığını ifade etmek fazla iddialı olacaktır ancak Özbekistan'ın örneğin Kazakistan kadar müteahhitlik projesi yapmamış olması, ülke yönetiminin dünyaya kapalı olmasının da bir sonucu olarak değerlendirilebilir.

Uluslararası İlişkiler bilimi, ağırlıklı olarak rasyonalistler/idealistler, gelenekçiler/modernleştiriciler, realistler, çoğulcular ve Marksistler arasındaki paradigmlar arası tartışmalar ve son olarak 1980'lerde ortaya çıkan ve dördüncüsü olan genel kabul görmüş dört ana tartışma tarafından şekillendirilmiştir. Uluslararası İlişkiler disiplin tarihinde bilim konusuna odaklanarak Soğuk Savaş'ın sona

ermesinden sonra da devam etmiştir.

Bu ana akım tartışmalardan sonra, 1980'ler Uluslararası İlişkiler literatüründe ilk tartışmanın neo-realistler ve neo-liberaller arasında olduğu yeni tartışmalar başlatmıştır. Aslında her ikisi de rasyonalist ekonomi teorisinin mantığını uluslararası ilişkilere uygulamışlardır, ancak potansiyel bir uluslararası işbirliği açısından temelde farklı sonuçlara ulaşmıştır. İkinci tartışma rasyonalistler ve eleştirel teorisyenler arasındadır. Eleştirel teorisyenler yeni-gerçekçiliğe ve onun epistemolojik, ontolojik, metodolojik ve normatif varsayımlarına meydan okumuştur. Rasyonalistler, uluslararası ilişkilerin gerçek dünyası hakkında çok az söz söylemekle eleştirel teorisyenleri suçlamıştır. Bu tartışmaların eksenini Soğuk Savaş'ın sona ermesinden bu yana iki yeni tartışmayla değişmiştir: Birincisi rasyonalistler ve konstrüktivistler arasında, ikincisi ise konstrüktivistler ve eleştirel teorisyenler arasındadır. Uluslararası ilişkilerdeki bu kademeli değişimin itici gücü, yeni bir yapılandırmacı yaklaşımın yükselişiyle açıklanabilir. Konstrüktivizm, dünyadaki siyasi gelişmelere yönelik meta-teorik ve ampirik analizleriyle kendisini eleştirel teorisyenlerden ayrı bir konuma yerleştirmiştir.

Uluslararası ilişkiler disiplininde özellikle 1990'lı yıllardan sonra Alexander Wendt tarafından geliştirilen sosyal konstrüktivizm kavramı mevcut kuramsal açıklamalara bir alternatif olarak ortaya çıkmıştır. Wendt, postmodernistlerin (Ashley, Walker), konstrüktivistlerin (Adler, Kratochwil, Ruggie ve Katzenstein), neo-Marksistlerin (Cox, Gill), feministlerin (Peterson, Sylvester) eserlerine atıfta bulunarak bunların hepsinin dünya siyasetinin sosyal olarak nasıl inşa edildiğine dair bir endişe üzerinde birleştiğini savunmaktadır.

Bu bağlamda liberalizm, Türkiye'nin Türk devletleri ile ticari diplomasi ilişkilerini aktörler açısından açıklamaktan yoksundur. Liberal Uluslararası İlişkiler teorileri, dış politikada esas olarak devletler dışındaki aktörlerin rolleri üzerinde durur, ancak özel aktörler, STK'lar, sosyal gruplar vb. Liberal Uluslararası İlişkiler teorileri, esasen dış politikada devletler dışındaki aktörlerin rolleri üzerinde durur, ancak özel aktörler, STK'lar, sosyal gruplar vb. Liberal teori, ortalama olarak rasyonel ve riskli kabul edilen bireyleri ve özel grupları analizinin merkezine koyar maddi kıtlık, çelişen değerler ve toplumsal etkideki farklılıklar tarafından dayatılan kısıtlamalar altında farklılaşmış

çıkarları desteklemek için mübadele ve toplu eylemi organize edenler. Bu bağlamda, bu aktörler herhangi bir düşünsel motivasyon olmaksızın çıkar maksimizasyonu peşinde koşmaktadırlar. Realizm de özellikle güç ilişkilerine yaptığı vurgu ve ilişkinin taraflarının birbirleri üzerinde ticaret yoluyla üstünlük kurmalarına yönelik temel kabulü sebebiyle Türkiye'nin Türk Cumhuriyetleri ile ilişkilerini açıklamada yetersiz kalmaktadır. Bu ilişki biçiminde, ortak bir kimliğe sahip olan ve ortak refah arayan ortaklar arasında işbirliğine dayalı bir çıkar tespit edilmektedir. Bu tür bir ilişkide Türkiye'nin motivasyonu, esasen ortak kimlik inşa etmek ve çoğu durumda kendi tek taraflı üstünlüğünü gütmekten ziyade diğerlerini güçlendirmektir. Bu itibarla kimlik ilişkisini ön plana çıkararak sosyal konstrüktivist yaklaşımın bu tezde ele alınan Türkiye-Türk Cumhuriyetleri ticaret diplomasisi ilişkilerini anlatmak için daha uygun bir kavramsal çerçeve çizdiği görülmektedir.

Türkiye'nin seçilmiş üç Türk Cumhuriyeti ile bağımsızlıkları sonrasında geliştirdiği ilişkiler bu tezde Ticaret Diplomasisi kavramı üzerinden değerlendirilmektedir. Ticaret Diplomasisi konseptinin Türkiye'nin bu ülkelerle geliştirdiği ilişki modelinde tarihsel bağlamda ikili ilişkilerin ekonomik ve ticari yönünü temsil ettiğine yönelik literatürdeki genel kabul bu tezde de benimsenmiş, literatürün genelinden farklı olarak ise Ticaret Diplomasisi kavramı merkeze oturtularak Türkiye'nin bu ülkelerle imzaladığı anlaşmalar vasıtasıyla kurduğu mekanizmalar ile bu ülkelerde faaliyet gösteren diplomatik temsilciliklerinin faaliyetleri bu kavram etrafında açıklanmıştır.

Sonuç olarak Türkiye'nin Türk devletleri ile ilişkilerinde Ticaret diplomasisini aktif olarak kullandığı, bu diplomasi yöntemi vasıtasıyla, bu ülkeler ile ilişkilerinde sosyal inşacılık çerçevesinde bütüncül bir şekilde ekonomik ve ticari kazanımların elde edilebileceği yapıların oluşturulmasının amaçlandığı, bunun yanında bu araçların aynı zamanda dış politikanın yürütülmesinde de etkin birer yöntem olarak da benimsendiği hususları tezin temel tespitleri arasındadır.

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