

**REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN**

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**ABSTRACT**

of the dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

**COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF FOREIGN POLICY  
DIRECTIONS OF POST-SOVIET COUNTRIES: IN  
THE CASE OF AZERBAIJAN AND KYRGYZSTAN**

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## THE GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DISSERTATION

**The relevance and degree of development of the topic.** After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, 15 independent republics took their place in the international system. The fact that these countries were under the influence of the Soviet system for years also affected their domestic and foreign policies. Some turned to the West to get rid of the impact of the Soviet system, some applied a balancing policy, and some followed the Russian Federation, which emerged as a great power after the collapse of the USSR (bandwagoning).

The post-Soviet republics, which entered the process of national state-building from a multilingual, multi-religious, multicultural, and, most importantly, multi-ethnic formation, had to face many problems such as ethnic conflicts, political disputes, border problems, crises caused by the transition from a planned economy to a market economy inherited from the Soviet era. These problems have affected the internal policies and foreign policies of these states. However, the differences in the national qualities of each of them, such as geographical conditions, demographic characteristics, geopolitical position, economy, population, and underground and surface resources, have created differences in their ability to cope with the problems they face, their foreign policy directions, and even their roles in the international system. Big powers such as the USA, Russia, China, and the EU have provided significant resources to shape post-Soviet countries' domestic and foreign policies, influence the regional order, and develop their international policy views. Many post-Soviet states have chosen to balance their national interests and the interests of stronger foreign actors by developing a multi-vector foreign policy<sup>1</sup>.

When classifying post-Soviet countries in Central Asia and the South Caucasus as strong-weak, rich-poor, etc., it is possible to see the influence of "geography," one of the most critical factors in national attributes. While the advantages of geography (surface and subsurface resources, sea presence, straits, etc.) provide countries with wealth and many opportunities, its disadvantages (hostility with neighbors, lack of

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<sup>1</sup> Nitoiu, C. The Influence of External Actors on Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Space // - EUROPE-ASIA STUDIES, - 2018. Vol. 70, No. 5, - p. 685.

access to the sea, mountains, unfavorable climate, etc.) can make the country weaker than others. Another advantage of the available resources is that they provide economic competitiveness. At this point, especially in countries with energy resources, the income from the sale of these resources plays a significant role in ensuring the country's prosperity and development. When looking at the post-Soviet countries, it seems that the countries that do not have the mentioned energy resources are facing more economic and political problems than others.

Azerbaijan, one of the former Soviet countries, has two valuable underground resources: natural gas and oil, which provide political and economic power. In addition, the fact that it has landed in Asia and Europe is another advantage given to Azerbaijan by geography. However, turning conflicts with Armenia into a war with independence prevented Azerbaijan from using its advantages more efficiently.

Kyrgyzstan is a landlocked and mountainous country due to its geography. In addition, it has disadvantages such as scarcity of energy and mineral resources, surface area, and small population. The fact that it has a stronger border neighbor like China also affects Kyrgyzstan's domestic and foreign policy. Especially in the early 2000s, the processes experienced in the international world allowed Kyrgyzstan to use its geopolitical opportunities. In fact, Kyrgyzstan is the only country where US and Russian military bases operate simultaneously. On the other hand, Kyrgyzstan, a neighbor of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan, often encountered these countries due to border problems. Its geography clearly has more disadvantages than advantages. Adding to this the structural fragility of domestic politics, it was inevitable that it gained the image of a small and weak state.

While Azerbaijan's geography has allowed it to build a strong economy and a robust military structure, Kyrgyzstan's geography has created a weak economy and demographic conjuncture where ethnic conflicts can quickly occur. For this reason, Kyrgyzstan, which views Russia as bandwagoning, tries to conduct a balanced foreign policy towards Russia and China and participates in joint integration activities. In addition to making Kyrgyzstan dependent on foreign countries, these conditions make it challenging to implement an independent foreign

policy<sup>2</sup>. These dependencies play a determining role in relations not only with global actors but also with neighboring states. In this context, Kyrgyzstan's energy dependence on Uzbekistan and its water problem, the border problem with Tajikistan, is still waiting to be resolved.

Although living in the USSR for years gave Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan many standard features, the period after gaining independence gained different dimensions due to the countries' foreign policy directions, relations, and cooperation with foreign actors, the South Caucasus, and Central Asia, which are part of Eurasia, have also had the characteristic of a chessboard where the world's great players compete. Despite the great players, only the right moves in chess can keep small countries from becoming pawns and checkmates.

The relevance of the topic is determined by a number of the following factors:

- At a time when the unity of the Turkic peoples, closely linked by common roots, values, language, religion, and culture, is being strengthened, in the context of the internal and external integration processes of the Turkic world, it is necessary to examine the foreign policies of Turkic states and identify integration opportunities;

- The fact that the foreign policy orientations of the two states (Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan), which emerged from the same system and followed the same development model, have been shaped based on different models after independence has revealed the need to identify the reasons for the existing differences;

- Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan are located in two important regions - the South Caucasus and Central Asia - with high dynamics of international political and economic processes;

- the location of both regions on important transit routes, and the need to identify the opportunities and challenges this creates for Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan;

- the proximity of both states to powerful world or regional powers such as Russia, China, Turkey, Iran, etc.; the need to determine the influence of these powers on the formation and development of the foreign policy directions of these two states;

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<sup>2</sup> Cooley, A. Great Games, Local Rules/ A. Cooley.- Oxford: Oxford University Press,- 2012. p. 35-36.

-the interests of non-regional powers in the South Caucasus and Central Asia region, and the need to determine the impact of their policy on the formation and development of the foreign policy directions of Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan against the background of ongoing processes in the region;

-the need to determine the causes of conflicts of interest of regional and non-regional powers in the South Caucasus and Central Asia and the role of Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan in ensuring these interests;

- the need for a more detailed analysis of the dynamically developing international political situation in both regions;

-the need to investigate the causes and characteristics of the conflicts faced by both states to prevent the occurrence of similar conflicts in the future, or to prevent the conflict from flaring up again.

-the need to investigate the new geopolitical realities in the South Caucasus as a result of Azerbaijan liberating its lands from the occupation of Armenia and restoring its territorial integrity and its impact on the state's foreign policy as a whole;

-the need to investigate the possibilities and opportunities created by the new geopolitical reality in the South Caucasus for the Central Asian region;

-The conflict between Russia and the West as a result of military intervention in Ukraine. The need to investigate the impact of this conflict on the politics of Russia, as well as other regional and non-regional powers in the South Caucasus and Central Asia region;

-Its scientific-practical importance is one of the factors determining the topicality of the issue. Therefore, examining the issue may be useful in developing methods for the effective use of foreign policy resources for states to achieve their foreign policy goals.

The above-mentioned makes it scientifically relevant to examine the comparison of the foreign policy courses of Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan and to make predictions about the future relations with the countries and organizations that are in contact.

The fact that the topic is related to comparative foreign policy analysis made it necessary to study foreign policy. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the 15 states that declared their independence had to face similar problems inherited from the USSR while transforming their

domestic and foreign policies. The national attributes of these 15 countries, including Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan, affect their success in overcoming these problems and how much they can achieve their national interests in becoming a nation-state. In the case of Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan, it seems that the post-Soviet republics determined their rules depending on the processes taking place in the international world and tried to exist in the international system. For this reason, in the dissertation, the foreign policy priorities and directions of Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan after gaining independence, relations with regional and global powers, future perspectives in integration activities, and foreign policy were examined at the state level, and forecasts were made.

Scientific research on foreign policy in Azerbaijan began in the years of independence. Although many articles, studies, and books have been published over the years, no study directly addresses the comparative foreign policy of the two countries. However, a comparative analysis of the foreign policy of a group of post-Soviet countries can be found in some foreign sources. The research of researchers such as A. Idan and B. Shaffer's joint article, B. Shaffer's article, I. Kobrinskaya and C. Nitou can be cited as an example<sup>3</sup>. Particularly a master's thesis at Harvard University titled "Two Caspian Sea Resource-Rich Countries Encounter the East-West Rift: A Comparative Analysis of the Foreign Policy Objectives of Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan in a Turbulent Region" by T. Batten analyzes the foreign policy of Azerbaijan in comparison to another country with similar national attributes<sup>4</sup>.

Numerous researchers, such as Turkish scholars M.F. Tayfur and E. Efeçil, American academics B. White and D. Beach, and British experts C. Hill, M. Webber, and M. Smith, have made significant

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<sup>3</sup> Idan, A. & Shaffer, B. The Foreign Policies of Post-Soviet Landlocked States// Post-Soviet Affairs, - 2011. 27(3),- p. 241-268; Kobrinskaya, I. The Post-Soviet Space: From the USSR to the Commonwealth of Independent States and Beyond// The CIS, the EU and Russia/ I. Kobrinskaya, ed. K. Malfliet,- Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, - 263 p.; Shaffer, B. Foreign Policies of the States of the Caucasus: Evolution in the Post-Soviet Period // -İstanbul: Uluslararası İlişkiler, -2010. 7(26),- pp. 51-65; Nitou, C. The Influence of External Actors on Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Space // EUROPE-ASIA STUDIES,- 2018. Vol. 70, No. 5,- pp. 685-691.

<sup>4</sup> Batten, T. Two Caspian Sea Resource Rich Countries Encounter the East-West Rift: A Comparative Analysis of the Foreign Policy Objectives of Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan in a Turbulent Region: /Master's thesis. /- Massachusetts-2015.- 106 p

contributions to the concept and theoretical framework of foreign policy<sup>5</sup>. They have made their definitions of foreign policy, and the general idea in these definitions is that the policies pursued by a state outside its borders can be defined as "foreign policy". The book "Foreign Policy Formation" by British author J. Frankel<sup>6</sup>, released in 1963, is widely considered the starting point for foreign policy analysis. Meanwhile, American scholar J. N. Rosenau<sup>7</sup> pioneered comparative foreign policy analysis by publishing "Primary Theory" in 1966.

It is possible to find the foreign policy features of the Soviet Socialist Republics and the factors affecting the formation of the foreign policy courses of the post-Soviet countries in the works of both Azerbaijani and foreign researchers. I. Kobrinskaya stated in her article "The Post-Soviet Space: From the USSR to the Commonwealth of Independent States and Beyond" that the foreign policy directions of the post-Soviet countries were influenced by different levels of development, different heterogeneous ethnonational, religious, and geopolitical orientations. On the other hand, C. Nitou, in his article "The Influence of External Actors on Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Space," notes that foreign actors such as the USA, Russia, and the EU play an essential role in the process of establishing the foreign policy of post-Soviet countries. He states that most post-Soviet states have a diversified foreign policy and try to balance their national interests with the interests of great foreign actors.

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<sup>5</sup> Tayfur, M. F. Devlet ve Ötesi // Dış Politika/ M. F. Tayfur, Der. A. Eralp.- İstanbul: İletişim yayımları, - 2019.- 288 s; Efegil, E. Dış Politika Analizi (Ders Notları)/ E. Efegil.- İstanbul: Gündoğan yayımları,- 2018.- 292 s; White, B. Analysing Foreign Policy: Problems and Approaches // Understanding Foreign Policy: The Foreign Policy Systems Approach/ B. White, eds. M. Clarke and B. White. -Aldershot: Edward Elgar,- 1989. -232 p; Beach, D. Analyzing Foreign Policy/ D. Beach. – Hampshire:Palgrave Macmillan,- 2012.- 280 p; Hill, C. The Changing Politics of Foreign Policy/ C. Hill. - New York: Palgrave MacMillan, -2003. - 376 p; Webber, M. and Smith, M. Foreign Policy in a Transformed World/ M. Webber, M. Smith.- Oxon:Routledge, -2013, -366 p.

<sup>6</sup> Frankel, J. The Making of Foreign Policy: An Analysis of Decisionmaking/ J. Frankel,-Oxford: Oxford University Press,- 1963.- 231 p.

<sup>7</sup> Rosenau, J. N. Foreword // Foreign Policy: Theories, Actors, Cases/ J. N. Rosenau, eds. S. Smith, A. Hadfield and T. Dunne.- Oxford: Oxford University Press, -2016. - 564 p.



Since the dissertation is devoted to the comparative analysis of the foreign policy courses of Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan, the Constitution of both states, the speeches of the Presidents, the Security Concept adopted by the states in different years, the foreign policy strategy and the relevant legislative acts, the information released by the official bodies and including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of both countries was taken as a source.

The work of Azerbaijani, Kyrgyzstani, Turkish, and many foreign researchers was used during the research. Regarding the foreign policy of Azerbaijan, M. Gasimli, A. Hasanov, H. Babaoğlu, S. Ruintan, H. Pashayev's books and A. Aslanlı, C. Valiyev, I. Gurbanov and other Azerbaijani researchers of works were consulted<sup>8</sup>. Regarding the foreign policy of Kyrgyzstan, the works of Kyrgyz researchers such as B. Tursunaliyev, C. Asanbayeva, B. Abdibaitova-Pala, A. Coldoshev, Z. Chotayev, O. Omonkulov attract attention<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> Qasımlı, M. Azərbaycan Respublikasının xarici siyasəti (1991-2003). [2 hissədə] / M.Qasımlı. - Bakı: Mütərcim, - c. 1. – 2015. - 648 s; Həsənov, Ə. M. Azərbaycanın geosiyasəti. Dərslik. / Ə.Həsənov. - Bakı: Zərdabi LTD MMC, - 2015. - 1056 s; Həsənov, Ə. Müasir Beynəlxalq Münasibətlər və Azərbaycanın Xarici Siyasəti, Dərslik. / Ə.Həsənov. – Bakı: “Azərbaycan” Nəşriyyatı, - 2005. – 631 s; Babaoğlu, H. Xarici siyasət (dərslik) / H. Babaoğlu. -Bakı: ELM, - 2019.- 324 s; Ruintən, S. F. XX əsrin sonu – XXI əsrin əvvəllərində Mərkəzi Asiyanın türk dövlətləri dünya dövlətlərinin maraqları sistemində. “Türk dünyası tarixi” ixtisası üzrə magistratura təhsil pilləsində tədris üçün dərs vəsaiti. / S. F. Ruintən. – Bakı: Bakı Universiteti Nəşriyyatı, - 2014. – 241 s; Paşayev, H. Bir səfirin manifesti / H. Paşayev. -Bakı: Şərq-Qərb, - 2007,- 248 s; Aslanlı, A. Azerbaijan-Russia Relations: Is the Foreign Policy Strategy of Azerbaijan Changing? //- Turkish Policy Quarterly,- 2010. 9(3), -p. 137-145; Vəliyev, C. Azərbaycan–Türkiyə münasibətləri: 1991-2016 // Azərbaycan Respublikasının xarici siyasətinin əsas istiqamətləri (1991-2016) /məqalələr toplusu / - Bakı: Poliart MMC, - 2017. 904 s; Qurbanov, İ. Azərbaycan–Avropa İttifaqı münasibətləri // Azərbaycan Respublikasının xarici siyasətinin əsas istiqamətləri (1991-2016) /məqalələr toplusu/ - Bakı: Poliart MMC, - 2017. - 904 s.

<sup>9</sup> Tursunaliyev, B., 2010, Orta Asya'da Entegrasyon Hareketleri ve Kırgızistan: / Uluslararası İlişkiler üzere yüksek lisans tezi.- Konya, 2010. – 102 s; Abdibaitova-Pala, B. Demokratikleştirme Bağlamında Kırgızistan-Avrupa Birliği İlişkileri // Bağımsızlığının 30. Yılında Kırgız Cumhuriyeti: Dış Politika Ve Uluslararası İlişkiler / B. Abdibaitova-Pala/, ed., Abdibaitova-Pala / - Ankara: Astana yayınları, - 2021. 217 s; Coldoshev, A. Kimlik ve Sınır: Orta Asya'da Sınır Sorunları //- Türk Dünyası İncelemeleri Dergisi, - İzmir: 2019. 19(2),- s. 303-326; Çotaev, Z. Kırgızistan Dış Politikası: Devam eden ve Değişen Eğilimler // Kırgızistan: Tarih-Toplum-Ekonomi-

H. Babaoglu, one of the Azerbaijani researchers, in his book "Foreign Policy," evaluates theories related to foreign policy, in short, the process of establishing foreign policy in many ways, along with the factors affecting foreign policy. Later, the author discusses establishing Azerbaijan's foreign policy directions, internal and external factors affecting its foreign policy, national attributes, and interests.

In the research paper titled "Foreign Policy of Kyrgyzstan: Ongoing and Changing Trends," Kyrgyz researcher Z. Chotayev analyzes the development of Kyrgyzstan's foreign policy. The paper delves into internal and external factors that have affected Kyrgyzstan's foreign policy since its independence. Chotayev examines Kyrgyzstan's relations with major powers like the United States, Russia, and China and its bilateral and multilateral relationships. The author highlights several critical issues that have impacted Kyrgyzstan's foreign policy since 2005, including security, border concerns, water issues, unemployment, immigration, and energy dependence.

H. Mackinder<sup>10</sup>, a geopolitician and pioneer of geostrategy, claims that Eurasia is the most critical part/heart of the world, and Z. Brzezinski<sup>11</sup>, who calls the region including the South Caucasus and Central Asia the Balkans of Eurasia, emphasizes the importance of Eurasia. Both global and regional powers continue to struggle for interest and influence in these regions, which have rich underground resources and are of geostrategic and geopolitical importance. For this reason, the two countries of Eurasia, Azerbaijan, and Kyrgyzstan, should consider both their national interests and the interests of foreign actors. A balance can be achieved in terms of both economic and security interests through agreements with external actors, joint projects, and integration activities. However, if peace is avoided, conflicts and even war are inevitable in the region.

Local and foreign researchers are interested in the relationships

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Siyaset /- Z. Çotayev, ed. C. Buyar.- Bışkek: BYR Publishing, - 2017.- 656 s; Omonkulov, O. Kuşak ve Yol Projesi Bağlamında Çin-Orta Asya İlişkileri// Bölgesel Araştırmalar Dergisi, 4(1), -Mayıs, 2020,- s.45-115.

<sup>10</sup> Mackinder, H. J. The Geographical Pivot of History// - The Geographical Journal,- (Apr., 1904). 23(4),- pp. 421-437.

<sup>11</sup> Brzezinski, Z. The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy And Its Geostrategic Imperatives/ Z. Brzezinski.- New York: Basic Books,-1997.- 215 p.

with neighboring powers. Azerbaijani researchers K.Ruıntan, M.Mahammadi, A.Aslanli, N.Alizade, and Kyrgyz researchers M.Tagayev and K. Kasimbekov are examples of such sources<sup>12</sup>. Turkish researchers also put forth many studies on this subject. B.Özsoy, F.Ş.Kahraman, A.S.Merdan, and Y. Sarikaya of research studies provide content on the subject<sup>13</sup>. There are several important studies regarding the relations between these two countries and the West (the USA, EU, and NATO). N.Jafarov and A.Aslanli, I.Gurbanov, V.Hajiyeva's research on Azerbaijan and the works of Kyrgyz researchers H.M.Namatbekova and A.Temirbekova, Turkish researcher Y.Sari, and American researcher A. Cooley provide valuable insights on the topic of Kyrgyzstan<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> Ruıntan, K. Ermənistanın Azərbaycanca Təcavüzü və Dünya Siyasəti / K. Ruıntan. – Bakı: Adiloğlu Nəşriyyat, - 2008. - 260 s; Məhəmmədi, M. Azərbaycan–İran münasibətləri // Azərbaycan Respublikasının xarici siyasətinin əsas istiqamətləri (1991-2016) /məqalələr toplusu/ - Bakı: Poliart MMC, -2017. - 904 s; Məhəmmədi, M. Azərbaycan–İran siyasi əlaqələrinin hazırkı durumu və perspektivləri // Azərbaycan–İran əməkdaşlığı: əsas istiqamətlər və imkanlar /- Bakı: Costco Company MMC, - 2018, - 204 s; Aslanlı, A. ve Memmedov, A. Neo-Realizm Kuramı Çərçəvesində Azərbaycan–İran İlişkilerinin Analizi // - İnsan Ve Toplum Bilimleri Araştırmaları Dergisi, - İstanbul: 2016. 5(6), - s. 1520-1532; Alizada, N. Bir Kuşak Bir Yol Projesi'nde Güvenilir Ortak: Azerbaycan // - Kahramanmaraş Sütçü İmam Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi Dergisi, - Kahramanmaraş: 2022. 12 (2), - s.107-118; Alizada, N. Özbekistan Dış Politikasında Mirziyoyev Etkisi: [Elektron Resurs] / ANKASAM, - mart 8, 2021. URL:<https://www.ankasam.org/ozbekistan-dis-politikasinda-mirziyoyev-etkisi/>; Тагаев, М., Касымбеков, К. Кыргыз-кытай алакасынын жаңы багыты: [электрондук ресурс] / Азаттык, - 14 май 2021. URL:<https://www.azattyk.org/a/kytadyndyn-borbor-aziyadagy-zhangy-dymagy/31253469.html>.

<sup>13</sup> Özsoy, B. Hazar Denizi Meselesi Bağlamında Türk Cumhuriyetleri Arasındaki Siyasi ve Ekonomik İlişkiler/- Bişkek: Manas Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi, 8(1),- 2018, - s.451-468; Özsoy, B. Rusya-Ukrayna Savaşı ve Türk Devletleri Teşkilatı Ülkeleri/- İzmir: Türk Dünyası İncelemeleri Dergisi/Journal of Turkish World Studies, 22(2),- Kış-Winter 2022,- s. 549-576; Kahraman, F. Ş. Ve Merdan, A. S. (2020). Hazar Denizi'nin hukuki statüsü // - Kars: KAÜİİBFD,- 2020. 11(21),- s. 434-468; Sarikaya, Y. Türkiye-Gürcistan-Azerbaycan Üçlü İlişkilerinin Savunma İşbirliği Boyutu// - İzmir: Karadeniz Araştırmaları, - 2019. XVI(64),- s. 585-597.

<sup>14</sup> Caferov, N. ve Aslanlı, A. ABD ve Güney Kafkasya: Ağustos 2008 Öncesinde ve Sonrasında // -Aksaray Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi Dergisi, - Aksaray: 2016. 8 (4), - s. 1-10; Qurbanov, İ. Azərbaycan–Avropa İttifaqı münasibətləri // Azərbaycan Respublikasının xarici siyasətinin əsas istiqamətləri (1991-2016)

The integration activities of Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan are developing differently. Therefore, the prospects of their foreign policies are also affected by this. One of the Kyrgyz researchers, T.K.Kamchibekov, A.O.Kocoshev, and others on the joint work of integration activities in Central Asia and obstacles to regional integration are discussed<sup>15</sup>.

Again, the integration process in Central Asia, the organizations with which Kyrgyzstan continues to cooperate, and future perspectives on its foreign policy are examined by researchers from Kyrgyzstan and Turkey, such as B.Tursunaliyev, E.Abdıkadırova, F.Purtaş, T.Demirtepe and O.Omonkulov, C.Buyar, and U.Şener<sup>16</sup>.

N.Yılmaz's research discusses the reasons for the lack of regional integration in the South Caucasus<sup>17</sup>. A.Garibov, B.Özsoy, T.De Wall,

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/məqalələr toplusu/ - Bakı: Poliart MMC, - 2017. - 904 s; Hajiyeva, V., EU's Policy for Azerbaijan: Challenges, Errors and Opportunities // Akademik Bakış Dergisi, – December 2015. Issue: 52, - pp.340-350; Наматбекова, Н.М. Кыргызско-Американские Политические Отношения // - International Journal of Humanities and Natural Sciences, - 2018. vol.1, - С. 22-25; Темирбекова, А. Кыргызская Республика В Стратегических Планах США // - Постсоветские исследования, - 2019. Т.2, № 3, - С. 1130-1140; Sarı, Y., Kırgızistan-Amerika Birleşik Devletleri İlişkileri // Bağımsızlığının 30. Yılında Kırgız Cumhuriyeti/ Y. Sarı, ed. B. Abdibaitova-Pala. - Ankara: Astana yayınları.-2021.- 217 s; Cooley, A., Great Games, Local Rules/ A. Cooley.- Oxford: Oxford University Press,- 2012. 252 p.

<sup>15</sup> Камчыбеков Т.К. Экономика Кыргызстана в условиях интеграции / Т.К. Камчыбеков, А.О. Кожошев, А.Д. Джаилова, Л.А. Мардалиева.- Бишкек : Издательство научных журналов и детской художественной литературы,- 2021.- 183 с.

<sup>16</sup> Tursunaliyev, B., 2010, Orta Asya'da Entegrasyon Hareketleri ve Kırgızistan: / Uluslararası İlişkiler üzere yüksek lisans tezi.- Konya, 2010. – 102 s; Abdıkadırova, E. Orta Asya'da Entegrasyon Süreçleri // - Reforma, - Bişkek: 2017. 2 (74), - s. 65 – 70; Purtaş. F. (2008). Orta Asya'nın Bütünlüğü Sorunsalı ve Orta Asya'da Bölgesel Entegrasyon Girişimleri // Orta Asya& Kafkasya Güç Politikası/ F. Purtaş, Der. M. T. Demirtepe. Ankara: USAK, -2008. -322 s; Demirtepe M. T. ve Omonkulov, O. Kırgızistan'ın Avrasya Ekonomik Birliği Üyeliği: Asimetrik İlişkinin Gölgesinde Refah Arayışı // - Bölgesel Araştırmalar Dergisi, - Ankara: 2022. 6 (2), - s. 532-574; Buyar, C. ve Şener, U. Tarihi perspektiften, sosyo-ekonomik değerler açısından Rusya -Ukrayna Savaşı ve Orta Asya Ülkelerine etkileri // - Uluslararası Medeniyet Çalışmaları Dergisi, - Bişkek: 2022. 7(2), - s. 136-149.

<sup>17</sup> Yılmaz, N. Küreselleşen Dünyada Kafkasya: Entegrasyonun Yeni Modeli: [Elektron Resurs] / Circassian Center,-2019. URL:

İ.Kocaman I.Gurbanov, M.O.Ultan and D.Saygın, K.Adıgözelov's integration activities in Azerbaijan and their future perspectives are essential resources for evaluating the integration activities of Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan and interpreting their future perspectives. The ongoing Russia-Ukraine war is one event affecting Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan's foreign policy perspectives<sup>18</sup>.

B. Ozsoy, in her article titled "Russian-Ukrainian War and the Organization of Turkic States," examines the attitude of the countries that are members of the Organization of Turkic States regarding the war and talks about the impact of the war on these countries. It is concluded that Kyrgyzstan, which makes up a significant part of its foreign trade with Russia and has a high share of labor money from Russia in the GDP, is the Turkic state most negatively affected by the Russia-Ukraine war<sup>19</sup>.

During the literature review conducted in Azerbaijani, Kyrgyz, Turkish, English, and Russian languages, it was discovered that no existing research compares the foreign policy courses of Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan. This indicates that despite their shared historical background and interaction with the same foreign actors, there is a necessity for in-depth research, comparison, and analysis to comprehend how the foreign policy directions of two countries with different national attributes have progressed in the post-Soviet geography.

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<https://www.circassiancenter.com/tr/kuresellelen-dunyada-kafkasya-entegrasyonun-yeni-modeli/>.

<sup>18</sup> Qəribov, A. Azərbaycan–Mərkəzi Asiya münasibətləri // Azərbaycan Respublikasının xarici siyasətinin əsas istiqamətləri (1991-2016) /məqalələr toplusu / - Bakı: Poliart MMC, - 2017. - 904 s; Waal, T. Remaking the Nagorno-Karabakh peace process// Survival: Global Politics and Strategy,- 2010. 52(4),- pp. 159-176; Kocaman, Ö. Kasım 2022, Türk Devletleri Teşkilatı: Stratejik Bir Bakış// - İstanbul: Kriter Dergi, -Kasım 2022. 7(73), - s.18-21; Qurbanov, İ. Azərbaycan–Avropa İttifaqı münasibətləri // Azərbaycan Respublikasının xarici siyasətinin əsas istiqamətləri (1991-2016) /məqalələr toplusu/ - Bakı: Poliart MMC, - 2017. - 904 s; Ultan, M. Ö. ve Saygın, D. Avrupa Birliđi-Rusya Enerji İlişkilerinde Azerbaycan Alternatifi// - Ankara: bilig,- 2022. no. 101,- s. 87-114; Adıgözelov, K. Avrupa İttifaqının "Şərq Tərəfdaşlığı"na yeni yanaşması: İlham Əliyev diplomatiyasının strateji uğuru: [Elektron Resurs] / - Bakı, avqust 18, 2021. URL: <http://newtimes.az/az/relations/7480/>.

<sup>19</sup> Özsoy, B. Rusya-Ukrayna Savaşı ve Türk Devletleri Teşkilatı Ülkeleri/- İzmir: Türk Dünyası İncelemeleri Dergisi/Journal of Turkish World Studies, 22(2),- Kış-Winter 2022,- s. 549-576.

**Object and subject of the research.** The object of the study is a comparison of the foreign policy directions of Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan.

The subject of the study is a comparison of the factors determining the foreign policy of the states of Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan, their foreign policy directions and characteristics, and integration processes.

**Goals and objectives of the research.** The study aims to investigate and compare the political directions and foreign policy characteristics of post-Soviet countries, in the case of Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan.

To achieve this goal, the following tasks have been set:

- To justify the theoretical and methodological approaches for the analysis and comparison of the foreign policy directions of Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan;

- to determine the foreign policy characteristics of the allied Soviet socialist republics against the background of problems left over from the Soviet era;

- To analyze the factors affecting the formation of foreign policy courses in post-Soviet countries;

- Comparative analysis of the geopolitical features and importance of Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan, as well as the South Caucasus and Central Asian regions where they are located;

- Against the background of the analyses mentioned above, to comparatively analyze the factors affecting the formation of foreign policy courses and dynamics of activity of Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan;

- To examine and compare the characteristics of the relations of the states of Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan with regional powers - Russia, Turkey, China, and Iran;

- Based on the analysis of regional problems, to examine and compare the characteristics of the relations of the states of Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan with other close geographical neighbours;

- To examine and compare the main problems of the integration of Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan into global and regional politics, taking into account the current realities and trends;

- To analyze and compare the characteristics of the cooperation of Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan with the Euro-Atlantic structure;

-To examine and compare the characteristics of the cooperation of the states of Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan with international (regional) organizations;

-To analyze and compare the foreign policy and integration perspectives of the states of Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan.

**Methods of research.** The proposed study attempts to investigate the subject by following the case study method from qualitative and comparative methodology. Political, scientific-theoretical methods (analysis and synthesis, generalization, forecasting) were also used to study the problem. To understand the events themselves, the two countries' foreign policies' similar and different aspects are compared without neglecting the internal-external dynamic relations. Research models such as document, content, and discourse analysis are also used. Research materials used in the study consist of official documents and primary and secondary sources. Academic articles, books, book chapters, newspaper articles, and internet resources are used to research this topic. The foreign policies of Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan are examined comparatively, taking them as examples.

**The basic provisions for defense.** - The South Caucasus and Central Asia are of great importance in terms of political, security, and economic interests of regional powers such as Russia, Iran, Turkey, and China, as well as global and regional actors such as the USA, NATO, and the EU;

- Relations with the same global and regional actors have different effects on the foreign policy of Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan;

- Although both countries are small states in the international system, Azerbaijan has a stronger image of an independent state, while Kyrgyzstan has a weak image;

- Azerbaijan's stability in domestic politics, and Kyrgyzstan's instability, have different effects on their foreign policy courses;

-The differences in the national attributes of the two mentioned countries had different effects on the development of their foreign policies after independence;

-After declaring independence from the USSR, H. Aliyev worked on balancing foreign policy. I. Aliyev adopted a strategy that prioritized national interests in foreign policy; Kyrgyzstan, on the other hand, continued bandwagoning to big power(s).

**The scientific novelty of the research.** The scientific novelty of the research consists of the following:

- Dedication to the comparative analysis of the foreign policy of the post-Soviet countries is one of the novelties of the subject;

- Identifying the problems left over from the Soviet era and investigating their influence on the formation of the foreign policy of the post-Soviet states is one of the novelties of the work;

- The factors determining the foreign policy of the states of Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan were compared and studied for the first time;

- The geopolitical characteristics of the states of Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan were compared and analyzed for the first time;

- The strengths and weaknesses of the national attributes of the two post-Soviet states, as well as the influence of those qualities on the foreign policy course of the states, were investigated for the first time;

- Researching the development of Azerbaijan's relations and cooperation with the region and major powers on the basis of today's new facts, especially after the Second Karabakh War, is one of the novelties of the work;

- Researching the development of Kyrgyzstan's relations and cooperation with the regional and major powers based on the new facts of today is one of the innovations for Azerbaijan's political science.

- For the first time, the main problems of the integration of Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan in global and regional politics were examined and compared in the context of current realities and trends;

- The characteristics of Azerbaijan's and Kyrgyzstan's cooperation with the West (USA, NATO, EU) were comparatively analyzed for the first time;

- Researching and comparing the relations of Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan with regional organizations is also one of the innovations;

- The mutual analysis of foreign policy and integration perspectives of the states of Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan is one of the novelties of the work;

- Given the lack of current studies on the comparative foreign policy of the post-Soviet countries and the lack of a study comparing the foreign policy of Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan in the Azerbaijani, Kyrgyz, Turkish, English, and Russian languages, this dissertation preserves its novelty.



### **The theoretical and practical significance of the research.**

This dissertation compares the foreign policies of Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan, and also provides a comparative analysis of the foreign policies of post-Soviet countries. It could serve as an elective course for international relations students in universities and a valuable resource for authors writing books and articles on the subject.

This dissertation, which includes general information about the foreign policy directions of the post-Soviet countries, is of practical importance in terms of the information it will provide about the foreign policy courses of the two post-Soviet Turkish republics, Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan, thanks to the comparative foreign policy analysis.

**Approbation and application of the dissertation.** The dissertation work was discussed at the "Political Sciences and Philosophy" department of Khazar University and recommended for defense. The dissertation's main propositions and conclusions were expressed in scientific articles published by the author in Azerbaijan and Turkey. The author has participated in various scientific conferences and symposiums related to her dissertation work in the country and abroad.

**The name of the institution where the dissertation work was performed.** Khazar University

**The total volume of the dissertation with a sign indicating the volume of the structural sections of the dissertation separately.** The structure of the dissertation consists of an introduction, three chapters covering nine sub-chapters, a conclusion, and a list of literature. Introduction 23947 characters, Chapter I consists of 3 sub-chapters 63370 characters, Chapter II consists of 3 sub-chapters 96201 characters, Chapter III consists of 3 sub-chapters 75336 characters, and the conclusion is 11812 characters. Dissertation work consists of 270666 characters in total (excluding the list of used literature).

## **THE MAIN CONTENT OF THE DISSERTATION**

In the **Introduction** part of the dissertation, the relevance of the dissertation topic is justified, and the degree of development of the problem is analyzed. In addition, the research's object, subject, goals, and objectives are defined. Its scientific novelty defended provisions, and

theoretical and practical importance are indicated. Information about research approval and structure is provided.

**Chapter I** is called "**Formation of foreign policy courses of Post-Soviet Countries**" and consists of three sub-chapters. The first sub-chapter, which has a theoretical-conceptual character, is called "**Foreign policy - as a guarantor of the country's national interests.**" Here, the author explores concepts such as foreign policy, foreign policy analysis, comparative foreign policy, national interest, and national qualities. In this subsection, definitions of the concept of foreign policy are made by different authors, and a general definition is obtained. In addition, the transformation of foreign policy before and after the Cold War is also discussed.

Foreign Policy Analysis is based on the fact that although there are differences in the foreign policy courses of countries, significant similarities and differences can be found, and it seeks to explain the factors that influence state behavior. Comparative Foreign Policy Analysis, on the other hand, predicts a two-stage comparison process. The first is the comparison of the phenomenon's domestic and foreign politics. The second is purely a comparison of national foreign policies, which is preferred in the dissertation.

There are external and internal factors that influence foreign policy. By comparing the main national attributes of Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan, shown as an example in the dissertation work, it is justified that national attributes, which are internal factors affecting foreign policy, are among the most influential factors in foreign policy. Considering that national attributes influence the state's power, it is claimed that the country superior in terms of national attributes will be closer to realizing its national interests.

In the second sub-chapter of the first chapter, called "**Features of the Foreign policy of the USSR and the Allied Republics and the problems left over from the Soviet Era**", it is noted that the USSR, which collapsed in 1991, was influential in the formation of common features and factors in the foreign policy of the post-Soviet countries. It is claimed that the policies of the Soviet period and the problems carried over from that period to the present are effective in the foreign policy directions of the post-Soviet countries.

The author states that since the 1940s, each republic of the Union had the right to establish direct relations with foreign countries, conclude agreements with them, and exchange diplomatic and consular representatives. Still, in a real sense, their foreign policy was managed by Moscow. On the other hand, in the last period before the collapse of the USSR, although Gorbachev implemented political openness, economic restructuring, and democratization programs to revive the economically and politically weakened Union, the Union was seen to disintegrate instead of regaining its former power. People's perception of economic and political problems in the Union and the increase of ethnic conflicts<sup>20</sup> also influenced the division process. In addition, the author discusses those problems such as the population policy implemented during the Soviet era, the goal of creating a Soviet person through standardization, artificial borders, and the policy of "divide and rule" had a negative impact on the process of nation-state building and foreign policy in the post-Soviet space.

In the third sub-chapter of the first chapter, called "**Factors influencing the formation of foreign policy courses of the post-Soviet countries**", general information is given about why the foreign policies of the republics that could not pursue an independent foreign policy within the USSR began to be formed in different directions after the collapse of the USSR. The foreign policies of these countries generally operate from a multi-vector position, but it is stated that there are similarities and differences in their foreign policy courses due to the variety of national attributes that affect their foreign policies, such as the state-building process that developed after independence, the rich resources they have, economic power and their geographical location. In addition, the author states that foreign actors also play an important role in the process of forming the foreign policy of post-Soviet countries. Powers such as the United States, Russia, and the European Union have invested significant resources in an effort to shape the domestic and foreign policies of post-Soviet states, develop their international policy visions, and influence the regional order.

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<sup>20</sup> Aydemir Baş, F. B. & Çevikel, Ş. Bağımsızlık Yolunda Azerbaycan ve Orta Asya'daki Kitleli Hareketler // - Tarix Və Onun Problemləri, - Bakı: 2022. no: 1, - s. 196-202.

Many former Soviet states also sought to develop multivector foreign policies and balance their interests with those of more powerful foreign actors. This situation affected how post-Soviet states determined their foreign policy routes and the tools these states developed to realize their own interests.

**Chapter II, "Formation of Foreign Policy Courses of Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan and Comparative Analysis of their Regional Foreign Policies,"** consists of three sub-chapters. In the first sub-chapter called "**Comparative analysis of the factors affecting the formation of the foreign policy directions of Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan**", the author talks about the factors determined by the influence of specific processes on the formation of the countries' foreign policies. He points out that the most important factors are geopolitical and (geo)economic factors related to geography.

When considering the modern geopolitical characteristics of the post-Soviet space, the Caspian-Black Sea basin, and the South Caucasus, as well as the development trends and perspectives of the countries of the region, Azerbaijan is considered the most geopolitically important and promising country of the region. Being located at the crossroads of trade routes between Asia and Europe and having oil and gas resources, an element that increases political and economic power, can be cited as examples of the main elements influencing Azerbaijan's formation of foreign policy.

On the other hand, two factors mainly influenced the formation of Kyrgyzstan's foreign policy. First, the country is small and poor. Therefore, it seems that the country will not be able to sustain itself economically without significant foreign aid. Secondly, it is located in an unstable region of the world and is vulnerable to the influence of a number of negative factors. These two factors have significantly impacted Kyrgyzstan's relations, especially with developed countries and its close neighbors.

In this sub-chapter, the author determines that the formation of the foreign policy of the states of Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan goes through a number of stages, and a number of other internal and external factors condition those stages. Apart from that, both countries' foreign policy concepts, priorities, and goals are discussed. It seems that the primary goal of the foreign policy of both countries is to realize their

national interests. Elements such as protecting independence and territorial integrity, ensuring national security, ensuring regional security and stability, and establishing friendly relations with neighboring states are similar factors in the main tasks set for realizing the national interests of both countries. In addition, the foreign policy concepts of both countries mention the conduct of a balanced and multilateral foreign policy. But in 2019, I. Aliyev stated that national interests are Azerbaijan's primary goal in its foreign policy.

In the second sub-chapter of the chapter called "**Comparative analysis of the relations of Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan with regional states (Russia, China, Turkey, Iran),**" an attempt was made to determine the regional powers with which Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan have closer relations depending on the region where they are located.

It was found that the main issues shaping Iran-Azerbaijan relations are the Caspian Sea, Iran-Armenia relations, Azerbaijan-Israel relations, the Karabakh problem, and the impact of growing nationalism on South Azerbaijan due to Turkey-Azerbaijan proximity. Compared to Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan's relations with Iran seem to be weaker. Although Iran is not a neighbor of Kyrgyzstan, it is a power that has been trying to be influential in Central Asia in recent years. Kyrgyzstan was the first country to receive a bridge at Iran's Chabahar port in the Gulf of Oman in 2007 and is the only country in Central Asia to sign a 10-year cooperation agreement with Iran in 2016.

Relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan have become closer in many areas with H. Aliyev's phrase "two states, one nation." During I. Aliyev's time, relations rose to the level of alliance with the Shusha Declaration. Turkey, which has always been on Azerbaijan's side in the Karabakh issue, operates in the Turkey-Russia Joint Center established in Aghdam to monitor and ensure the ceasefire regime after 2nd Karabakh war<sup>21</sup>. Claiming that Kyrgyzstan-Turkey relations are not as strong as Azerbaijan-Turkey relations, the author states that relations between Turkey and Kyrgyzstan at the level of strategic partnership continue in multifaceted, including political and economic fields. Turkey, which has not been able to establish excellent cooperation with

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<sup>21</sup> Çevikel, Ş. Coğrafya kader midir? Coğrafya-dış politika ilişkisi: Azerbaycan örneği // - Cappadocia Journal of Area Studies (CJAS),- Nevşehir: 2022. 4(1),- s. 52.

Kyrgyzstan, as with Azerbaijan, supports Kyrgyzstan with investments and TIKa assistance and uses soft power.

The processes of the pre-independence period also impacted the development of Azerbaijan-Russia relations. Although negative relations between Azerbaijan and Russia started with Russia's support to Armenia in the Karabakh war of 1988-1994 and the tragedy of January 20 by USSR soldiers, in the following years, Russia became a mediator in the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict<sup>22</sup>. The relations that developed during the period of H. Aliyev reached the level of the alliance during the I. Aliyev era. Although Kyrgyzstan supports a multi-vector and balanced foreign policy, Russia is its leading strategic partner and ally. Dependence on Russia regarding economic and security causes Kyrgyzstan to bandwagon with Russia in its foreign policy. Currently, the presence of Russian military bases in the country and the large share of labor migrants working in Russia in Kyrgyzstan's economy are factors that significantly affect Kyrgyzstan-Russia relations<sup>23</sup>.

The author points out that the most critical factor affecting Kyrgyzstan's relations with China is the country's debts to China. Although it is emphasized that taking part in China's projects means more debt and more dependence on China for Kyrgyzstan, which especially needs infrastructure construction, it is stated that Beijing's interests determine the relations between the two countries<sup>24</sup>. It is difficult to say that China is an effective power in the South Caucasus as well as in Central Asia. However, it seems that the OBOR project, in

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<sup>22</sup> Bayrakdar, O. K. Ulus Kent Kimliğinin Oluşumunda Meydanların Rolü Üzerine Bir Değerlendirme: Bakü Örneği / O. K. Bayrakdar, F. B. Aydemir Baş, Ş. Çevikel // - Genel Türk Tarihi Araştırmaları Dergisi, - 2022. 4(8), - s. 947; Çevikel, S. ve Aydemir Bas, F. B. Azerbaijan-Russia Relations in the Period from the First Karabakh War to the Victory in the Second Karabakh War// - Bakı: Sivilizasiya jurnalı,- 2022. 11(51),- p.66.

<sup>23</sup> Çevikel, Ş. Kırgızistan Dış Politikasında Üç Büyük Gücün Etkisi //- Tarix və onun problemləri, -Bakı: 2021. No:3,- s.174; Çevikel, Ş. ve Bayrakdar, O. K. Azərbaycan ve Kırgızistan'ın Dış Politikasında Rusya'nın Etkisi: Karşılaştırmalı Bir Analiz // 7th ASIA PACIFIC International Modern Sciences Congress Proceedings Book. Jakarta, Endonezya, - 2022, s. 225.

<sup>24</sup> Çevikel, Ş. Kırgızistan-Çin Güvenlik İlişkileri ve Doğu Türkistan Meselesi //- Journal of History School, - İzmir: 2020. 13(49),-s. 4633, 4637; Çevikel, Ş. Kırgızistan Dış Politikasında Üç Büyük Gücün Etkisi //- Tarix və onun problemləri, -Bakı: 2021. No:3,- s.174-175.

which both countries participate, may give Azerbaijan more advantages than Kyrgyzstan. Because Azerbaijan plays an important role in the transportation process between China and Europe with the "Middle Corridor" and OBOR projects.

In the third sub-chapter of the chapter, called "**Comparative analysis of the relations of Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan with the countries of the South Caucasus and Central Asia**". In this sub-chapter, the relations of Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan with the South Caucasus and Central Asian states are investigated.

Just as the South Caucasus region consists of Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Armenia, Central Asia also consists of Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan. Although Azerbaijan is a border neighbor with all countries in the region, Kyrgyzstan does not have a border with Turkmenistan. Both countries have problems in terms of regional security due to negative relations with some of their neighbors.

Azerbaijan's relations with Georgia continue to be strong thanks to good neighborliness, economic cooperation, and energy and transport projects such as BTC, BTE, BTK, and TANAP. On the other hand, Armenia's policy of aggression prevented the development of normal relations between Azerbaijan and Armenia. In November 2020, with the Second Karabakh War, Azerbaijan managed to return an essential part of its lands. In September 2023, after a 1-day anti-terrorist operation organized by Azerbaijan, Karabakh was wholly freed from occupation. Peace processes between the two countries continue.

Kyrgyzstan generally maintains relations with Armenia within the CIS, EAEU, and CSTO framework. Relations with Georgia are weak.

Stating that the biggest problem among Central Asian countries after independence was the border problem, the author notes that Kyrgyzstan resolved the border problem with Kazakhstan in 2001 and Uzbekistan in 2023. After the ongoing border conflicts with Tajikistan in 2021-2022, the officials of the two countries reportedly reached an agreement on 90 percent of the problem lands at the end of 2023. Another important problem of the countries of the region is the water problem. The first step towards solving this is for Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan to define a roadmap for constructing the Kambarata-1 Hydroelectric Power Station in January 2023. Unlike other Central Asian

countries, Turkmenistan is the country with which Kyrgyzstan has the least interaction. In general, Kyrgyzstan's relations with its neighbors have been cooperative in cases where their interests overlap and conflictual in areas where their interests collide.

The Turkic states of other countries in the region, except Tajikistan, also played a role in Azerbaijan's relations with Central Asian countries. At the same time, Azerbaijan's relations with Central Asian states are based on bilateral interests. The fact that the South Caucasus and the Central Asian region are located on an important transit route together, as well as the fact that Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan, which are located in Central Asia, are Caspian states, played an important role in the formation of these relations in the form of cooperation.

In this paragraph, the author, in addition to taking a more detailed look at the relations of Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan with their neighbors, gave a more general look at the relations of Azerbaijan with the countries of Central Asia and Kyrgyzstan with the countries of the South Caucasus. Although it seems that Azerbaijan's relations with the countries of Central Asia are continuing closely, it is observed that Kyrgyzstan's relations with the countries of the South Caucasus are not fully developed.

**Chapter III** of the dissertation is called "**Integration Problems and Perspectives of Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan**" and consists of three subchapters. In the first sub-chapter of the chapter called "**Integration of Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan to the West (USA, NATO, EU)**", it is noted that the integration into the Euro-Atlantic structures and the development of bilateral and multilateral relations with the Western countries are considered as priority directions in the foreign policy of Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan. With this in mind, this paragraph examines both countries' relations and integration activities with the US, NATO, and the EU.

Factors such as Russia's attempt to re-increase its activity in Central Asia, the development of the European Union's TRACECA and INOGATE projects, China's start to be active in the region, and the growing interests of US-based oil companies in the region have influenced the increase of US interest in the Eurasian region since the mid-1990s. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the strategic and



economic interests of the United States in the South Caucasus included Iran and Russia, as well as ensuring the security of oil and gas exports from the Caspian Basin. The United States, which supports Georgia and Azerbaijan directly entering the BTC pipeline, has tried to isolate Russia from its natural sphere of influence by maintaining friendly relations with Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

In 1992, under the influence of the Armenian lobby, the US Congress deprived Azerbaijan of aid with a section 907 waiver of the "Freedom Support Act", which regulates state aid to the former Soviet republics. This decision clearly shows the side of the USA in the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict. On the other hand, the "Contract of the Century" ensured Azerbaijan's cooperation with many US oil companies. The military cooperation between the two states was established after the terrorist attack in the United States in 2001. Although the author notes that these provide some exceptions to section 907, this supplemental law has not yet been repealed.

If we look at Kyrgyzstan's relations with the United States, many aids stand out. Over the past 30 years, the US has provided more than 2 billion US dollars in aid, mainly to support the people of Kyrgyzstan through US government programs. In addition, the US military base was located in Kyrgyzstan from 2001 to 2014. Kyrgyzstan experienced the most active relations with the United States during these years. It became one of the countries that the United States attaches importance to from a strategic point of view<sup>25</sup>. The US has generally established relations with Azerbaijan based on oil and with Kyrgyzstan based on aid.

NATO's relations with Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan began in 1992 when these countries joined the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (The North Atlantic Cooperation Organization, a dialogue forum, became the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council in 1997, which brings together all allied and partner countries in the Europe-Atlantic region). With the practical cooperation of both countries with NATO, they joined the Alliance's Partnership for Peace program in 1994.

In the relations of Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan with the EU, Azerbaijan is more cooperative than Kyrgyzstan due to its geographical

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<sup>25</sup> Çevikel, Ş. Kırgızistan Dış Politikasında Üç Büyük Gücün Etkisi //- Tarix və onun problemləri, -Bakı: 2021. No:3,- s.173-174.

position closer to the EU and its energy resources. Relations between the EU and Azerbaijan have progressed around economic and political reforms, the creation of the East-West transport and communication corridor, infrastructure development, and Eastern Partnership. The EU supported the economic reforms implemented in Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan by providing technical and expert assistance within the framework of the Independent TACIS program. The TRACECA project supports Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan's political and economic independence, provides access to European and world markets through alternative transport routes, and aims to increase regional cooperation. The EU supports the success of democratic and legal reforms in Kyrgyzstan, and Kyrgyzstan is one of the countries benefiting from the Generalized Scheme of Preferences+ program.

In the second sub-chapter, called "**Comparative analysis of integration problems and multilateral relations of Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan,**" the global and regional integration efforts of the two countries and issues of cooperation with their member organizations are discussed and compared.

Although the South Caucasus states could not engage in integration activities among themselves, the Central Asian states have taken a step towards integrating themselves in the region with the Central Asian Union. The Soviet experience of the Central Asian republics having problems such as border, water sharing, regional security, and needing and complementing each other regarding energy resources pushed these countries to regional integration efforts after gaining independence. However, this step failed due to the differences of opinion between the presidents of the Central Asian states on integration, differences in economic development, and the influence of extra-regional powers. Central Asian Union established in 1994 transformed name as Central Asian Economic Union in 2001. After Russia joined the union in 2004, it merged with EAEU in 2005 and moved away from its goal.

On the other hand, the fact that approximately 20 percent of Azerbaijan's territory in the South Caucasus was occupied by Armenia for nearly 30 years was the main reason that hindered the regional integration processes. We should also note that the peace process that started after the Second Karabakh War has not yet resulted in a peace

agreement. In addition, the organization and support of separatist activities of Armenians in the Javakhetia region of Georgia has also led to the disruption of many socio-economic relations and transport networks in the South Caucasus. Armenia's negative ties with the other two states of the region and its policy in the region resulted in its exclusion from the integration processes.

Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan work together in international and regional organizations such as the UN, OSCE, CIS, Economic Cooperation Organization, and Organization of Islamic Cooperation. It has the opportunity to cooperate with the Turkic states of the region within organizations such as OTS, TURKSOY, TURKPA. In recent years, one of the most important organizations for these two countries has been OTS. During the 9th Summit of OTS in Samarkand in 2022, I. Aliyev, "The Turkish world is a big family". *"Considering each other's national interests, we must continue to show mutual support and solidarity. In addition to the political, economic, commercial, cultural, transport, energy, digital transformation, agriculture, and tourism fields, we should also activate our cooperation in fields such as security, defense, and defense industry,"* he said. These words reflect the goal of advancing integration efforts in OTS and Aliyev's view of OTS.

Some organizations are important for Azerbaijan's foreign policy, but Kyrgyzstan is not a member. Examples of such organizations as GUAM, Non-Aligned Movement, and BSEC can be cited. On the other hand, SCO, EAEU, and CSTO are essential organizations for Kyrgyzstan's foreign policy, but Azerbaijan is not a member of them. In general, it can be said that while the CIS is the only organization that both Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan participate in around Russia, the organization that aims to strengthen integration in the Turkic world based on their Turkic identity is OTS. Azerbaijan has participated in integration activities that are more Western-oriented, and Kyrgyzstan more Eastern-oriented (Russia, China).

In the third sub-chapter of this chapter, called "**Foreign Policy and Integration Perspectives of Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan**", the future perspectives of foreign policy and integration activities of Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan within the framework of some important events shown as examples are emphasized, and opportunities are discussed.

As a member of the Non-Aligned Movement, Azerbaijan prefers to act by its national interests, not to get involved in conflicts between other states, and not to join military alliances of rival blocs due to its geographical location. It is expected that Azerbaijan will continue to maintain its strategic neutrality shortly. Although Kyrgyzstan is a member of the EAEU and CSTO, it also maintains relations with the EU and NATO. Although Russia is still its closest ally, its heavy debts to China may cause Kyrgyzstan to show different foreign policy behavior in the near future.

Apart from these, the relations with Russia occupy one of the main places in the foreign policy perspectives of Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan. The attitude of Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan to the Russia-Ukraine war, which began on February 24, 2022, with Russia's aggression against Ukraine, and the results of the war are also crucial for the future of the foreign policy of these two countries. Due to Kyrgyzstan's close relationship with the Russian economy, it can be predicted that the Russia-Ukraine war will have long-term adverse effects on Kyrgyzstan. Due to the sanctions imposed by the European Union against Russia, increasing the use of Azerbaijani gas as an alternative to Russian gas is a positive thing for the economy of Azerbaijan. Let us also add that although Azerbaijan's relations with the EU continue within the framework of the Eastern Partnership, it does not intend to become a member of the EU in the near future. Moreover, although the EU, USA, and Russia took steps to contribute to the peace process after the Second Karabakh War, no real constructive progress was achieved. The unmediated meeting of Azerbaijan and Armenia on December 7, 2023, is an essential step toward peace. Azerbaijan, which made its mark in history as the first country to end occupation and separatism in the post-Soviet space, has also shown that the balance in the region has changed in its favor.

For Kyrgyzstan, the most important security problem in the near future may be the still unresolved border problem with Tajikistan. In 2023, the parties said that they would complete the border demarcation work in 2024. Solving this problem will make an important contribution to regional security and cooperation.

One of the projects that will significantly impact the foreign policy and economy of Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan is the BKBY project.

In this project, the gains and losses of both countries can be estimated differently. Due to the inadequacy of Kyrgyzstan in terms of infrastructure and economy, the prevailing opinion is that the inclusion of this project will increase the debt to China more and will cause more harm than good. On the other hand, Azerbaijan is in a stronger and more favorable position than Kyrgyzstan in terms of both economy and infrastructure. Due to its geographical position, it is clear that the country will become a center for the transit of goods between Europe and Asia, and in the long run, Azerbaijan will benefit from the profit and loss account.

Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan play an active role in OTS and other organizations within it. These organizations, which carry out more active relations on topics such as education, culture, and tourism, strengthen their cooperation from the economic and political points of view. The "Turkish World Vision 2040" document provides an opportunity to take important steps for the faster, more effective, and decisive continuation of Turkic integration. However, in an organizational context, becoming a structure like the EAEU or the EU may require more effort due to other formations involving member states.

In the **conclusion** part of the dissertation, the foreign policy directions of Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan were compared, specific results were reached about the two countries foreign policy, and predictions were made about prospects.

**The main content of the dissertation is reflected in the following articles of the author:**

1. Integration Efforts, Possible Obstacles and Opportunities for The Turkic Union // International Euroasia Congress on Scientific Researches and Recent Trends-V,-Baku: Khazar University,- December 16-19, -2019, pp. 39-40.

2. Çin-Kırgız İlişkileri Bağlamında Kırgızistan'ın Dış Borcu // IV. Uluslararası Türklerin Dünyası Sosyal Bilimler Sempozyumu, Kıbrıs: Online,- 17 Aralık,- 2020, s. 333-340.

3. Kırgızistan - Çin Güvenlik İlişkileri ve Doğu Türkistan Meselesi // - İzmir: Journal of History School,- December 2020. Year 13, Issue XLIX, pp.4631-4657.

4. Kırgızistan Dış Politikasında Üç Büyük Gücün Etkisi //- Bakı: Tarix və onun problemləri, -2021. No. 3, s. 173-176.

5. Coğrafiya kader midir? Coğrafiya-dış politika ilişkisi: Azərbaycan örneği //- Nevşehir: Cappadocia Journal of Area Studies (CJAS),-2022.- 4(1),- s. 40-63.

6. Azerbaijan-Russia Relations in the Period from the First Karabakh War to the Victory in the Second Karabakh War//- Baku: Sivilizasiya,- 2022. 11(2), p. 63-69 (həmmüəllif: Fatma Betül Aydemir Bas).

7. Ulus Kent Kimliğinin Oluşumunda Meydanların Rolü Üzerine Bir Değerlendirme: Bakü Örneği //- Genel Türk Tarihi Araştırmaları Dergisi, -2022. -4(8),-s. 939-952 (həmmüəlliflər: Oğuz Kağan Bayrakdar, Fatma Betül Aydemir Baş).

8. Bağımsızlık yolunda Azerbaycan ve Orta Asya'daki kitlesel hareketler //- Bakı: Tarix və onun problemləri,- 2022. No. 1,-s. 196-202 (həmmüəllif: Fatma Betül Aydemir Baş).

9. Azerbaycan ve Kırgızistan'ın Dış Politikasında Rusya'nın Etkisi: Karşılaştırmalı Bir Analiz // 7th ASIA PACIFIC International Modern Sciences Congress, Jakarta, Indonesia, -November 4-5,- 2022, p. 218-228 (həmmüəllif: Oğuz Kağan Bayrakdar).

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