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A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF EUROPEAN AND TURKISH SOFT POWER (GEO)  
STRATEGIES IN CENTRAL ASIA AND IN SOUTH CAUCASUS  
“CASE STUDIES: AZERBAIJAN AND TURKMENISTAN”

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A Comparative Analysis of European and Turkish Soft Power (Geo) Strategies in Central  
Asia and in South Caucasus

“Case studies: Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan”

Orta Asya ve Güney Kafkasya'da Avrupa ve Türkiye Yumuşak Güç (Geo) Stratejilerinin  
karşılaştırmalı bir analizi

“Vaka çalışmaları: Azerbaycan ve Türkmenistan”

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

BTC Baku- Tbilisi- Ceyhan Pipeline

CA Central Asia

CD Cultural Diplomacy

EaP Eastern Partnership

EC European Commission

ENP European Neighborhood Policy

ENPI European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument

EP European Parliament

EU European Union

MFA Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs

PCA Partnership and Cooperation Agreement

SC South Caucasus

TACIS Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States

TANAP Trans Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline

TAP Trans- Adriatic Pipeline

TR Turkish Republic

USSR Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics

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## ABSTRACT

Joseph Nye explored the concept of soft power arguing that soft power is one of the effective tools of foreign policy of states in the 21st century and states use the soft power to influence or attract a particular region with soft power tools such as policies, values, culture, institutions, rather than hard power elements such as military power or economic sanctions. The EU and Turkey have numerous soft power exercises and programs in the post-soviet republics. Central Asia and South Caucasus were target regions that EU and TR projected their soft power programs to develop bilateral relations in cultural, economic, and public diplomacy aspects. The thesis will cover the EU's use of soft power after the 2004 enlargement and Turkey's soft power during Turkey's JDP period from 2002 onwards. Therefore, the thesis aims to analyze and compare the soft power (geo) strategies of European Union (EU) and the Turkish Republic (TR) in Central Asia and in South Caucasus. To achieve this, the study uses William Walter's geostrategic framework (2004) which is the theoretical groundwork for this research. William Walter proposed four types of geo strategies and clarifies that each "geo-strategy" has a certain purpose, key concepts, and main codes. Thus, using Directed Content Analysis as the methodology of the thesis, the study will identify main codes, themes and key concepts from the selected literature and then will assign those codes, key concepts to the "codes of the geo-strategies". Consequently, the study will provide an in depth analysis and comparison of the similarities and differences between which geo-strategy is employed by which actor and where.

Keywords: EU, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, soft power

## ÖZET

Joseph Nye, yumuşak gücün 21. yüzyılda devletlerin dış politikasının etkili araçlarından biri olduğunu ve devletler, askeri güç veya ekonomik yaptırımlar gibi sert güç araçları yerine politikalar, değerler, kültür, kurumlar gibi yumuşak güç araçlarıyla belirli bir bölgeyi kendi çıkarları için etkilemek veya cezbetmek için kullandığını savunarak yumuşak güç kavramını geliştirmiştir. Avrupa Birliği ve Türkiye'nin Sovyet sonrası cumhuriyetlerde çok sayıda yumuşak güç uygulaması ve programı bulunmaktadır. Orta Asya ve Güney Kafkasya, AB ve Türkiye'nin kültürel, ekonomik ve kamu diplomasisi boyutlarında ikili ilişkileri geliştirmeye yönelik yumuşak güç programlarını hedeflediği bölgelerden biri olmuştur. Bu tez, 2004 genişlemesinden sonra AB'nin ve Türkiye'nin 2002'den itibaren AK Parti döneminde, yumuşak güç kullanımını incelemektedir. Tez, hem AB'nin hem de Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin Orta Asya ve Güney Kafkasya'daki yumuşak güç (jeo) stratejilerini analiz etmeyi ve ardından yumuşak güç jeostratejilerini ampirik olarak karşılaştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bunun için çalışma, araştırmanın teorik zemini olan William Walters'ın jeostratejik çerçevesini kullanmaktadır. William Walters, dört tür “jeo-strateji” önermiştir ve her “jeo-stratejinin” belirli bir amacı, anahtar kavramları ve ana kodları olduğunu açıklamaktadır. Bu nedenle, tezin metodolojisi olarak “Yönlendirilmiş İçerik Analizi” kullanılarak, seçilen literatürden ana kodlar, temalar ve anahtar kavramlar belirlenecek ve ardından bu kodlar ve anahtar kavramlar “jeostratejinin kodları”na atanacaktır. Sonuç olarak bu tez, hangi jeostratejinin, hangi aktör tarafından, nerede kullanıldığını gösterecek ve benzerlik ile farklılıkların derinlemesine bir analizini ve karşılaştırmasını sağlayacaktır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: AB, Türkiye, Azerbaycan, Türkmenistan, Yumuşak güç



# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Research Problem

Wars have always been on the agenda of international politics. It has been one of the important topics of world politics for centuries. Nevertheless, the international environment is still witnessing crimes, destructions, and sufferings caused by wars in the contemporary world. The military instruments have been used by the states to overcome the challenges and to get opportunities for their interest. Thus, “Hard power” became well-known term in bipolar world, however, after the cold war era the term “Power” changed its shape and a new shape of power was presented by Harvard Scholar Joseph Nye in early 1990s; “Soft power” (Nye, 2002). The new term drew attention in the 21st century of international relations. Simply, the term was defined by Nye as “getting what you want by means of attraction and persuasion rather than coercion” (Nye, 2004). Nye, used this term in the context of US foreign policy, criticizing the US invasion of Iraq, and the Vietnam war, arguing that the US should use this term to have a good image in the international arena instead of using military means (Nye, 2002). In fact, among economic problems, wars have caused a bad image of the states. Therefore, after the cold war, those international global players including Russia, China, US paid attention to the new term called “Soft power” by “gaining the consent of people with attraction and persuasion rather than coercion” (Nye, 2004). Along with these, regional actors including Turkey, Iran, and Russia have invested in their soft power instruments to be welcomed by their neighboring countries in the Eurasian continent (Kainazarov, 2018). In fact, EU is considered as a giant soft power provider because of its devotion to peace and stability around the world by non-military means (Nye, 2002). Establishing good relations with neighbor countries were on the agenda of regional and international actors committed to soft power to have peace around them. However, the question of “How to create better strategies for better results regarding the use of soft power by actors?” has become an important question in international relations (Smith, 2014).

The objective of this study is to investigate the general soft power strategies of the EU and Turkey and the interpretation of the strategies in Central Asia and in South Caucasus from the beginning of the early 2000s onwards. In 2002, following the new Turkish government

establishing new foreign policy called “Zero problems with neighbors” that focused mostly on good relations with neighbors (Davutoglu, 2014). Especially, under the rising of the current government (JDP) -Justice and Development Party- soft power of Turkey engaged widely in the regions like, Middle East, Caucasus, and Central Asia (Cagaptay, 2008). Moreover, Turkey's "Neo-Ottomanism" has been claimed by academics that during the new Turkish government (JDP) Turkey aims to have a wider Turkish-Muslim unity in its immediate region to become a new regional power (Taspınar, 2011), (Oniş, 2014), (Bal, 2017). Simultaneously, the EU adopted new policies for its southern and eastern neighbors after the 2004 enlargements, where, ENP, then the EaP, Action plans, and, strategic and partnership agreements approved by the Commission (EU Commission, 2005). In fact, ENP (European Neighborhood Policies), EaP (Eastern Partnership Policies) programs were established after the “big bang” enlargement of EU which has been considerable institutions established to promote good relations with EU’s closest Eastern and Southern Neighbors (EU Commission, ENP). Furthermore, following the accession to Central and Eastern Europe in 2004, the EU renewed its policy where the “Wider Union” initiative was noted by the commission (EU Commission, 2003). Therefore, “European values outside Europe” was stated by the scholars emphasizing EU’s new external policies after the 2004 enlargement of Europe (Browning, 2008), (Walters, 2004).

In this context, the EU and Turkey have adopted the principle of establishing good relations with the countries in their close regions. In fact, both are important players in international arena as well as in Eurasian continent. Consequently, EU and TR have employed their soft power strategies for better results and obviously, both actors have two different soft power models, and consequently, different strategies in the regions. This thesis has analyzed and compared the similarities and differences between the strategies adopted in the last two decades. The timeframe of this thesis will focus on the soft power of EU starting from “big bang” enlargement of EU from the year of 2004 and JDP era of Turkey from the year of 2002. No doubt, EU consists of 27 member states and it is an economic giant of the world with high GDP per capita, however, Turkey is a “middle power” with low GDP per capita comparing with the EU (Oniş, 2001). Therefore, in many conducts EU have a big capacity to sustain its foreign policy directions. Hence, the thesis does not take these two actors from a rivalry perspective but rather, the thesis carries a comparative analysis of soft power strategies in two different regions of post-soviet environment and their (EU & TR) commonalities and differences of soft power (geo) strategies. In fact, literature review reveals that soft power geo strategies of these two actors in the selected regions have not been adequately researched. Consequently, with a

comparative analyses perspective, the study will clarify the understanding of soft power (geo)strategies over two case countries which are chosen to examine strategies of actors towards Central Asia and in South Caucasus.

In the aftermath of the dissolution of the Soviet Union, EU and Turkey developed relations with post-soviet countries; those in South Caucasus and in Central Asia. Each actor shares different values and policies over the region. Declaration of independence of post-soviet countries was first step for establishment of relations between regional actors such EU, Turkey. In the context of soft power, both actors were involved for better common co-operation with respectful mutual interests (Umbach & Raszewski, 2016). Since different actors have involved in the region, there are challenges and opportunities between different international actors with different soft power ambitions in the region (Caman & Akyurt 2011). Therefore, numerous soft power players enabled their soft power instruments in the post-soviet sphere; US, Iran, Russia, Turkey, EU, and China. According to Anderson and Caman, soft power of Turkey and European Union in South Caucasus and Central Asian regions is "softer" than Russian and Chinese soft power, in which, EU tries to convey its Democratic liberal values and Turkey mostly employs its common history and culture over Turkic republics but Russia and China are generally on military and economic grounds (Anderson, 2008), (Caman, 2003). Consequently, Turkish Republic and European Union interests are visible in Central Asian and South Caucasus. Thus, each actor's implementation of soft power several projects succeeded in the different fields of the regions. For example, different educational projects by EU in Central Asian and South Caucasus enabled many students to come to study in Europe. Equally, Turkey has large numbers of Central Asian students studying in Turkey and this helped the two countries to develop good relations in different fields (Aras & Zulkarnain, 2018). Therefore, this study will reveal how the EU as a peace project, global economic giant and conflict resolution, and Turkey, as a culturally close ally and regional power, follow soft power strategies for Central Asia and the South Caucasus. In fact, the countries in Central Asia and the South Caucasus are oil-rich countries with highly authoritarian regimes, located in strategically important geographical locations for regional and international actors to develop their foreign policies.

It can be argued that why there is a "soft power (geo) strategy" but not a "soft power strategy". William Walter's geostrategic framework (2004) is the theoretical groundwork for this research. According to William Walter, geo-strategy is a particular way of organizing the border, space and population according to the particular logic (Walter, 2004). He discovers four geo strategies that EU has employed towards its near borders, these are; Marches, Limes,

Colonial frontier and Networked (non)border (Walters, 2004). Because each of the four geo-strategies has its own characteristics, key concepts, elements, purpose, such that one might be “expansionist” while the other may not be expansionist, but “defensive and protective” (Walter, 2004). In addition, Walter, by calling EU as expansionist he does not mean “expansionism” in the sense of traditional IR terminology of dominating the population and territory of the particular country, but rather Walter meant as “spreading of values” such as good governance, Human rights, Rule of law for further co-operation (Walter, 2004). Moreover, Walter’s definition of EU’s defensive and protective reading of outside intended that EU cares for itself by protecting and securing its values such as Democracy and Rule of law. Therefore, in the conclusion, research proves that EU and Turkey has been expansionist not in the sense of imperial expanding toward those countries but in the way of establishing common dialogues and enabling free movement of goods and services to increase mutual relations between the parties for further co-operation.

Consequently, by claiming the “strategies” as “(geo) strategies”, they will give a clear picture, a more detailed story, to see the full meaning, point and in-depth and nuanced understanding of the attitudes, behaviors and policies of the actors' soft power, therefore, to see the difference and similarities easily. As the thesis seeks to reveal the difference and similarities of the strategies, as an important part of the methodology, the thesis utilized William Walter’s four geo strategies to conceptualize the employed strategies of EU and Turkey. There are four strategies of William Walters; Marches, Limes, Colonial frontier and Networked (non)border. As said above, each geo-strategy has certain meaning, codes, and key concepts (See Table, 1). Therefore, the thesis methodologically utilized Content Analyses to find out the codes and key concepts of the related documents of EU’s and TR’s soft power and then, that codes from the selected texts and documents will be assigned to the “codes of geo strategies” (See Table, 1) and this will prove clear pictures of which actor adopts which geo strategy in which case country (Methodology, Pp.8). As a repeat, geo strategies allow us to see and tell more stories about the real nature of the strategies and policies of the actors. According to William Walters, the geo-strategies might be changed depending on time and place, as a matter of fact, the thesis argues that there are similarities and differences between the two actors within the framework of (geo)strategies. As a result, content analyses over the documents shows that most similarities are the expansionist role of actors, according to Walters conception. Indeed, by mentioning the “Expansionist” role of actors, this concept does not judge the actors’ peaceful diplomatic engagements towards Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan. And most visible difference is that EU

adopts defensive and protective policies emphasizing the “March” and “Limes” geo-strategies in the chosen countries. Because main codes, repeated words and key concepts such as “protective”, “defensive”, “avoiding conflicts” are assigned to Limes and March geo strategies (See Table 1). As a repeat, defensive and protective policy means that the EU cares for itself by protecting and securing its values such as democracy and rule of law. However, Turkey does not have those geo strategies in the regions as the study will elaborate over the next chapters.

The Central research question is: What are the similarities and differences of EU's and Turkey's soft power (geo) strategies in Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan?

In order to answer this central research question, sub-questions have been enlisted:

- What are the Soft Power understandings of each actor?
- What are the challenges and opportunities for EU and TR to sustain their soft powers in the selected regions?
- Which type of geo strategies are employed by EU and Turkey toward Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan?

## **1.2 Case Studies**

Two cases are selected for a better explanation of the strategies of the actors and make inclusive research to understand how regional actors such as Turkey and EU influence countries having authoritarian regimes in the post-soviet sphere and then, to compare the strategies of the actors over those countries to find out nuanced understanding of differences and similarities of the strategies employed over those countries. Two determined case countries are Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan that both are located in strategic regions. Both countries have high authoritarian regimes and have low Democracy in world ranking (Democracy in the world ranking, 2021) with security and stability needs; Azerbaijan in South Caucasus and Turkmenistan in Central Asia. They characterize strong attention for EU and Turkey. The employment of soft power (geo) strategies towards those countries bear importance for actors in the post socialist world. According to Ibragimov, Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan can be defined as “small powers” because these two countries have limited access to international areas but have opportunities to

attract the national interest of the states because of the rich resources and strategic importance geographically (Ibragimov, 2017).

In addition, on January 21, 2021, the "Dostlug" agreement, (which means "friendship"), was signed between the leaders of Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan and Paul Goble argues the agreement between the two countries is very important for Turkey for "Turkic union" and regional cooperation that connects South Caucasus and Central Asia and equally, the agreement also made western actors to have interest in the region (Goble, 2021). Moreover, Guliyev argues that in order for EU to reach Turkmen gas it is important to cooperate with Azerbaijan, otherwise, reaching Turkmen gas will not be an easy task. Since the destination for the Russian pipeline to Europe is mostly over Ukraine, after 2014, the EU, Turkmenistan, Turkey and Azerbaijan negotiated over TCP project (Umbach & Raszewski, 2016). Thus, geopolitical positions of Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan have been in the agenda of EU and Turkey. Consequently, chosen two case countries have political, cultural and economic ties with these regional actors. Thus, from different aspects EU and TR both have cultural and economic ties with these two case countries to promote their soft power ambitions (Council of the European Union, 2007) & (Yilmaz & Kilicoglu, 2018). Moreover, EU and TR's relations with Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan are not the same and Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan are not in equal positions. As a matter of fact, both Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan have rejected the allegations from the EU regarding human rights violations in their countries.

### **1.2.1 Azerbaijan**

Azerbaijan has established relations with international players after exiting the USSR, but eliminating Russian influence would not be an easy task for a typical post-Soviet country (Nuriyev, 2007). Since independence, Azerbaijan adopted a free-market economy and considering its territory and population, it is located in the category of "small states" (Gol, 2016). Much like Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan adopted "Neutrality" within post-soviet countries that guaranteed its stability within the context of balanced foreign policy (Nuriyev, 2007). Azerbaijan created balances between Russia and the West, several mutual programs in the field of energy and in other fields established with different international actors (Gojajev, 2010). Russia and Turkey remain as an important partner for Azerbaijan to export its petrol to European market (Guliyev, 2019). Azerbaijan have partnership programs and agreements with

TR and other European member countries. Several pipelines were held via Georgia and Turkey to reach Europe. Therefore, TANAP was the last project that carried Azerbaijani gas to Europe (Gojavev, 2010). Adrien Mauclet says “Thanks to TANAP that EU gets Azerbaijani gas from 2020”. Azerbaijan has been noted for good relations in EU that was added to the Eastern Partnership program (EaP, 2018). Azerbaijan will be an important partner for EU according to Mauclet (Mauclet, 2021).

### **1.2.2 Turkmenistan**

After gaining independence from Soviet Union (USSR), landlocked Turkmenistan worked to adopt an international market economy and to protect its “neutrality doctrine” (Anceschi, 2008). The scholar accepts that Turkmenistan prefers neutrality in its foreign policy and it is the most suitable model for the country according to Anceschi (Anceschi, 2008). The President had worked for balancing its power between the West and Russia to protect the country’s position in the region because Russia is the nearest dominant country in the region in nearly all fields (Horák, 2009). In addition, China's role as a successful foreign investor in the region is visible in Turkmenistan, where it has put forward the project that carries Turkmen gas to China via Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan (Olcott, 2013). Turkmenistan has the world’s fourth highest gas reserves. EU and Turkey have several partnership agreements and bilateral and trilateral agreement with Turkmenistan to develop good relations. However, the Turkmen president pays special attention to increasing international cooperation in the field of energy and accelerating the work of transferring Turkmen energy resources to the European market. Therefore, the EU was keen to engage Turkmenistan with different options. The scholar accepts that Turkmenistan prefers neutrality in its foreign policy and it is the most suitable model for the country according to Anceschi (Anceschi, 2008). Thus, examining the existing soft relations of EU and Turkey with selected case countries, the thesis overviews how European and Turkish ambitions are carried with soft power tools.

### 1.3 Methodology

Soft power strategies have been difficult to measure, and because of this immeasurability, finding and establishing relationships between dependent and independent variables have not been an easy task. Thus, one of term's problems was the methodology, in which researchers faced the uncertainty of soft power. However, there are some ways to come over of it. According to Nye, qualitative research design is appropriate for measuring soft power because it examines perceptions, event and values such as culture, and society (Nye, 2002). Thus, an important part of this study is the form of Qualitative Content Analyses (QCA) over qualitative materials. QCA is research deigns that focuses on textual data as a to interpret texts using codes, key concepts, themes, features using the systematic process of coddng (Assarroudi, Nabavi, Ebadi, & Vaismoradi, 2018). Thus, as a method, the thesis has utilized a Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) and two case studies added to examine and compare the soft power strategies of the EU and the Turkish Republic in two different selected regions.

According to Hsieh and Shannon (2005), there are three approaches of QCA. These are; conventional (inductive), directed (deductive) and summative methods (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005). In the thesis, "Directed Content analysis" is the main work of the Qualitative Content Analyses (QCA) aimed to explore and interpret the Turkish and EU soft power policies by examining websites, official documents, academic books, strategy papers and articles to identify specific codes, characteristics and key concepts over qualitative text materials. Hsieh and Shannon, (2005) argue that one of the way of conducting "Directed Content Analysis" is to identify the specific codes and key concept for the texts and relate those codes to the "predetermined codes" (Ex: Codes of William Walters four geo strategies) (See Table 1). As the "predetermined codes" in this research are determined codes of geo strategies (See Table 1). Therefore, within the Directed Content Analysis, documents will reveal certain codes, key concepts, themes and elements such as Culture, language, Human rights, Rule of law, Democracy and Tradition, then, those identified "codes" will be assigned to William Walters four (geo) strategies, in which, each of geo strategy have certain key concepts and predetermined codes such as expansionism, integration, safety, security, neo liberalism (See Table 1). As a result, the study will reveal which actors are assigned to which (geo) strategy and where.



The scope of reading materials has been selected based on the understanding of European and Turkish foreign policy and their relevance to the selected regions. This characterizes the work on European and Turkish foreign policy in general and the transformation of these policies in Central Asia and in South Caucasus, particularly, in Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan. Because the qualitative content analysis used in the thesis to reveal the soft power concepts of actors and their transformation to target countries in terms of soft power approaches and strategies. Because the thesis mainly works text-based research over qualitative materials. Blanchard argued that this has been used in soft power examination to get the main communications of soft power (Blanchard, 2012)

In the light of the content analyses, the thesis has a twofold manner of examination; First, the thesis examines the general soft power understanding of EU and Turkey, with their main instruments and established policies. Second, the thesis has added two case studies to see the transformed and employed strategies of EU and Turkey over Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan. Because case studies within the qualitative data analysis have been employed for gain in-depth and detailed understanding of one or a few particular processes or objects which are has limits on time and space (Blanchard, 2012)

Therefore, qualitative content analyses will be applied to primary and secondary documents. Simply, Primary data is collected through statements of ministry web-sites, commission documents, strategy papers. Secondary documents consist of scholarly articles, academic books, foreign policy journals, internet resources and main focus of time frame of the selected texts and documents is 2002/4 to date. These aspects were primarily analyzed by the authors exploring the problems and prospects of development of soft power strategies of Turkey and European Union in the post-soviet environments. This helped to understand how the soft power practitioner sees their own state and counter state. The research covers two different soft power providers/actors in two different countries therefore the thesis will avoid certain generalizations.

The Networked (Non)Border	March	The Colonial Frontier	Limes
Free movement of goods and services.  Neoliberal assertion  Borderless world  Globalization	Buffer zone between power  Security zone,  Away from threats  Protective belt keeping the disorder	Imperialism  Traditional, Cultural meaning  Interaction, assimilation  Expansionism  Expanding power outwards	Separating territories  Not-expansionist nature  Drawing limits  Defensive reading of security

(Table 1). Predetermined codes of four (geo) strategies. Source: Browning and Joenniemi (2008).

#### Chapters:

The thesis has been divided into chapters;

The first chapter will be devoted to the general introduction, including Research problem, Methodology, and explanation of case studies. Second chapter will be devoted for literature review and the theoretical framework of the analyses in which soft power of EU and TR, and Walter's (geo) strategies will be explained. In this chapter, Joseph Nye, William Walters, and other scholars will be referred to. This part will answer the question of "What are the soft power understandings of each actor"?

The Third stage will take place to identify the Soft power understandings of each actor in selected regions. To achieve that information, the thesis will look several foreign policy journals, official web-sites and several written academic works to see the practice of each actor in the regions. This part will answer the question of "What are the challenges and opportunities for EU and TR to sustain their soft powers in the selected regions"? Last chapter is the operational part where determined geo-strategies of two actors toward selected region will be

shown and compared as a main aim of the research. The differences and similarities between two soft power strategies will be shined by the policy attitudes of the actors. This part will answer the question of “What are the similarities and differences of EU's and Turkey's soft power (geo) strategies in Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan?”. In other words, the thesis will look at different types of soft power geo-strategies of the actors the regions. For this, in this section success of the actor's soft power approaches will make us to see the challenges and opportunities of the policies toward selected regions. Thus, this chapter will answer the question of “What are the Turkish and EU soft power (geo)strategies toward Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan?”

Overall, the methodology of the research was designed as a qualitative fashion of two different actors in two different geographies. The examination of official written works and academic works, speeches delegations and the documents will give feedback how the soft power is conducted with the selected regions and how the strategies were practiced. In fact, two different soft power models for those countries will determine the effects of soft power strategies of Turkey and EU toward the South Caucasus and Central Asia. In fact, the result of the research may be well used for the EU and Turkish diplomatic purposes and might be beneficial for the parties regarding which policy is better to imply.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Joseph Nye's the concept of soft power and William Walter's "geo-strategies" are the groundwork for the theory of the thesis. "The Frontiers of the European Union: A Geo Strategic Perspective" by William Walters, "Public Diplomacy and Soft Power" and "Soft Power: The Means to Success" by J. Nye; these articles are the groundwork for my research to sketch a theoretical framework to determine soft power strategies of EU and Turkey. Theoretically, in order to address the main research question, several works/literatures around EU and Turkish soft power studies have been collected such as Nye. J, Melissen. J, Kalin. İ, Davutoğlu. A, Aras. B. In this respect, empirical part of the study will prove assumptions on the basis of theory by scholars and best practices. The most important conceptualization of actor's soft power is provided by William Walters (2004) and Turkey's soft power readings provided by Davutoğlu, Bal, Aras, Kirisci and EU's soft power readings provided by Melissen. J, European Commission documents and academic written books, journals and research. Thus, the theoretical line will deal with understanding the foreign policies, attitudes and then deceiving body of state policies towards the regions. Therefore, the chapter seeks to put a theoretical frame to see the soft power approaches toward countries like Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan where the cause takes a different view from liberal democratic states. Therefore, theoretically, this had been implemented in several parts. First the, the study adds types of "geo-strategies" employed by William Walters for getting tangible conceptualizing. This will help us to see the nature of Soft power actors adopting different types of geo-strategies for a particular geography. As the research argues that EU can develop protectionist policies in soft power approaches while Turkey might approach "Expansionist" for the particular geography, according to Walters's conceptual framework. After lying out the geo-strategies, the thesis will compare them and will be able to see the similarities and differences between the geo-strategies. In the result, the study argues that Colonial Frontier geo-strategy is employed by Turkey most of the time towards Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan. However, EU mostly used defensive policies in Central Asia and

South Caucasus, thus, geo strategies of March and Limes can be seen throughout the Soft power implementation of EU towards the regions.

J. Nye created the term in the 1990s underlying changing international global order at the end of the Cold War (Nye, 1992). Since the whole period of cold war filled off with military armaments and equipment, Nye suggested a new way for US to attract the world with this new term (Nye, 2002). Therefore, Nye formulated an interesting question for US, “How to gather resources and methods to persuade a new international order after a bipolar world”? (Nye, 2004). Thus, this question was noticed by the scholars of IR in 21st century. However, the question of “how to collect the resources?” has been challenging issue because resources have not been measurable for the soft power. Therefore, in the 21st century every state has adopted the soft power components that cultural programs, exchange activities, international organizations have been considered as soft power resources according to Nye. For instance, particular narratives as well can be a resource of a particular soft power. For example, the “War on Terror” has been one of US’s soft power narrative to define the particular place or people as terrorists (Roselle, 2014).

William Walters published an article in 2004 “The Frontiers of the European Union: A Geo Strategic Perspective”. There, he discovers different types of “geo-strategies” that EU employs toward its outer borders (Walters, 2006). This thesis will examine the Soft Power (geo) strategies that EU and Turkey had referred in South Caucasus and Central Asia. The thesis will name the policies of the soft power strategies to simplification of the policies to understand the soft power approaches. Therefore, by employing William Walters different geo strategies will help us to see the perception of the particular geo-strategies for the actors as Walter argues that geo strategy is the particular way of understanding the perception and ambitions (Walter, 2008). The term geo-strategy according to Merriam-Webster, the two words “Geo” and “Strategy” are emphasized and is defined as a subdivision of geopolitics dealing with strategy (Merriam-Webster, Geo-strategy). “Geo” resembles geography explaining the territory, population and land (Walters, 2008). “Strategy” it’s the particular way of controlling the geography to minimise the threat and maximize the security to achieve the goals under the foreign policy directions (Walters, 2008). Thus, the thesis combines these two phrases to get the full meaning of Soft power geo-strategies of EU and Turkish approaches.

## 2.1 Concept of (Soft) Power

Joseph Nye conceptualized the concept of Soft power, which gained attention after the end of the Cold War where international/regional powers began to work on the soft powers of states. According to Nye, each state can have its own rule for governing the Soft power (Nye, 2011). Nye argues that new contemporary age required a new definition of power which is different among different powers of statehood, such as hard power (Nye, 2011). However, hard power was also on the agenda of the states and question was raised as; “whether hard power can be used together with soft power, and what are the strategies behind soft power policies”? These questions are well known in Soft power theme of International Relations. The concept of ‘power’ is one of the important core concepts of international relations. There are several different perspectives of how scholars understand the concept. One of the well-known understandings is that one can do it with its physical potential; “you command and they obey because you have a “power”” (Baldvin, 2008). It was commonly known as hard power, using force to get what you need. Morgenthau argues that power is the first priority of states and there is a struggle for that. Among academic views, realists argue that power is having the military capacity to defend itself, but from a liberal standpoint cooperation might be a power (Nye, 2004). However, new definitions began to shine with new dynamics. Joseph Nye argues that power is related to political science, sociology and physical geography, but the recent new challenge of “power” is “soft power” (Nye, 2008). Nye argues that a power can be a capacity to influence conclusions (Nye, 2008). According to Nye, having power does not mean you will be successful in need, thus, he gives the Vietnam war as an example that US is more powerful than Vietnam but they have lost the war because they needed strategic leadership (Nye, 2008).

According to Nye, power is divided into two parts, as soft power and hard power (Nye, 20011). Hard power is well known in international readings as an older and traditional type of power that is defined as; one can achieve its goals by using force (Nye, 2011). Soft power is a typical cultural and intuitional body, through which one can get outcomes through attractions (Nye, 2004). Nye also argues that soft power should be used in 21st century foreign policies especially criticizing US foreign policy that does not have efficient soft power assets (Nye, 2004). Joseph Nye criticizes the US foreign policy, which uses more hard power (Nye, 2004). He gives an example that US tried to take control of Vietnam and Iraq through military actions and this

situation made people disrespect US, but if the US gained public approval by using soft power tools, the Iraqi people could respect US (Nye, 2004)

The power used effectively in foreign policy, according to the way it is used, we can classify them as Military power, Economic power, Soft power. (Table 2).

	Behaviors	Primary Currencies	Government Policies
Military Power	coercion deterrence protection	threats force	coercive diplomacy war alliance
Economic Power	inducement coercion	payments sanctions	aid bribes sanctions
Soft Power	attraction agenda setting	values culture policies institutions	public diplomacy bilateral and multilateral diplomacy

Three Types of Power

Hard power is the Military and Economic potential of a state to attract by force or to impose sanctions by economic means (Nye, 2004). However, Soft power is to get it whenever you want through attractions (Nye, 2004). Instead of hard power elements, soft power elements should be “soft instruments” such as cooperation, agreements or institutions. (Nye, 2004). He argues that soft power is about policies, preferences, or understanding what the other party wants (Nye, 2004). For this reason, Nye attaches importance to the concept of soft power as knowing the behaviour of others (Nye, 2004). According to his arguments, he thinks that the concept of power today demands soft elements such as institutions, cooperation and diplomacy, not harsh elements such as military action (Nye, 2004).

According to Nye, Soft power must be about persuasion, and attractiveness, and to be “soft power” it must be acceptable. According to Nye, Cultural Diplomacy is a very important tool among soft power elements (Nye, 2004). Nye argues that soft power elements should be used in the content of soft power and should not be served as different tools such as propaganda

(Nye, 2004). He gives an example of USA; how the state uses soft power elements to attract the country through soft elements. However, he argues that US has lost its popularity due to the invasion of Iraq and decline of the state's economy, which in turn has led to the decline of US soft power in the global world (Nye, 2004). That's why Nye cites EU as a good example of a soft power provider, as it has no military body and wants to maintain peace around the world (EU commission, 2017 & Nye, 2004). Joseph S. Nye argues that the most useful elements of soft power are values, policies, culture, and institutions. Among these divisions, Cultural diplomacy is most often seen in the foreign policy journals of the states. Most potential soft power providers try to use CD (Cultural Diplomacy). He explains that "Cultural Diplomacy" keeps relations long-term, even if there are political disabilities but CD can stay in different fields for a longer period of time (Nye, 2004). In this thesis, among the elements of soft power, Cultural Diplomacy will be touched much as a key reference to Soft power of the European Union and Turkey toward selected two post-soviet countries.

Nye lists the sources, referees and objectives of soft power categorized as seen in the table below; (Table, 3).

**SOFT POWER SOURCES, REFEREES, AND RECEIVERS**

Sources of Soft Power	Referees for Credibility or Legitimacy	Receivers of Soft Power
Foreign policies	Governments, media, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), intergovernmental organizations (IGOs)	Foreign governments and publics
Domestic values and policies	Media, NGOs, IGOs	Foreign governments and publics
High culture	Governments, NGOs, IGOs	Foreign governments and publics
Pop culture	Media, markets	Foreign publics

In fact, there are several scholars who criticize Nye's concept of soft power saying that it does not have the potential to be a power, while Nye highlights the example of the global production of the United States, such as American brands, music, and Hollywood movies, emphasizing that it remains weak rather than a collaboration between states (Ferguson, 2003). In response to these critics, Nye formalized the new theory called "smart power", which is the combination of soft power and hard power, arguing that soft elements such as cultural throughout the hard power element are essential for persuasion. In global world, usually states wish to surge their



effectiveness by using the culture and diplomatic features defined as soft power, However, military and economic essentials defined as “hard power”. Nye argues that states need soft power strategies, but sometimes soft power strategies are not enough to get what a country wants, thus they need to have hard power assets, claiming the mixture of hard and soft power in this concept, naming as "smart power" (Nye, 2009) and according to him, USA is a smart power (Nye, 2009). He gives an example that the EU can be a smart power in which the process (member) has the cultural, institutional formations to achieve its goals, as well as in some cases, its military assets (Nye, 2009). Therefore, smart power can have different power tools and direct them simultaneously. (Nye, 2009). In his book of “Nature of power”, Joseph Nye says that increasing a country's diplomatic effectiveness and expanding its sphere of influence is not due to soft power or hard power alone, but to smart power (Nye, 2011). Soft power has been one of the most popular concepts of the 21st century. In 2004, Nye published his book, “Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics”, which examined the American experience of soft power concept.

## **2.2 Soft power of European Union**

The creation of the European Union with Maastricht Treaty in 1993 led the efforts of the European Union to reach the whole world through its External Relations Policy (EU, External relations). External relations were supported in several different areas; economic relations, partnership, cooperation (EU, External action plan). European Soft power has addressed in several programs such as Neighborhood policy, Enlargements process, and other cultural and social programs. Soft power has always been the basic principle of EU enlargement (Rehn, 2007). The enlargement process can be considered as one of the achievements of EU soft power, says Akdag (Akdag, 2017). Therefore, EU has a potential to act internationally that European Union as a peace project that aims to establish and develop peace in the face of international disputes, including its close neighbor countries, as far as Asian countries (EU-New strategy, 2007). EU has no military components who act as a conflict resolution by imposing peacekeeping missions or other political or economic costs. (Nielsen, 2013). According to Michalski, EU's soft power depends on practices and social actions to resolve conflicts through trade agreements and cooperation (Michalski, 2005). Therefore, according to EU soft power understanding, it is possible to eliminate any terrorist actions, security problems with employing

reliable soft power actions (Michalski, 2005). Moreover, Nye argues that considering of Europe's diversity in the world such as Culture, Art, Music and Performances, EU soft power is the biggest challenger of the US in positions of soft power assets (Nye, 2008). There have been criticisms that EU's soft power is weak as it has limitations on military action (Smith, 2014). Because EU cannot respond to the security problems outside its borders and this situation reduces the soft power policies of the EU (Michalski, 2005). The soft power of EU is ineffective in regions where security and conflicts are going on (Michalski, 2005). In the times of crisis, such as the COVID-19 virus disease or immigration problems, EU's soft power elements cannot present in international politics. However, J. Nye argues that hard power users are not always successful in establishing Democracy or Stability where security problems are, but the employment of soft power can have tangible results (Nye, 2004). EU is recognized as an important international actor in the world. In particular, the trade union and economic union functions have made EU as a giant economic actor (Michalski, 2005). The enlargement process has taken the influence of the EU out of the world from Asia and to the Far East (EU Commission). For these reasons, many referred EU as a successful soft power provider (Nye, 2002). In the international agenda, the EU has tried to be the best in the field of environmental sustainability, humanitarian, peacekeeping, conflict resolution as a global institution (European Commission, 2007). Various institutions such as Global Governance have been established within EU. In fact, this position of EU has been criticized that EU should have developed its military capacity to be strong in international system (Michalski, 2005).

Soft power has been always in a change in foreign policy journals and has been thinkable and questionable (Nye, 2004). As a matter of fact, EU's soft power efforts towards Eastern Europe developed after the Soviet Union, where globalization hit the international communities and affected the economies of the states that international players started to invest their soft powers. However, soft power has been debatable issue which most of the time depended on the political process of the states. Right after 2004, the Enlargement of Europe, scholars thought about security and stability in "multi-speed of Europe" (Browning 2008). The lack of cooperation has emerged due to the need for information exchange and networking of globalization in the sense of "economic development", therefore, the institutions began to develop networks among the post-Soviet regions. Michalski argues that new force was the "Soft Power" proceeding economic/social developments in Post-socialist environment (Michalski, 2005). This made regional local authorities to engage further in network cooperation in social and political context. Therefore, soft power engagements were one of the core principles of the EU's foreign

policies (Nielsen & Vilson, 2014). Since soft power projects and programs had opportunities for mutual cooperation, economic developments and several other co-operational programs, many obstacles and weaknesses have seen in several places where projects activities are held.

Soft power was in the agenda of European Union which was emphasized in several programs; European Neighborhood Policy (ENP), Eastern Partnership (EaP). Therefore, Soft power development could be a venerable tool to diminish the risk of threats especially in the concept of eastern enlargement where Soft power management became important issue for EU enlargement (Michalski, 2005). For this, EU started to discuss entering local and regional authorities of the regions under the central managements for Jointly cooperation (European Commission, 2007). The practice of soft power implemented by EU external actions aiming to promote good relations in different areas (European external action). Many soft power practices in the European Union has been engaged by multi governance of strategies (Nielsen & Vilson, 2014). Particularly in Europe, multiple governances of soft power have changed its stances in the light of neo-regionalism, which are common expressions that Europeanization, localization and globalization have confronted with different international actors (Michalski, 2005). Therefore, EU soft power to promote international networking with central authorities are new pathways in international order with mutual interests to protect spaces, and among these projects some have been successful and some have failed. (Michalski, 2005). Research argues that EU geo-strategy behind Soft power reading is expansionist that tries to promote its core western values there. Generally, EU soft power seems in Colonial frontier geo-strategy. However, in different region, this geo strategy might be changed as the study will examine it in the following chapters.

### **2.3 Soft Power of Turkey**

Hard power has always been on the agenda of Turkey who located in a strategic place where security problems are most prevalent (Çaman & Akyurt, 2011). Turkey has the potential to be a regional actor close to its geography. History and culture are the determinants of Turkish soft power, as the country has historical and cultural ties with its close neighbor. These are the elements where the country can be a good soft power provider by using these elements (Aras,

2009). Before the collapse of the Soviet Union, Turkey's soft power in its nearby countries was dead, however, new dynamics changed in international politics and where, in the early 1990s Turkey restored its relations with the close countries, especially, during Turgut Ozal's presidency, Turkey has engaged its cultural and economic ties with its near regions including "Turkic" republics in post-soviet environment (Ekşi & Erol, 2018)

Struggling with the PKK since 1984, political and social inadequacy, and other border problems due to the Middle East, made Turkey to keep its Hard Power instruments on the agenda, however, the new government in 2002 revised Turkish foreign policy where Turkey started to adopt EU reforms, in the context of TR-EU relations (Keyman & Duzgit, 2007). EU supported new reforms held by the Turkish government on the domestic democratization process (Keyman & Duzgit, 2007). The new government also started renovation of Soft Power institutions of Turkey. This is how Turkey expanded its soft power targets to nearby countries such as the Middle East, the Balkans, Central Asia and Caucasus (Cagatay, 2008). It might be said that Davutoglu's doctrine formed the foreign policy approach of the JDP (Justice and Development Party) in which Davutoglu was appointed as Foreign Minister in the year 2009. The new government started new era where all near countries were promised to give peace and order that "Zero problems with neighbor's policy" was prove of this (Davutoglu, 2003). The government started to discuss issues about security, economic stability and visits to countries including post-soviet regions on the bases of Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe or OSCE (Efeğil, 2008).

EU favored those initiative and accession negotiations welcomed by JDP (Justice and Development Party) government (Aras, 2009). Bulent Aras argues that Turkish soft power has been active during JDP era when organizations were in rising to spread Turkish values abroad (Aras, 2009). TIKA, YTB, Yunus Emre Institute, Religious Affairs and Radio and Television Corporation and Turkish TV series are most important soft power institutions of Turkey (Aras, 2009). Turkish TV programs turned to spread Turkish values in the region, these regions were Muslim-majority regions, including South Caucasus, Central Asia and Middle East (Aydin, 2004). Prime minister Ahmet D. published a book "Strategic Debt" addresses basic missions of the governments toward neighbors and other near countries (Davutoglu, 2001). The main task of the position of foreign policy was to maintain soft power policies to get main goals there (Davutoglu, 2004). This position of Turkey was named as "new Ottomans" or "new imperialist ideas" by scholars such Ziya Onis, Efe Caman (Onis, 2014) (Caman, 2013). According to Bulent Aras, Arab spring in Middle East made decline in Turkish foreign policy ambitions

toward the regions (Aras, 2009). Even there were some critics that Soft power of Turkey was in decline because Turkey involved to the war and this made unpopular image of Turkish public diplomacy (Ekşi, 2018). At the beginning of the 2000s, Turkish foreign policy, within the new government developed good relations with its neighbors. The role of TIKA should be examined here, because the institution opened new offices in Central Asia and the South Caucasus during the JDP period, and 9.92% of aid spent there (TIKS, 2016). The organization carried the ministry of TR's mission in different fields, including education and other social-cultural programs in the country where it was located. Soft power and cultural diplomacy have been the main topics of the JDP's foreign policy agenda (Kilicoglu & Yilmaz, 2017). Furthermore, during the Justice and Development Party period, Turkish soft power uses its resources intensively towards the Arab world, Central Asian and South Caucasus countries options to improve the deteriorated relations with its immediate neighbors in order to become a model country in its near region. Turkey mediated between Russia's Georgian war in the South Caucasus and even the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the Middle East. Thus, at one point, this increased Turkey's image as a regional power in the global arena where this situation led Turkey to invest its soft power, which was formed by institutions, into TIKA. Those intuitional in program was to attract new post-soviet elites in Turkey.

## **2.4 Conceptualizing Soft power (geo) strategies**

Emphasizing geo strategies is the priority of the research and therefore to see the Soft power strategies toward the selected two countries. As mentioned above, there are various (geo)strategies discovered by William Walters that the EU has implemented toward its close borders (Walters 2008). For this, in this section the thesis, will give explanation of the four geo-strategies according to the Walter's conception. Since the thesis will examine the soft power geo strategy of the EU and Turkey towards Central Asia and the Southern Caucasus, the concept of geo strategy needs to be clearly understood. This is an important task for states to control or determine the security of the state for a special position (Walters, 2006). As soft power policies take different forms from time to time, the strategies adopted to promote better policies for target regions also differ on a case-by-case basis (Nye, 2004).

Now, the thesis will examine the types of Geo strategies recently employed by William Walters (Table, 7);

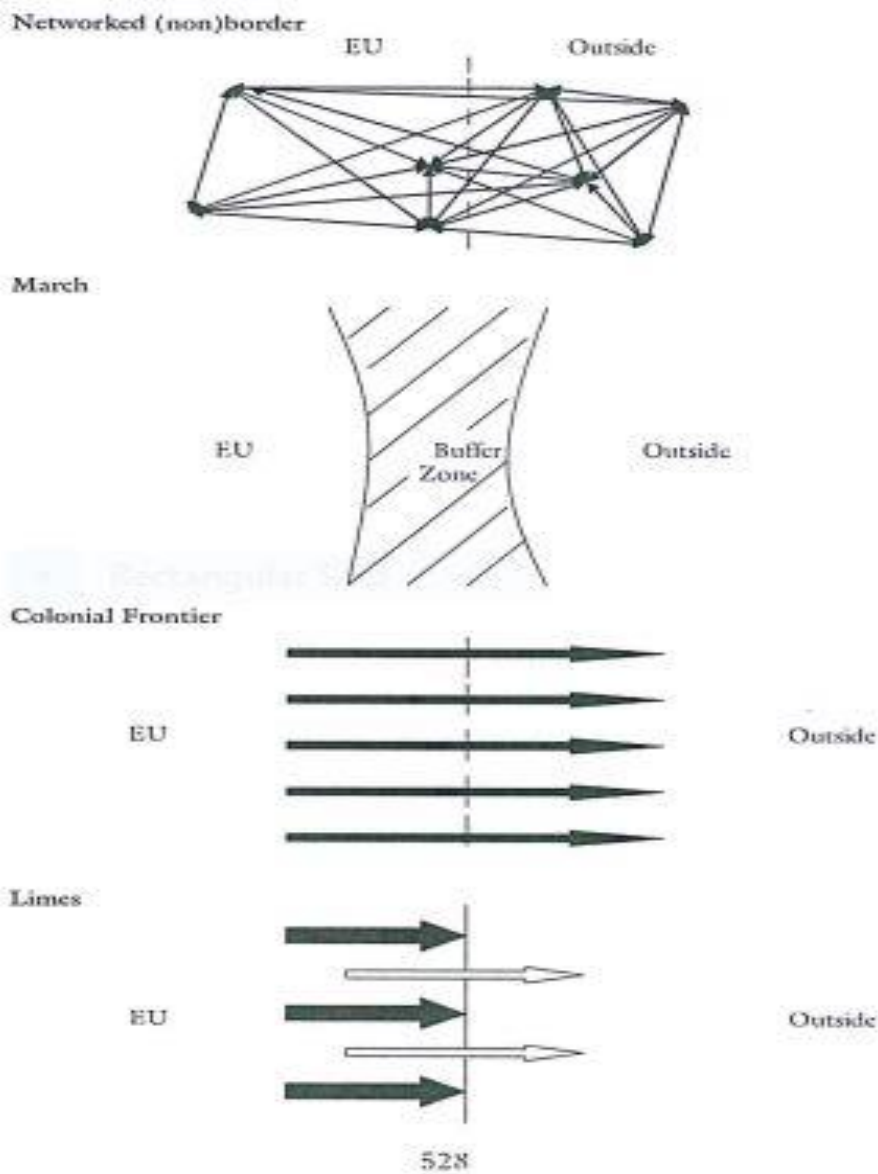
The first is networked (Non) border which resembles “a world with no border” and underlines neoliberal approach to the freedom of goods or services in the regions and cooperation with neighbors. As seen below in the table that there is a mixture of inside and outside, which means networked (Non) border strategy favors the integration of its close neighbors mainly focusing of globalization as noted by Browning and Joenniemi (Browning & Joenniemi, 2008).

Second is March, this geo strategy comparatively, takes the defensive role for the state which means there is a line of separation between inside and outside which is kind of “buffer zone” between powers (Browning & Joenniemi, 2008). Here, a state might have particular space between itself and outside to protect the “security zone”. As an example, Ukraine might be Buffer zone between Europe and Russia (Browning & Joenniemi, 2008).

Third is colonial frontier resembles assimilation of the power outside (Walters, 2008). In other words, transformations of inside values to the particular outside which means state might transfer policies to the particular geography. Here, the notion of expansionism is important while Walters argues that the strategy is to “assimilation of particular place” (Walters, 2004)

Last, is called Limes which is like an edge or limit. Similar to Colonial frontier where both are transformative power from inside to outside. However colonial frontier is too keen to expand to outside but lime is not considering expansionism as a permanent geo strategy. More clearly, Walter argues that this geo-strategy has certain limits for expansionism.

Figure 2  
EU Geostrategies



(Table, 7) Downloaded from article of Browning and Joenniemi: Geo strategies of ENP)

William Walters used four different geo-strategies that EU applied toward the borders (Walter, 2008). Walters also criticizes the EU's use of multiple geo-strategies in different regions, but argues that geo-strategies should not be played for generalization, they should be used for specific logic (Walter, 2008). In fact, geo strategy might be employed at the same time in different regions. For example, March geo strategy might be employed together with Colonial Frontier geo-strategy. For instance, according to the arguments of the thesis, the Turkish case may be a bit different where we see the country wishing to be a “regional power” however is weak in an economic sense comparing with EU but follows Colonial Frontier (geo) strategy

toward external relations. Therefore, the thesis shows how Turkey shapes geo strategies in its Soft power in two post-soviet countries.



## CHAPTER 3

### Soft Power of EU and TR in Central Asia and South Caucasus

#### 3.1 Soft Power of EU in Central Asia and South Caucasus

Central Asia and the Southern Caucasus remained under the rule of the Soviet Union for about 70 years, and the countries in the region followed Russian-Soviet values even after they left the Union. This was a big challenge for the opponents of the Russian soft power in the region where the vast majority of people speak Russian and even in some countries, Russian language is the second official language (Çaman, 2011). Moreover, states in the Central Asian and South Caucasus region have authoritarian regimes with economic downwards, political extremism and extremists Islamist groups (Efegil, 2008). The thesis covered a more generalized soft power understanding of two actors in the previous chapter, now the thesis will look into more of a region-specific view in the context of soft power strategies. In this section, Qualitative Content Analyses will be applied to the articles, books, journals, commission documents and strategy papers to interpret the documents and find out main codes, repeated words, key concepts, themes and features of EU's soft power in Central Asia and South Caucasus. The main focus will be EU's soft power strategies towards regions aftermath of "the big bang" enlargement of EU. As a result, the content analyses of the thesis will demonstrate that the determined codes from the selected documents mostly resonated with geo strategies of Colonial Frontier, March and Limes geo strategies. Therefore, research argues that the main codes of the documents assigned to Colonial frontier, March and Limes geo strategies in Central Asia and in South Caucasus.

EU pursues its common Western values with its economic potential such that in the commission documents it was stated that EU has been engaged not only with energy issues but also with human rights, rule of law and good governance (Michalski, 2005). The text of Michalski, strategy papers and website of the EU delegations, underline "exchange" programs, "trade partnership" "Good governance", Rule of law, Human rights (Table 3). These elements oriented with "transferring values", "expanding towards outside" which clearly resonated geo strategy

of Colonial Frontier (See Table 1). Therefore, Colonial Frontier also visible in EU's soft power strategy that uses this approaches to transfer their own core values to the selected target countries. However, interestingly, in the analyzed documents there are also other key concepts such as "security, avoiding conflicts, safety" that resonates with the geo strategy of "Limes" and "March" (Table.3). From this context, the research shows that EU employs "Limes" and "March" geo strategy that it has limits on its soft power implications toward Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan. However, it was already known that Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan were both in the Russian "sphere". Therefore, one of the concerns of EU was its security. Thus, the research shows that Limes geo strategy employed in which EU tries to see "the outside" as problematic in the papers. One reason may be that the Chinese and Russian values or elements in the region threaten the security of the EU, which the Union cannot further expand to Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan with concrete policies according to the research.

### **3.1.1 Central Asia**

According to Eva Gross, as different actors have different ambitions, China's main priorities remain in the economic sphere, where China hopes to reach Central Asian resources and markets to expand its routes to Europe (Gross, 2015). Thus, the Central Asian countries were not easy to dominate by the European Union, which means that the region is a neighbor to China, Russia, Turkey, and Iran, where the Western influence is not as prevalent as it was in the Balkans or Eastern Europe (Akgul, 2007). After the collapse of the Soviet Union, EU engaged in Central Asia in the political, economic, security and social fields with bilateral trade, agreements and technical assistance (TASIC). There are many opportunities and challenges for the EU to continue its soft power strategies in Central Asia. In fact, before the break out of the eastern bloc, Soft power of EU in the region of Central Asia was almost dead. However, in the aftermath of the dissolution of the USSR, EU institutions have supported soft power option of EU and EP (European Parliament) have set aside a budget for soft power institutions (European parliament, 2005). According to Gross, EU has been engaged to the region with long-term investments such as water resources, infrastructures and technological investments (Gross, 2015). However, among them, energy issues were one of the top priorities of the EU's strategy in Central Asia, as the Union is dependent mostly on Russian energy, taking new tasks was priority to focus on CA energy to diversify the Union's energy route (Knodt, Urdze, Nodia,

Paramonov, 2018). Therefore, Energy element was key priority that EU developed its new strategy in 2007 after TACIS agreement launched in 1991. TACIS was first negotiation of EU for post-communist states namely as “Technical assistance of CIS states” launched right after the break out from USSR, which was adopted from 1991-2006, and it was first attempt of EU in Central Asia to help their transformation process of economic reforms of countries (Fact Sheets on the European Union, 2021). The strategy has pointed out several points including, Human rights and Rule of law (EU strategy, 2007). That was the first attempt of recognition of Central Asia as an important place and region for EU. Especially, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan has special importance for EU because those countries have large percentage of oil and gas in from the entire world. As a result of TACIS, all five countries in CA region signed PCA with EU (Council of the European Union, 2007).

After the 2004 enlargement of the Union, the membership of the Eastern and Central European Countries to the Union became a center of attraction for the remaining post-Soviet countries (Gross, 2015). Those countries were not on the European continent but hoped for close cooperation with the EU (EU Commission, 2005). The new strategy adopted in 2007 covered the topics like, Human rights, Rule of law and Energy environment. Covering a 10-year period, the program intensified the dialogues between the parties. Although the EU took a big step for the Central Asian countries in 2007, it invited these countries to PCA, where the EU prepared agreements and documents with the five Central Asian countries individually in the topics of Rule of Law, Human Rights, Good governance and Democratization plus Energy and Security cooperation (Council of the European Union, 2007). However, after the NATO withdrawal from Afghanistan, Chinese and Russian influence dampened EU's hopes in Central Asia, says Prof. Dr. Steven Blockmans who is Director of Research at CEPS (The Centre for European Policy Research) (Blokman, 2019).

In 2015, Gross argued that Russian and Chinese visible role in the region made EU to adopt new strategies for CA region (Gross, 2015). For example, China's the Silk Road Belt project and Russia's EEU (Eurasian Economic Union) attempts changed EU's strategic directions over the region (Gross, 2015). For this, the new strategy was adopted in 2019, which included more specific assumptions that Blockmans argues that one of the main key differences in this package is transportation and commerce, which is more concrete than these latest strategies (Blokman, 2019). However, Blockmans continued that EU cannot be a rival for China's huge investments across the region and Russian's historical legacy in the Central Asia (Blokman, 2019). For those reasons, EU's soft power will have several maneuvers during its presence on Central Asia

says Blokman who consider Russian and China's role provided more tangible outcomes over the region (Blokman, 2019). However, the author argues that EU's 2019 strategy towards CA countries committed to give development for all CA countries in a border scale (Blokman, 2019). Moreover, it was argued that EU policies towards CA were based only with soft power instruments, but critics expressed that EU had weak potential with soft power policies in CA, in particular, policies no longer help the region to resolve conflicts, smuggling and terrorism (Umbach, 2007).

The 2019 strategy spearheaded by organizations and institutions founded by EU and shaped with several programs in Central Asian countries; Border Management, EU Action Against Drugs and Organised Crime (EU-ACT) and even during Covid-19 virus diseases EU supported Central Asia with the program of COVID-19 Crisis Response (CACCR) that helped the vaccination programs (EU-Turkmenistan relation, 2021). These were the soft power tools in EU's foreign policy that new EU period developed towards Central Asia (EU, new strategy, 2007). The employed content analyses over the chosen documents show that priorities of EU soft power strategy, was to establish economic and political agreements for Central Asian countries to integrate them to the international system (Lynch, 2003).

### **3.1.2 Case study: Turkmenistan**

EU's position in high authoritarian Turkmenistan has been recorded as positive. EU worked to balance its power in Turkmenistan with energy issues and human rights and rule of law. From 2007, EU has taken a closer look into Turkmenistan. According to this strategy, EU intensified its economic activities in the country then slowly enabled the issues of human rights and rule of law (Policy department, 2017). TACIS and other two strategies (2007, and 2019 strategy) adopted with this motivation conducted with neo-functionalist approach of EU. After the EU's enlargement, new developments were established in the way of EU's Turkmenistan engagement. For instance, in 2012, during the oil and gas conference it was said that EU was involved not only for energy issues but also other local issues (Policy department, 2017). However, many initiatives were at a stand-still in the way of democracy promotion of EU over Turkmenistan. Turkmenistan has problems in its internal affairs such as education, health care and social problems which concerns EU as well. For example, studying abroad has been

problematic for the citizens of Turkmenistan, freedom of movement for citizens is not easy, therefore, changes in social manufacture is not easy in the country. However, Brussel has been keen to develop on EU-Turkmenistan relations in all different spheres due to its huge energy supplies but is not happy with the region's suspicions over its citizens (Anceschi, 2008). The author argues that despite corruption in government affairs, EU has some important development on the workshop of the internal issues of the country. According to Denison, EU engagement might be to stay in the long run.

EU launched the partnership and cooperation agreement, which serves to examine the political and social situation of the country. In this agreement, EU also encouraged cooperation in the area where Turkmenistan is known as an oil-rich Central Asian country (Partnership and Cooperation agreement).

In general, EU's approach to Turkmenistan is based on PCA (Partnership and Cooperation Agreement). EP (European Parliament, 2021) confirms EU's participation in Turkmenistan with the intention of democratization, rule of law and other trade and energy partnership (European Parliament, 2019, PCA-Turkmenistan). In recent years, EU increased its human rights efforts in Turkmenistan for bilateral dialogue and Turkmenistan had opened new national action plan to adopt new Human Rights developments. Among this, EU had energy talks with Turkmenistan in all energy fields such as gas and Methane (Policy department, 2017). In the fields of environment, education, trade and private sector EU had finically supported Turkmenistan (Policy department, 2017). Turkmenistan is located in a place where instability is inevitable such as terrorism, drug trafficking and instability of Afghanistan and has relatively isolative role among those five countries that is a member of several non-alignments movements (Anceschi, 2008). Thus, Cultural Diplomacy of EU in Turkmenistan was not easy because the state had to interfere the individuality of its people (Anceschi, 2008). Thus, EU could not easily reach Turkmenistan with CD tools in terms of promoting Cultural Soft power policies.

### **3.1.3 South Caucasus**

South Caucasus is a geographically important region for Europe that combines two basins such as the Caspian Sea and the Black Sea. Aftermath of the USSR, first EU's engagement was the

document of PCAs put in force in 1996, however, the economic and political situation re down in all three countries of South Caucasus. Theoretically, the EU engagement in South Caucasus has been as a “new regionalism” that sees the whole region as one complete region but not each of them differently (Nuriyev, 2007). Main soft power elements in the region are; security, human rights, democratization and trade cooperation (Kristian, Nielsen, Vilson, 2014). However, there have been criticisms that countries are authoritarian regimes and democratic reforms are not well functioned. Thus, EU cannot achieve its purpose by implementing economic and political reforms, according to Stewart (Stewart, 2011).

However new policies were adopted with 2004 enlargement of EU, in which ENP, then EaP has been main instrument of EU’s soft power in South Caucasus (Kristian, Nielsen, Vilson, 2014). In the frame work of this instrument, EU has adopted “Action Plans” for three countries of South Caucasus separately. Starting in 2006, EU signed new association agreements. This approach might be as soft power of EU as its intentions in three countries and thus, made reforms in the way of Europeanisation covering the topics like, Rule of law, Good governance and Democracy promotions. The regional ambition of EU is visible in general but that ambition has been messed up with the conditions of the South Caucasus regions (Nuriyev, 2007). Because the conditions were different in each of countries in South Caucasus that Armenia and Azerbaijan has conflict and Georgia has occupied territories. Another problem is that region is located where Turkey, Iran and Russia have an observable role since the collapse of the Soviet Union, therefore, EU involvement could not get tangible outcomes (Aliyeva, 2015). In fact, Neo-functional approach of EU hoped close co-operation with all the countries in SC that employed the “spillover effect” of EU that problems might be solved with cooperation (Peterson, 2007). In general, the programs aftermath of the TACIS agreement, PCA EIDHT TRACECA and INOGATR encouraged reforms and cooperation were achieved especially in the energy issue. However, in general, Denison argues that EU policies made to recognize an “European identity” in the region (Denison, 2009). EaP was created as a new instrument for six Ex-soviet countries in South Caucasus. Russia's efforts to pursue policies that do not ignore its interests in the South Caucasus is one of the most important problems of the EU's South Caucasus policy (Aliyeva, 2019). Although the European Union has significantly improved its South Caucasus strategy in the framework of European Neighborhood Policy (ENP,) the current picture shows that EU is determined to benefit from the strategic advantages and resources of the region, especially with Azerbaijan and Georgia, but ethnic conflicts and occupation were not an easy task for the Union to handle (Valiyev, 2017).

### **3.1.4 Case study: Azerbaijan**

EU started its first assignment with the PCA agreement in 1999. In fact, PCA presents different topics including economic relations, trade and investments. EU counted Azerbaijan as a growing economy with respect to its oil market in 2005. (ENP country report). Mainly in the oil and gas sector Azerbaijan is the largest trade partner of South Caucasus with EU. Among the economic relations, EU wanted to see the reforms in social and political level (EU, Commission, 2005). However, implementing democratic values and reform has been a challenging task for Azerbaijan, because negative attitudes (Ex: Corruption) of the countries also have a negative impact on EU-AZ economic relations (Nuriyev, 2007). In many fields, Azerbaijan has developed relations with EU but the main areas are economy and politics. Especially due to the country having energy resource and the role of pipeline implications made it more attractive to the EU, according to Nuriyev.

A closer look of EU for Azerbaijan happened after the enlargement that EU adopted new action plan under ENP for Azerbaijan starting in 2005. Main topics included economic development, security, rights, rule of law and energy cooperation (EU/Azerbaijan-Action Plan, 2005). This, highlights also new reforms in the way of democratic reforms and connections with rule of law and human rights. Nuriyev also argues that this new “Action plans” might have new impact on EU-AZ relations that in 2007, ENPI (European Neighborhood partnership instrument) worked under ENP to protect the relations with two parties and make Azerbaijan to make new reforms in the way of Europeanisation. According to an annual survey 40-47% of Azerbaijanis trust in the EU (Valiyev, 2017). Meanwhile, EU has been an important partner to Azerbaijan, being the largest investor in Azerbaijan. Especially, BP (British Petroleum) role in Azerbaijan oil companies; Baku-Ceyhan pipeline project, and the Southern Gas Corridor achieved to carry gas from the Caspian Sea to reach European board (EU-Azerbaijan, 2015). These developments made Azerbaijan view to the EU in a positive way according to Valiyev (Valiyev, 2017) and EU also have supported these projects (EU / Azerbaijan Action Plan). In addition, a 2009 report showed that Azerbaijan has implemented and succeeded in some of the issues in political and social spheres (EU/Action plan, 2009). However, as discussed above, the EU has not been successful in security issues, where Nuriyev argues that EU might have fear of Russian and eastern influence (Valiyev, 2017).

EU-Azerbaijan relations have several ranges where the EU has several sectors trying to engage with soft power tools. However, EU commission reports that the Azerbaijani elite are reluctant to undertake EU reforms (EU/Action plan, 2019).

Currently, the Action Plan commitments strongly support the strategic partnership with Azerbaijan. Moreover, the EU has recently focused on Azerbaijan's internal problems in different areas (EU commission, 2017). However, other EU influences succeeded in the field of education and other cultural social programs. The ENP and EaP programs emphasize the EU's soft power practice in Azerbaijan, so the EU has the potential to be a partner for the Azerbaijani society (Alieva, 2019).

However, this was not shown in all areas of the engagement, in the context of education and culture, Colonial Frontier geo strategy is driven by EU that Cultural Diplomacy is seen in Azerbaijan. One of the reasons might be Russia's primary role in the regions that made EU to adopt more protective and defensive policies oriented with Limes and March geo strategy according to the content analysis (See table 1, 4)

EU	
The Networked (Non)Border	
March	X
The Colonial Frontier	X
Limes	X

(Table. 4) EU in CA and SC



### **3.2 Soft Power of Turkey in Central Asia and South Caucasus**

Being a culturally and historically close country to Azerbaijan in the South Caucasus and Turkmenistan in Central Asia, Turkey had controversial relations with these two countries at different times. Ivanova argues that soft power of Turkey in the countries of Central Asian and South Caucasus is weak because of involvement of other actors (Ivanova, 2018). However, in 2002, Turkey, developed new foreign policy that Turkey aimed good relations with countries of Central Asia and South Caucasus (Bal, 2017). According to new party doctrine of JDP, Turkey, employed cultural diplomacy toward the Turkish speaking countries in post-soviet environment (Caman, 2013). Main ambition was to strength the ties between all Turkic republics and build strong relations with all Turkic states (Caman & Akyurt, 2011). Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan both are naturally oil rich countries and have traditional cultural similarities with Turkey (Caman & Akyurt, 2011), especially language, religion, tradition and culture bears vital importance for Turkey to promote its soft power involvement. In both case countries, Turkey claimed “Turkic unity” as a regional power from historical and cultural affinity (Eren, 2013). Davutoglu argues that the new Turkey's "zero problems with neighbors" policy will be valid for the Turkic world as well as in Caucasus and Central Asia (Davutoglu, 2002). According to Davutoglu’ doctrine, the most important asset of Turkish soft power in all Turkic countries is common Turkic culture and common language (Davutoglu, 2004). Thus, content analyses over gathered documents of soft power of Turkey will provide the main meaning of content with codes and key concepts. Consequently, the main findings of the Content analysis on selected literatures of Turkish presences in Central Asia and South Caucasus resonates with the Colonial frontier geo strategy. Because, Turkish Soft power practitioner’s emphasize cultural and historical components to improve the country’s image (Davutoglu, 2002), (Kalin, 2014). According to Content analysis, Turkey promotes its soft power positions in the context of historical, cultural elements toward Central Asia and South Caucasus (Chapter 3). Most visible elements in Turkish Soft power toward Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan are “Language” and “Religion” which resonates Colonial frontier geo-strategy (See Table 1).

### **3.2.1 Central Asia**

Turkey is the first country who recognized the five states of Central Asia independently right after the independence from USSR, and also held negotiations individually in the political, economic, cultural and military fields between Turkey and these countries (Caman, 2003). TIKA was the main institution that carried out aid and cultural programs that mobilized the Turkish presence in Central Asia (Tika, 2005). As discussed above, regional and international actors are interested in Central Asian resources and energy, where Turkey enters the region with the same ambition (Oner, 2018). For Turkey, Central Asia means homeland for Turkish ancestors, many historical books or other archaeological research considered the regions as homeland of Turks (Efegil, 2008). For this, Turkish people seem to be having the closest cultural ties with Central Asian people. As one of the motives of the Turkish engagement in Central Asia was to maintain cultural ties with four Turkic republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan (Caman, 2003). Since the independence of the five CA countries, Turkey started a new mission in five countries and supported the developments of countries in all fields, after their independence from the Soviet Union. Back in 1990s, there have been very important developments in the energy sector, trade and education (Caman, 2003). (Ex: such that many students from Central Asia come to Turkey to continue their education). Main motive for Turkey was to develop linguistic and cultural ties with these five countries (Caman, 2003). This process included several different ways, such as common TVs, Projects about the Turkish language, Exchange of Academicians (TIKA, 2005). Turkey's strategic importance has also enabled countries to develop healthy relations with Turkey (Sancak, 2016). For this reason, Turkey has become one of the countries that recognize the "Turkic" states in Central Asia (Efegil, 2008). The collapse of the USSR created opportunities for Turkey to join bilateral relations with ex-Soviet countries where Turkey's position became more visible for EU as well (Caman, 2003). In fact, initially the EU supported Turkey for its secular stance which could challenge the Central Asian Islamic Groups (Akgul, 2007). Thus, many scholars started to investigate Turkey's geopolitical ambitions towards its neighbors (Onis, 2014).

After the rise of the Erdogan's party (JDP) -Justice and Development Party- Turkey started to invest its soft power instruments and one of the target regions was Central Asia (Cagaptay, 2008). Turkey's soft power largely depended on cultural diplomacy towards Central Asian

countries, especially emphasizing the unification of the entire “Turkic world” (Bal, 2000). According to Aras and Akpinar, Turkey uses cultural values through Cultural programs, TV series which are very common in Central Asian countries as well (Aras & Akpinar, 2011). For instance, through cultural and educational programs such as “Maarif Vakfi” and “Diyanet” which are closely related with Turkish religious affairs, Turkey had established cultural relations (Alaranta & Silvan, 2022). In addition, Ankara maintains its role under the “Turkic council” established in 2009 including Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkey but Turkmenistan did not get involved because of its doctrine of neutrality policy (Alaranta & Silvan, 2022).

### **3.2.2 Case study: Turkmenistan**

Like many other Turkic republics in the post-Soviet space, Turkey and Turkmenistan have several agreements in the field of trade, economy and culture (Turkish MFA, 2016). There are some institutions where Turkey monitors its politics through them, and these programs are mostly used in other Turkic countries as well; YUNUS EMRE Foundation, TIKA and TURKSOY. Turkey increased relations with Turkmenistan during the JDP period, and President Erdogan has emphasized the importance of Turkmenistan several times (Hurriyet news, 2016). The Bilateral agreement has been agreed upon by the parties on gas reserves and pipeline diversification. Several protocols were signed in 2016 between Turkey and Turkmenistan in the field of energy; “Turkmengas” and “Ata gas” companies are the companies that export gas to Turkey (TR Presidency, 2016). Therefore, various cultural, education, language programs projects have begun to rise (Great Student Project). However, there was a crisis period in which soft power functions were suspended in Turkey (Bal, 2017). In addition, in the cultural programs, education is the biggest field where right after independence of Turkmenistan, the “Great Student Project” enabled many students to get an education in Turkey.

With regards to economic spheres, Turkey is the second-largest economic partner for Turkmenistan, having more than 600 companies in Turkmenistan (Turkish MFA, Relations between Turkey and Turkmenistan). With regard to Turkmenistan, Turkish MFA states that Turkey is the first country that recognized Turkmenistan in 1991 and opened embassy in 1992.

According to content analyses over the website of embassy main key codes are common culture and religion. Similarly, Turkey also see the country as “one nation two states” (Turkish MFA, Relations between Turkey and Turkmenistan).

Especially, several visits have been made in 2014, 2015 in regard of bilateral meetings and forums (Turkish MFA, 2021). Even the Turkish president has acknowledged the Turkmenistan’s 30 years of neutrality policy (TR presidency, 2015). Among the economic relations, Turkey’s power soft tools have several limits comparing with the Turkic countries in Central Asia. For instance, TIKA does not play a big role in Turkmenistan, however, TIKA has implemented programs like Exchange student programs, and Agricultural techniques in Turkmenistan (TIKA, 2009) In fact, Turkey has also acted as a mediator between Azerbaijan and Turkey over their gas dispute in Caspian Sea (Wheeler, 2013), as it states in TIKA website that 40% of the aid went to Turkmenistan in the fields of economic stability and political affairs (TIKA, 2009).

### **3.2.3 South Caucasus**

In the MFA website of Turkey, TR relations with the SC is noted that TR serves as “a bridge” between South Caucasus and Central Asia and Turkey is noted as the first country to recognize each of the SC countries after the USSR (Turkish MFA, 2021). For each country, special programs have been established. However, after the Armenian occupation of Azerbaijani territory, borders between Turkey and Armenia closed. However high level relations were held between Turkey, Azerbaijan and Georgia. Turkey also stated that it supports the peaceful solution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and that it wants to act as a mediator in the Russian-Georgian war, and also wants the normalization process with Armenia (Turkish MFA, 2016). However, Mustafa Aydin argues that Azerbaijani and Armenia conflict and Georgia’s unstable economy made Turkey to follow its traditional foreign policy in the region, and he continues that TR found itself in Eurasia because of its ethnic cultural-historical components with countries in the continent (Aydin, 2002)

Kemal Kirisci argues that Turkey's soft power target is regional integration in economic and political spheres (Kirisci, 2015). Each of the three countries played a role in Turkey's soft power goals. Three countries in South Caucasus; Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia were strategically

important for Turkey. Turkey has developed specific programs for each of the three South Caucasus countries. Turkish soft power ambition has different roles in those three countries within different areas (Balci, 2019). TIKA, which Turkey sent in the 1990s, revealed Turkey's ambition in the region, and thus, many positive relations such as education and culture developed in the regions (TIKA, 2005). Moreover, Turkey hoped to resolve these conflicts with its role in 2008, such as Nagorno-Karabakh, the war between Georgia and Russia (Balci, 2019). Georgia and Turkey have developed good relations in the energy sectors and Turkey has developed new programs in the field of culture and education. However, according to the TIKA agency, in South Caucasus many students go to Turkey for education (TIKA, 2017).

During the JDP period, Turkey's priority was the energy sector in the South Caucasus. Therefore, the first initiative was the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline (BTC) and then TAP and TANAP pipeline projects (Gojayev, 2010). These projects attracted other European countries to admire Turkey as a key country to bring Caucasian energy to Europe (Oge, 2014). Even before, the JDP's period, TR's soft power instrument has always been there for Muslims of the Caucasus (Caman, 2003). In fact, TR's foreign policy was ruled by a relatively more secular way than the present government, since, the aftermath of 2002 TR's policy ruled by the government named as "new-ottoman" according to Taspinar (Taspinar, 2011). One of TR's general foreign policy was to establish a stable region around it. Onis argues that Turkey still has the financial capacity problem to support and implement many other programs. (Onis, 2011). Rising problems in Turkey, such as the "Syrian crisis" and the coup attempt declined Turkey's soft power after 2010 (Balci, 2019).

According to Aras and Taspinar, TR's Caucasus policy was shaped with two elements during JDP period, high political dialogue, economic interdependence, regional policy and peace and tolerance (Aras, 2009). Turkey favors development and stability in the South Caucasus including all three separate countries. New institutions in Caucasus were established carrying Turkish values and the main institutions in the region are, TIKA, TUSKON, DEIK. Mostly Turkey has economic and business ambition in the region. In terms of soft power, Turkish TV programs, TV series are well known in South Caucasus countries. On the other hand, Turkish religious issues are seen in all Muslim minorities of the South Caucasus (Balci, 2019).

### 3.2.4 Case study: Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan has a strategic location surrounded by potential regional players such as Russia, Iran and Turkey. Due to the country's soviet past, Russia is a dominant actor in South Caucasus, despite the invasion of Georgia in 2008, most countries in the region have good relations with Russia in South Caucasus (Gojajev, 2010). Unlike Iran and Russia, Turkey openly claims its military and economic alliance with Azerbaijan, and their alliance has been established on "the Brotherhood" (Asadov, 2009). Therefore, Culture was an important factor that Turkey was preoccupied within Azerbaijan with its language, religion and common traditional elements (Valiev, 2019). Different mutual programs, projects, or trainings were organized between these two countries (Aydin, 2002). Many Azerbaijani students are studying in Turkey and the abolition of the visa regime recently were also one of the achievements of good relations between these two countries. While Azerbaijan is Turkey's closest ally in the South Caucasus, it is also the closest ally of the entire Turkic geography due to its cultural and linguistic similarities (Çaman, 2011). "One nation, two states" is the main motive of these two states. Relations in many areas are very good, especially in economic areas with projects such as BTC, TAP and TANAP which affected the Turkish economy (Balci, 2019). Turkish soft power plays with the elements of Cultural, Regional and Economic instruments. And the most concrete result is Azerbaijan according to Aliyev (Aliyev, 2017). Because, among social and cultural relations, economic relations also play an important role. For instance, there are countable relations that Turkey and Azerbaijan signed new project known as Trans Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline project (TANAP) (Gojayev, 2010). TANAP is an initiative to transport Azerbaijani gas to the European border via Turkey and Georgia. This project paved the way for the relationship and cooperation that shaped the partnerships of the two countries. In general, Ankara's policy over Baku has been recorded as very good that Turkey has supported the country in the way of westernization because of its dependence from Russia. Moreover, on energy issues TRACECA is the program that Turkey supported Azerbaijani energy to transport to the EU market (TRACECA Passage). Furthermore, as a NATO member, Turkey has been providing military services to Azerbaijan for the security sector such as Military trainings, etc. (Robins, 1993). In fact, Turkey was the closest ally during the second Nagorno-Karabakh war between Azerbaijan and Armenia.

Overall, during the JDP period, Turkey established schools, TV channels and educational and cultural programs as a soft power provider to the country. Therefore, the Directed content analysis gave results that TR-AZ relations has always been in-line with ideological elements because mainly Turkey engages with elements of common culture such as language, tradition and religion. Therefore, those are codes in the selected Turkish soft power literature that resonate with the Colonial Frontier geo strategy (See Table, 1 and 5).

Turkey	
The Networked (Non)Border	
March	
The Colonial Frontier	X
Limes	

(Table 5) TR in CA and SC

## CHAPTER 4

### CONCLUSION

“Soft power” was explored by Joseph Nye in the early 1990s as new way to persuade international order with “soft tools” (Nye, 2002) and (geo) strategies coincided by William Walter to understand the nature of EU border strategies (Walter, 2004). In this work, the thesis combines two terms “soft power” and “(geo) strategies” in relation with EU and Turkey’s soft powers. The work sets out a more empirical and more concrete goal to gain a nuanced understanding of the approaches of the actors in two different geographies. As Nye argues that Soft power might be implemented in different dimensions such as economic, political and cultural spheres (Nye, 2004), thus, EU and Turkey have different practices of soft power implications in different areas with different (geo) strategies, according to research. Therefore, Directed Content Analyses on textual documents have found out the difference and similarities existing in EU and Turkey’s soft power geo strategies in Azerbaijan and in Turkmenistan. As the main goal of the thesis is first to determine soft power geo-strategies. In this section, the thesis will analyze and compare EU and Turkish soft power geo-strategies toward Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan. The thesis has used the Directed Content Analyses over web-based texts, academic books, journals and strategy papers in order to answer the main research question. Table 6, have been established empirically to see the similarities and differences of the soft power geo strategies of the two actors.

The soft powers of actors can change from time to time, and the aspects of domestic concerns and foreign policies can change the direction and strategies of soft power. Despite there was a decrease in Turkey's soft power due to military interventions or internal problems, for instance, a coup attempt and/or cross border military operations, and despite EU had a few declines in its soft power mechanism, but the soft power presence of the EU and Turkey from early 2000s have not changed a lot in Central Asia, and in South Caucasus. In fact, Turkey and EU both are new players in the region and don't have a long history in Central Asia and in South Caucasus (Efeğil, 2008). During the last two decades, Turkey has changed its soft power attributes with Turkic countries in the post-soviet sphere that Turkish government started close co-operations with South Caucasus and Central Asian countries with new foreign policy of JDP (Bal, 2000).



Many institutions of Turkey established in Central Asian and South Caucasus countries that TIKA, YUNUS EMRE Foundation are a few of them. Similarly, EU has adopted new soft power policies for Central Asian and South Caucasus countries aftermath of 2004 enlargement, where new institutions, cultural programs and projects have been set for close co-operation with the region (Nielsen, 2013). Therefore, EU and TR have employed their soft power strategies for better results and obviously, both players have different soft power models, and consequently, different strategies in the regions. As the objective of the thesis is to find out the differences and similarities of the employed (geo) strategies of the actors in the region, to provide a clear picture of the policies of actors with main codes, concepts and ideas by utilizing the William Walters geo strategies. Therefore, the theoretical framework of William Walters's geo-strategies allows us to see the differences and similarities of the geo-strategies of EU and Turkish soft power in Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan (See Table 6).

Among the four geo strategies, three geo strategies have been used by EU and Turkey towards Central Asia and South Caucasus. These are; Limes, March, and Colonial Frontier. As discussed above, Limes and March geo-strategies interpret the "outside" mostly as "problematic, threatening, and unwilling to expand", however, Colonial frontier geo-strategy is mostly "expansionist and aims at the transformation of the "outside"" (See table 1). Now, this section will explore which geo-strategies are used by which actors and where. Before presenting the analysis, an important emphasis should be reminded to avoid any misunderstanding of the concepts. The thesis follows Walter's geostrategic concepts and in the content it emphasizes the expansionist role of EU's and TR's policies which resonate with Colonial Frontier geo strategy. Here, the thesis highlights the concept of expansionism in a different and relatively limited manner. Because, Walter understands the expansionism as an attempt to transform and incorporate the other but not in a coercive and traditional manner because, the concept of expansionism is a broad political concept in IR literature. Therefore, in this thesis, "the expansionism" is not used in the traditional sense, instead it is used as "spreading the values to further cooperation", according to Walters' conceptual framework. Therefore, the result of the content analysis does not claim that EU and TR "expanding" to these countries, instead it argues that both are willing to spread their values. In fact, the article of Walter published in 2004 and the concept has not always been used as an active policy. Overall, the thesis uses the expansionism as one code of the Colonial Frontier geo strategy, in which, according to this research it has been implemented by EU and Turkey and does not judge EU's and TR's co-operative missions towards Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan.

This study aims to reveal how the EU as a peace project, a global economic giant and a conflict resolute, and Turkey, as a culturally close ally and regional power, follow soft power strategies for Central Asia and the South Caucasus. According to the content analysis applied on the selected documents of EU soft power in Central Asia and South Caucasus, initial key elements are; “Human Rights, Rule of Law, and Good governance”, which resonated particularly with a "Transferring values" oriented with Colonial Frontier geo-strategy (See Table. 1). Equally, strategy papers have revealed the key elements as “security structures, (police/armed forces) and conflict prevention (EU Strategy for Central Asia, 2007). Furthermore, in the strategy paper, the Afghanistan problem was noted as follows; “The threats to human security partly linked to the security problems of neighboring countries such as Afghanistan and the risks of destabilization and conflict must be placed at the very core of the EU's approach to Central Asia” (EU Strategy for Central Asia, 2007). In parallel, EaP noted in the following notes for South Caucasus: “Boosting security cooperation, notably to tackle organized crime, support conflict resolution, and counter new cybersecurity threats” (EAP, 2020). Therefore, other key Elements of EU in readings are; security, safety, rule of law, which means EU sees “outside as problematic” and wants to be “away from threat “and follows “defensive” policies that clearly resonated with March and limes geo strategy in Central Asia and South Caucasus (See table 1). In this perspective, a colonial frontier geo-strategy signals EU’s obvious engagement towards the regions, because the key concepts and the codes show that EU believes in the transformative potential of the regions, and ultimately entails Walter’s concept of expansionism. Thus, in regard to case countries, the emergence of a colonial frontier geo-strategy assigned with the continued European ambitions towards Central Asia and South Caucasus as it is evident to the EU of further cooperation. Thus, while the key elements of content analysis over the EU readings have been matched with limes and march geo-strategy (seeing outside as unstable and as being away from the threats). Rest of the key elements of Human rights, rule of law is in-line with the colonial frontier geo-strategy with most frequent words in the selected readings.

Content analysis of the interpretation of the main works are; Efeğil, E. (2008). “Turkish AK Party’s Central Asia and Caucasus policies: critiques and suggestions”, Bal, I. (2017). “Turkey's Relations with the West and the Turkic Republics: The rise and fall of the ‘Turkish Model’” Bülent, A. R. A. S. (2009). “Davutoğlu era in Turkish foreign policy”, Çaman, M. E., & Akyurt, M. A. (2011). “The Caucasus and Central Asia in Turkish Foreign policy: The time has come for a new regional policy”. These’re the texts the Directed content analysis have applied and main key elements and key concepts on Turkish soft power in Azerbaijan and

Turkmenistan are; “tradition”, “language” and “religion”. That meant Colonial Frontier has been the main geo strategy for Turkey to promote its ambitions with common elements towards Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan. As noted above, “transferring values” is one of the purposes of colonial frontier geo strategy (See table 1). Therefore, Turkey has been staying mostly on colonial frontier geo strategy in Central Asia and in South Caucasus. As discussed above, Turkey's soft power geo strategies are ideologically positioned to unite the “Turkic world” in the region (Çaman, 2009) and highlights the cultural and historical background in Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan. JDP’s new foreign policy adopted during Davutoglu’s PM period was the new foreign policy of Turkey and “Neo-ottoman” emphasis of Turkey is seen in this foreign policy (Davutoglu, 2002). However, EU’s attitude in Central Asia and in South Caucasus also might adopt Colonial Frontier geo-strategy in which EU hopes to disperse its values towards the countries which also criticizes that EU uses certain types of policies that are different in nature so that mostly EU sees obstacles to attain tangible results in Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan.

Comparing with TR soft power exercise in the selected countries, most visible difference is EU followed protective defensive geo-strategies in the region. EU has its soft power limits according to research in which EU has mostly adopted Limes and March geo-strategies but Turkey stays Colonial Frontiers, where it might be seen that TR in Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan spread its cultural, traditional values as “Colonial frontier” geo-strategy. As shown, EU has less influence in the sense of Cultural Diplomacy comparing with Turkey. In fact, both have the cultural factors in the soft power strategies whereas EU’s soft power elements pose more in a social sense and partnership framework and EU also reveals its cultural ambitions with the economic potential that Colonial frontier geo strategy might be the most visible similarity between those two-regional actors (See Table 3). Differences and similarities might vary in different fields and can change from time to time with adopting different geo strategies. Mainly EU strategy towards CA follows the instructions set in 2007, because, the region is complex with other regional actors, illegal migration and instability around the borders (EU strategy, 2007). Indeed, in terms of democratic values, there are high human rights violations in both countries, moreover, China and Russia mainly involved with tangible or hard elements such as economic hegemony or military acts (Policy Department, 2016). However, Brussels confirmed that it had priority to promote democratic reforms in Central Asia (Policy department, 2016). Therefore, another visible difference is the economic potential of EU who is the largest investor in both, Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan that promotes CD tools with “Colonial Frontier” geo strategy. In fact, Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan are not holistic, thus

they do not have equal policies from the EU's perception. As a matter of the fact, both Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan have rejected EU's allegations regarding human rights violations. Azerbaijan was included in the ENP in 2006 after the Color revolutions took place in Georgia and Ukraine. Many reforms have been carried out in the EU's Azerbaijan Action plan (EU-Azerbaijan, Action plan 2017). Many non-governmental organizations of Azerbaijan were affiliated with ENP. However, Turkmenistan from EU's perception has certain limits comparing with Azerbaijan. First, major difference is Turkmenistan remained the only country in post-soviet sphere who did not ratify PCA. In 2009 EP set several points for Turkmenistan to ratify PCA. In these points; release of political prisoners, allowing intention monitoring mechanism including non-governmental organizations such as Red cross and other international organizations to be independent, were not upheld (EU-Turkmenistan relations, 2017). Moreover, EU commission reiterated that Human rights must be part of the mutual dialogue between EU and Turkmenistan (Policy department, 2016). Therefore, the case countries cannot be in the same position from the strategies of EU.

However, in Turkey's soft power, those instruments are not seen in the soft power elements. Turkey use cultural diplomacy within the framework of soft power, where Azerbaijan, a close ally of the Turkic union, and Turkmenistan, which is a part of the "Turkic union" or at least observer in the "Turkic council", accept their cultural cooperation with the Republic of Turkey. Thus, according to research, Language, religious and cultural ties with Turkey, they have more influence than EU's values. However, it was seen that EU has the same role with Turkey that both wish to transfer its core values in the region, although assets and policies quite differ from each other. There are determinants of each actors' policies, for example, EU action plan exercises to give a reform to Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan however TIKA, YUNUS EMRE foundation also proves Turkey's soft power engagement in Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan. In fact, Turkey's relations with Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan is not the same where Turkey claims close alliance with Azerbaijan however this is not the case with Turkmenistan. In addition, Neutrality doctrine of Turkmenistan eludes the country to have close allies. In fact, Turkmenistan was not joined in the Turkic council but took place as an "observer position". However, this research content analysis has discovered that Turkey has employed similar elements towards Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan in the framework of the "the codes of the geo strategies". That is why, research argues that the most visible difference is the "Colonial frontier" geo strategy mostly used by Turkey towards Central Asia and South Caucasus, but least used by EU to Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan. Instead EU used "Limes" and "March"

geo strategies. However, due to the fact that regional actors such as China and Russia have expanded their spheres of influence in these regions, these are obstacles that the EU may encounter in the implementation of economic reforms in countries. Therefore, Limes and March geo-strategies, which emphasize the idea that the EU cares about security issues and tries to stay away from any external threat can be seen in the EU's soft power geo-strategies. Finally, the geo-strategies of each actor's soft power are debatable between the EU and Turkey. EU's policy may be stable in the long run as it has been so far, but many changes in Turkey's domestic policies may change the direction of Turkey's soft power applications. Therefore, Brussels may see Moscow and Beijing as threats to its security and this might be a reason why soft power of EU is criticized for non-functionality of programs. Overall, finding of the study is EU employs colonial frontier, lime and march geo strategies in Central Asia and South Caucasus but, Turkey employs only Colonial Frontier geo strategy. Therefore, according to Walter's conceptual framework (2004) EU has been as defensive and protective as it has been expansionist which means that EU cares for itself by protecting and securing its values such as democracy and rule of law and expansionist as "spreading of values" such as good governance, Human rights, Rule of law for further co-operation, while Turkey followed only Colonial Frontier geo strategy in the regions which clearly resonate Turkey's attempt of transferring values in the way of establishing common identity and enabling free movement of goods and services to increase mutual relations through common characteristics such as language, tradition and religion.

	EU	Turkey
The Networked (Non)Border		
March	X	
The Colonial Frontier	X	X
Limes	X	

(Table 6) Similarities and Differences of EU and TR (geo) strategies in CA and SC

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