



PhD thesis

**Comparative analysis of the UK, Russian, and Turkish soft power
in the education sector of the Kyrgyz Republic from 2000 to 2021
Kojomkulova, B.**

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Comparative analysis of the UK, Russian, and Turkish soft power in the education
sector of the Kyrgyz Republic from 2000 to 2021.

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M00683591

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Abstract

Central Asia has been a geopolitical hotspot for centuries, with Britain and Russia engaging in a rivalry known as the 'Great Game' during the 19th and early 20th centuries. This region's strategic location and abundant resources make it a prime location for geopolitical interests, with former Soviet republics offering access to the Black and Caspian Seas. Today, competition extends beyond military and political affairs, including economic interactions, cultural exchanges, and humanitarian cooperation. Major players like the USA, China, and Turkey are now involved in this rivalry. However, scholars and policymakers recognize the need for a shift in diplomatic approaches and international relations in light of the changing political landscape in the 2000s. They have been exploring the concept of soft power to attract and persuade others to serve the region's interests. This research delves into the concept of soft power in Kyrgyzstan, a small republic caught in the crossfire of the 'New Great Game' among major powers. Despite its size, Kyrgyzstan has actively pursued a multi-vector policy and has not been passive in the power struggle between major countries. The study uses the Gramscian theory of cultural hegemony to analyse the soft power exerted by Russia, Britain, and Turkey towards Kyrgyzstan from 2000 to 2021, focusing on their financial and institutional investments. The research tests the hypothesis that despite increasing Turkish and British investment, Russia remains dominant in Kyrgyzstan's educational sector due to historical, economic, and political factors. Additionally, Russia's influence in the country is expected to remain strong due to the Soviet legacy, which created a closer integration process between Kyrgyzstan and Russia than with other states outside the region. One of the significant sources of integration is labour migrants, where the Republic received more financial assistance than the total official aid from regional donors.

To my lovely family, to Mama, Papa and Amantur.

I want to thank my family for the love and guidance I have received throughout my life. I am incredibly grateful to my mom, who has always believed in me and provided unconditional love and encouragement. I am also grateful to my father for his moral and financial support, allowing me to pursue my research. Also, I want to express my love and appreciation for my brother, Amantur. He has been there for me as a constant and reliable pillar of strength.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- **AKDN** The Aga Khan Development Network
- **BC** British Council
- **BRICS** is acronym for Brazil, India, China, Russia, and South Africa
- **BSC** British Study Centers
- **CCRCK** Coordinating Council of Russian Compatriots in Kyrgyzstan
- **CIS** Cambridge International School in Bishkek
- **CIS** Commonwealth of Independent States
- **CSTO** Collective Security Treaty Organization
- **DFID** Department for International Development
- **EAEU** Eurasian Economic Union
- **EEU** Eurasian Economic Union
- **EurAsEC** Eurasian Economic Community
- **FCO** the Foreign and Commonwealth Office
- **IDA** International Development Assistance
- **IHC** International Humanitarian Cooperation
- **IR** International Relations
- **JDP/AKP** Justice and Development Party
- **KRSU** Kyrgyz- Russian Slavic University
- **KTMU** Kyrgyz-Turkish Manas University
- **MOD** Ministry of Defence
- **OTS** Organization of Turkic States
- **RCSC** Russian Centre of Science and Culture
- **RIC forum** Russia, India, China
- **ROC** Russian Orthodox Church
- **Rossotrudnichestvo** Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States Affairs, Compatriots Living Abroad, and International Humanitarian Cooperation
- **RSSU** The Russian State Social University branch in the city of Osh
- **SCO** Shanghai Cooperation Organisation
- **SP** Soft power
- **SRIS** Silk Road International School
- **TIKA** Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency
- **TURKSOY** The International Organization of Turkic Culture
- **TDV** Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı (Foundation)
- **UNDP** United Nations Development Programme
- **USSR** Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

Chapter 1.

Introduction and Methodology

1.1 Background and overview

The Central Asian region is of great strategic importance as it is located along the ancient trade route known as the 'Silk Road'. For centuries, this region has played a crucial role in connecting the rapidly developing regions of East Asia and Western Europe, enabling the exchange of goods, ideas, and culture. Moreover, the region is further enhanced by the transcontinental Eurasian highway, which makes it a critical transit hub linking different parts of the world. This has attracted the interest of numerous international actors, drawn to the region's global connectivity, dynamic internal politics, and abundant resources. However, the September 11 attacks and the geopolitical changes in the new millennium have transformed the landscape, with the emergence of new powerful players and a heightened focus on security concerns. Historically, Russia has maintained dominance in Central Asia due to its Imperial and Soviet legacy. However, the region has witnessed a diversification of interests, with Turkey's burgeoning economic and cultural ties and the UK's pursuit of alternative energy sources. These countries have been drawn to Central Asia for various geopolitical reasons, including energy security, regional stability, and influence. The competition between Russia and Turkey, particularly in countries like Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, has generated tensions and raised concerns over potential power struggles. On the other hand, the UK's involvement in to be driven by economic opportunities, as well as a desire to counterbalance Russia's dominant presence in the region. This complex interplay between international actors in Central Asia highlights the region's significance and highlights the need for careful consideration and collaboration to ensure stability and sustainable development. However, traditional means of power, such as military force and economic sanctions, have proven to be less effective since the beginning of the new millennium until Russia started using its hard power in Ukraine in February 2022. This has led to a shift towards the use of soft power tactics by major powers in exerting influence. Thus, the thesis will delve into the use of soft power strategies by Turkey, Russia, and the UK in Kyrgyzstan to explore how their educational programs have served as soft power tools in the Republic from 2000 to 2021.

Trends in Cultural Education in Kyrgyzstan.

Kyrgyzstan, chosen as an example of this study, and its unique geopolitical position, combined with the weakness of its state, the corruption of elites, and its multi-vector nature, has become an ideal platform for using soft power. Despite experiencing multiple national revolutions and changes in leadership over the past 30 years, the country has not seen significant progress due to a lack of cohesive direction- "it eventually leads to the state's weakening" (Kozhemjakin, 2016, p 103). In particular, for the last three decades, Kyrgyzstan's educational system has significantly transformed from the centralized Soviet-style model to a more Western one with the establishment of new institutions, schools, and exchange programs and the restructuring of existing ones by the funding provided from regional donors as Russia, Turkey, the UK, USA and China.

Thus, the 2000s saw the rapid 'growing nationalism' among Kyrgyz people (Dowell, 2016) - "They made us think that we were Russian, that our capital was in Moscow and our writers were Pushkin and Lermontov" ¹ - was 'shaking' status of the Russian language in the Republic during the last two decades and helped to the Turkish government successfully used their vector of the Turkic brotherhood based on shared Muslim religious and cultural values. Despite this, the Russian language is still recognized as official and enshrined in the Constitution of Kyrgyzstan. The origins of this can be traced back to the time of the Soviet and Tsarist eras. Thus, during the Soviet era, significant reforms were implemented that had a lasting impact on modern Kyrgyzstan. These included the establishment of a standardized curriculum, the creation of a network of schools, and the promotion of Russian as the language of instruction. As a result, a segment of the intelligentsia adopted a Slavic perspective on the issue of national self-determination, and they have become a powerful force in modern Kyrgyz society. Even today, over 65% of the population speaks and studies Russian, indicating the continued influence of Russian culture on the country. However, there have been some changes to its special status since 2000. Thus, in 2011, President A. Atambayev aimed to strengthen ties with Russia by joining the Customs Union. Nevertheless, the Kyrgyz government, in collaboration with the

¹ Trends in cultural education in Kyrgyzstan, 2016. Available at: <https://geohistory.today/trends-cultural-education-kyrgyzstan/> (accessed: 13.01.2023)

Turkish-Kyrgyz University 'Manas', opted to transfer higher education to the Kyrgyz language in 2013, with financial backing from Turkey. Also, in the same year, the Turkic Council organization proposed the idea of transitioning all Turkic states to a unified Turkic alphabet. Fast forward to 2023, the first meeting of the "Common Alphabet Commission" of the Organization of Turkic States is expected to occur in Kyrgyzstan to facilitate this transition. Following this, the Jogorku Kenesh, the unicameral parliament of Kyrgyzstan, passed the first reading of the constitutional law "On the state language of the Kyrgyz Republic"² on January 18, 2023, officially establishing Kyrgyz as the sole state language and Russian as an official language. Consequently, the Russian language is now losing ground in Kyrgyzstan. Currently, Turkish universities have established themselves as leaders in providing education in Kyrgyzstan. The younger generation now has the option to learn a foreign language such as English, Turkish, or Chinese. However, the Russian language is the least popular choice among the available options.

On the other hand, the Russian contribution was limited to creating the Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University (KRSU), which, if it competed with Turkish and American universities, was only in the first years of operation. Moreover, the usage of the Russian language in Kyrgyzstan has been significantly impacted by the decreasing number of Russians in the country over the past 30 years. The number of people who speak Russian has dropped from one million to 341,237³, causing a shift away from Russian in many rural areas where it used to be the primary language. While there has been a recent surge in the popularity of the Russian language in rural schools due to labour migration to Russia and the availability of educational and employment opportunities, however, the activities of Rossotrudnichestvo, an organization that promotes the integration of Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States, in the sector has been relatively small.

Also, there has been a marked shift towards the use of the English language since 2015 in Kyrgyz education system, particularly in the more prominent private schools such as Oxford and Cambridge. This has involved an orientation to a Western liberal model of education. The British Council has supported this trend through their

² Korotkova, E. (2023). Parlament Kyrgyzstana prinimaet zakon o "yazyke titulnogo naroda". Available at: <https://www.mk.kg/social/2023/01/20/parlament-kyrgyzstana-prinimaet-zakon-o-yazyke-titulnogo-naroda.html> (accessed:14.01.2023)

³ National Statistical Committee of Kyrgyzstan. Available at: <http://www.stat.kg/en/pendata/category/312/> (accessed 26.06.2023)

'Creative Spark' programme (British Council report, 2022), which has seen the signing of three partnership projects that cover ten universities in the capital Bishkek and other regions of Kyrgyzstan⁴. More broadly, the British Council has also focused on developing creative entrepreneurship amongst the youth of Kyrgyzstan through the organisation of annual festivals of creative industries, as well as through the provision of training modules, boot camps and creative talks.

Thus, my thesis aims to comparatively analyse the UK, Russian, and Turkish soft power activities in the education sector of the Kyrgyz Republic. Specifically, it focuses on exploring how their educational programmes have served as a soft power tool in the Republic from 2000 to 2021. This analysis aims to bridge *a gap in unexplored empirical research* by examining how these three major powers' activities comparatively work in the Republic. Building on existing literature on the concept of soft power and Nye's (1990, 2004, 2011) original definition of soft power where 'power can be exercised through attraction and persuasion rather than coercion and force' - the thesis suggests considering the concept of soft power through *the Gramscian theory of cultural hegemony* as the analytical framework of this study. Thus, the research addresses the rudimentary questions - To what extent do the three major powers invest in the educational sector of Kyrgyzstan? What is the strategic and geopolitical significance of the Central Asia region for the Major Powers? To this end, I am going to operationalise Gramscian theory of cultural hegemony and apply it to the empirical data of the three separate case studies – 1) Rossotrudnichestvo and how Russia implements soft power through educational channels in the Kyrgyz Republic from 2000-2021; 2) TİKA and how Turkey implements soft power through educational channels in the Kyrgyz Republic from 2000-2021; 3) British Council and how Britain implements soft power through educational channels in the Kyrgyz Republic from 2000-2021. The selected case studies aim to unpack the financial and institutional investment of the three major powers in the educational sector of Kyrgyzstan from 2000 to 2021, as well as the number of government quotas allocated to the Kyrgyz Republic by the three major powers annually.

Answering these case studies questions using Gramscian theory of cultural hegemony and its concept of 'common sense', where 'power can be gained by having a strong presence in public discourse and convincing people that a majority holds similar beliefs

⁴ The British Council in Kazakhstan has issued an official response to the researcher regarding the report titled "British Council-Creative Spark in Kyrgyzstan 2022."

and values' (Gramsci's Prison Notebook, 1971, pp.236-238). On the other hand, taking Joseph Nye's soft power (1990, 2004,2011), that is based on persuasion rather than the use of force to influence the behaviour and beliefs of others - the thesis suggests analyse empirical data of the soft power activities of the UK, Russia and Turkey as a form of cultural hegemony (Robinson, 2004; Gingrich,2010; Semenova,2015; Cox,1983) and 'a form of hegemonic co-optation', in which dominant class attempts to co-opt and control the discourse by creating a false sense of consensus" (Hobson, 2001). I argue that Nye's soft power, which relies on cultural and social institutions like education, language, creative industries, and religion (Keane,1990; Hobsbawm,1990), is a 'tool of domination and control' used by the dominant powers to maintain their interest through their educational channels. Particularly, it argues that Russia, Turkey, and Britain are interested in Central Asia and are working to increase their influence in the region. While Russia is hoping to maintain the influence of the Soviet Union in Kyrgyzstan, Turkey's Big Turan Policy – developed by Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu in 2009 – is increasing its historical connections with the Turkic-speaking nations of Big Turan (Landau, 2010) – involves a variety of efforts, including cultural, economic, and political collaboration, and is met with a geopolitical rivalry between Russia and Britain in Central Asia.

My personal educational background, including Turkish lyceum, a bachelor's degree in Moscow, and current studies in the UK, has inspired me to delve deeper into the concept of soft power and to know how different countries implement their educational policies and activities in Kyrgyzstan. Thus, the thesis will focus on the three major powers' soft power policies exercised through their respective central organisations in Kyrgyzstan: Rossotrudnichestvo, the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Centre (TIKA) and the British Council.

Rossotrudnichestvo, an organisation that began its history as the All-Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries in 1925, continued since 1958 as the Union of Soviet Societies for Friendship and Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, '*Roszarubezhtsent*' in 1994 and since 2008 became the Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States, compatriots living abroad and international humanitarian cooperation (see the Chart of Agency in the appendices). The Agency has been working in Kyrgyzstan since 2007. Since 2011, it has been carrying out the Federal Target Program 'Russian Language' with the support of the Russkiy Mir Foundation.

The Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA), which falls under the Office of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey, was established in 1992 in response to the fall of the Soviet Union and the Eastern European Socialist Block⁵ (see the Chart of Agency in the appendices). With the intention of providing technical assistance to developing countries, TIKA coordinates numerous projects and programs aimed towards strengthening economic, trade, technological, cultural, educational, and social development connections between Turkey and CIS countries. For over 30 years, TIKA has been providing robust infrastructure and human resources support to Kyrgyzstan through assistance in the form of 1000+ projects⁶. Additionally, the Agency has facilitated training programmes for professionals such as Journalists, Doctors, Diplomats and Police Officers since opening its first international office there in 1993. In fact, TIKA's activities in Kyrgyzstan replaced the absence of the Yunus Emre Foundation – Turkey's leading language and culture institute.

Established in 1934 as the British Committee for Relations with other countries, the British Council was created by the UK government in the early 1940s in response to the growing political extremism of Communism in Russia and Fascism in Germany, Italy, and Spain⁷. The British Council is an executive non-departmental public body whose primary goal is to promote cultural relations between the UK and other countries, broaden knowledge of the English language and foster educational cooperation between the UK and other countries (see the 'Royal Chart of Organization' in appendices). Despite not having an office in Kyrgyzstan, the British Council has implemented its educational programs through its Kazakhstan office as part of the 'Wider Europe' scheme, which began in 1994.

Through these case studies of Turkey's, Russia's, and the UK's soft power activities, I will analyse their soft power strategies over the past 21 years, during which they have made significant progress in cooperation with the Republic. Within the chosen time for

⁵ On 25 December 1991, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) dissolved, which resulted in many countries in Central Asia and Caucasus gaining their independence. Having a common language and a shared social memory and culture with these countries, which are comprised of Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, and Kyrgyzstan, paved the way for the resurgence of dual and regional relations with them. Turkey and the countries in Central Asia consider themselves as one nation containing different countries, and our foreign politics displayed a multilateral and proactive understanding in the region. Our relations with the Turkish speaking countries have become a permanent focus for Turkey and this focus gained in importance in the most recent 20 years of global politics. See more information on the official website of TIKA. Available at: https://www.tika.gov.tr/en/page/about_us-14650 (accessed:12.06.2023)

⁶ TIKA continues to support the development of Kyrgyzstan. Available at: https://www.tika.gov.tr/en/news/tika_continues_to_support_the_development_of_kyrgyzstan-74931 (accessed: 12.06.2023)

⁷ British Council's history. Available at: <https://www.britishcouncil.org/about-us/history> (accessed: 26.01.2023)

analysis, which are the past 21 years, Russia and Turkey have undergone a process of formalising and institutionalising their soft power strategies. Thus, in Turkey, the term 'soft power' first appeared in 2007-2008 when then-Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu discussed 'unseen soft power' linked to the country's mediatory activities in the region and officially declared that NGOs should be considered an integral part of Turkey's foreign policy (Davutoğlu, 2008, p.84). Later, in 2010, the Office of Public Diplomacy was established under the Prime Minister's Office to improve the coordination of soft power institutions in Turkey. The Turkish Office of Public Diplomacy was established in collaboration between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in 2011 (Kalin, 2011, pp. 7–8). Thus, since coming into power in 2002, the AKP has employed a soft power strategy, resulting in the creation of new organisations and the revitalisation of existing ones. These include the Prime Minister's Office's Office of Public Diplomacy, the Turkish Red Crescent (Kizilay), the Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA), the Yunus Emre Foundations, TRT, and the Department for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (Yurtdışı Türkler ve Akraba Topluluklar Başkanlığı). In 2008, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov stressed the significance of implementing soft power⁸, which was later incorporated into the 2013 Russian Federation Foreign Policy Concept. As a result, the concept originated in the context of the Kremlin's increasingly assertive policies in the post-Soviet space, commonly referred to as the 'near abroad'. Moscow aimed to strengthen its influence over its perceived compatriots, leading to the introduction of the 'Russian World' concept. This concept encompassed Russian speakers outside Russia and was integral to an initial soft power strategy (Sergunin&Karabeshkin, 2015; Kudors, 2010, Conley, 2011). During this time, Rossotrudnichestvo was established amidst a shift from Greater Europe to Greater Eurasia (Suslov, 2015), establishing several parallel funds, such as

⁸ Lavrov, S. (2008) 'Interview', *Rossiyskaya gazeta*, 31 October (in Russian). In 2008 the Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov (2008) commented: "Nowadays the growing role is played by the so-called 'soft power' – an ability to affect the environment through civilisational, humanitarian, cultural, foreign policy, and other forms of attractiveness. I believe that the whole grammar of our diverse links with compatriots should be constructed precisely with account of these factors".

Gorchakov Fund, Russkiy Mir, Russian Centers and Cabinets of the Russian World (RCSC).

Notably, the UK's interaction with Kyrgyzstan before 2015 was primarily limited to security cooperation and border conflicts. The Department for International Development (DFID) has carried out most British activities in the Republic since its opening in 1997, as the activities of British embassies in cultural cooperation are considered a priority for those countries already covered by British Council projects. However, the UK's policy shifted to a 'creative economy' approach since 2015, allowing for a noticeable rise in the amount of collaboration and the advancement of British influence through soft power tactics, such as the implementation of Oxford and Cambridge affiliated schools and the British Study Centre. Thus, the period between 2000 and 2021 can be considered a crucial juncture in using soft power in Kyrgyzstan, with Turkey and Russia instituting their strategies and the UK vigorously implementing theirs since 2015.

In this 'rival' context of Kyrgyzstan's transition period from the turn of the new millennium to 2021, Russia has sought to retain its presence in the region by engaging its Russian-speaking constituency, leveraging its Soviet heritage and the 'russification' of the region. The UK, in contrast, has forged an understanding with Kyrgyzstan's notably youthful population via a variety of innovative and creative programs. Turkey, however, has taken a different approach, leveraging its soft power by emphasizing the importance of education in order to facilitate educational opportunities that have fallen to the wayside since the collapse of the Soviet Union's public education system. Turkey has promoted a range of institutions, from the former Sebat network of 22 lyceums, the international school Silk Road, the Ataturk Ala-Too University and Turkish-Kyrgyz University Manas, to provide high-quality education that was formerly provided by the Soviet Union. Additionally, Turkey has supported charitable and religious organizations to promote the idea of Turkic brotherhood based on Muslim traditions. For example, the Turkish agency TIKa, through the Turkish Foundation for Religious Affairs initiative -Diyanet, completed the construction of the Bishkek Central Mosque in 2016, the largest mosque in Central Asia. This was in line with the religious beliefs of the majority of Kyrgyzstan's population, with 86% identifying as Sunni Muslims.

Thus, the thesis will compare and contrast the role of identity -Soviet, Islamic and Liberal educational and exchange programs of the three major powers in Kyrgyzstan and its implication for the Republic. Furthermore, the research aims to uncover why, despite the Turkish and British having systematically employed advantages, they are not superseding Russian soft power in Kyrgyzstan. By examining these questions, the study will provide insight into Turkish, Russian and UK soft power activities in Kyrgyzstan from 2000 to 2021. Thus, the study's first part delves into the concept of soft power and its application in the foreign policy philosophies of Turkey, Russia, and the UK. Secondly, I will analyse how the Soviet Legacy has influenced Kyrgyzstan's educational institutions and culture and how this impacts the country's current policies. Furthermore, the thesis will analyse the role of religion, specifically Islam, in the relationships between Turkic countries, focusing on Turkey. Furthermore, I will compare the activities of Rossotrudnichestvo, TIKa, and the British Council in Kyrgyzstan from 2000 to 2021. Finally, I will discuss the data obtained in a comparative manner, and provide insights into the current strategies of Turkey, Russia, and the UK in Kyrgyzstan. In doing so, the study will examine the twenty-one years of activities of Russia, Turkey and the UK in Kyrgyzstan and compile empirical data of their activities in the education sector of the republic prior to the 24th of February 2022, when Russia had started using its hard power.

The practical implications of the research results are twofold. Firstly, the data obtained can be used to inform higher educational institutions in Russia, the UK, Kyrgyzstan, Turkey, and other CIS countries. Secondly, the data can be used to develop, implement, and monitor educational initiatives that will ensure the quality of higher education in Kyrgyzstan, as well as to design international educational collaboration projects that can benefit from the resources of all the participating countries.

To conduct a thorough analysis of the three case studies, the thesis will collect data and information from various sources, including official documents, reports, and national concepts from the three major powers involved, which I evaluated and classified into five distinct groups. Firstly, they encompass official statements and documents from the relevant Central Asian states, the United Kingdom, Russia, and Turkey. Secondly, purposeful reports and key publications by expert and analytical centres, providing regular soft power ratings of countries, country brand indices, and other pertinent material. Thirdly, speeches and interviews given by prominent leaders, foreign ministers, and government officials are available on various websites, including

those operated by political parties, public organizations, the media, and the press. Fourthly, a wealth of statistical data and related information from the UK and the European Union, Russia, and Turkey. Finally, international journals and magazines, academic websites, scientific articles, blogs, and social networks feature prominently in the analysis.

In the upcoming subchapter, I will explain my approach and the specific methods and techniques used to gather and analyze the data in detail.

1.2 Methodology.

Case study approach.

The overall research question for the dissertation asks what the soft power of Russia, Turkey, and the UK look like when analyzing educational programs in Kyrgyzstan. This study focuses on soft power policy exerted by Russia, Turkey, and the UK through their respective institutions, namely Rossotrudnichestvo, TIKa, and the British Council in Kyrgyzstan. The selected case studies are relevant to the literature on soft power by expanding an empirical database and pertinent to soft power literature.

Thus, Russia, with its historical connections to soft power and hegemony through both the Tsarist and Soviet eras, provides valuable insights into its contemporary practices. On the other hand, Turkey explores the concept of Big Turkism, which has influenced its soft power strategies and outreach efforts in the region (Huntington, 1996). The UK, with its long-standing presence in Central Asia since the 19th and 20th centuries and its ongoing geopolitical rivalry with Russia, commonly referred to as the 'Great Game,' presents a unique perspective (Larrabee, 2010). Examining these cases will shed light on their cultural, social, and economic impacts on exploring historical and geopolitical events that have shaped the region.

Answering these questions, as I acknowledge in Chapter Two, it is not possible to measure accurately in an empiricist way a volatile and diffuse concept such as soft power - "It is notoriously difficult to measure soft power, let alone quantify its effects" (Mearsheimer, 2017, p.12). Guetterman and Fetters (2018) identify that case study integrates well with mixed methods, which seeks a more complete understanding through the integration of qualitative and quantitative research. My thesis engages

with this methodological debate and will unfold how soft power works in three specific case studies. Thus, the case study is an in-depth and comprehensive examination of contextual factors that allow for the study of the complexities of educational programs of major powers. The case study approach allows for examining relationships and interdependencies that characterise a particular situation, providing valuable insight into the strategies countries and actors use to achieve their goals. As George and Bennette (2005) highlight, this method of inquiry through the exploration of historical events allows for the attainment of conceptual validity, offering a detailed consideration of contextual factors. Gerring (2004) defines a case study as an in-depth study of a single case to disseminate a more comprehensive understanding of similar cases. This approach then provides an intermediary step from qualitatively derived contexts to general patterns. Miles and Huberman (1994) characterize a case study as a phenomenon that is "limited by a situation (context)". George (2004) further explains that "case" in such regards refers to "a particular phenomenon limited in space (for example, a nation-state)" indicated within a specific time frame or over a more extended period. It is clear, therefore, that the case study methodology offers an in-depth and comprehensive examination of the educational programs of the major powers, allowing for an understanding of their complexities.

In order to fully comprehend and analyse the complexities of educational programs of major powers, a case study approach is employed. This approach involves examining the contextual factors that influence these programs, thereby providing valuable insights into the strategies used by countries and actors to achieve their educational goals. As I noted above the case study integrates well with mixed methods (Guetterman& Fetters, 2018) which seeks a more complete understanding through the integration of qualitative and quantitative research. Such research design first collects and analyses the quantitative data and then the qualitative data in two sequential stages or phases within one research or study (Tashakkori& Teddlie, 2010; Venkatesh, Brown&Bala, 2013). The rationale for using this research design is that it affords an integrative and rigorous data analysis from both quantitative and qualitative research methods. George and Bennett (2005) state that the case study method is well-suited to addressing the research question on two counts: First, it allows for a high level of conceptual validity. As the qualitative analysis tends to answer questions 'why' and 'how', it is more suitable in this thesis, mainly because there is no final definition of how to measure soft power. Reus-Smit and Snidal (2008) argue that qualitative

methods are essential for understanding the motivations and decision-making processes of actors in international relations. Weber (1978) notes that combining quantitative and qualitative methods can help researchers develop more effective strategies for responding to international issues and crises. Thus, using a case study with a mixed-methods approach is a viable research strategy to examine the concept of soft power. This type of research provides a comprehensive and holistic approach to understanding the role of soft power in international relations, as it allows for an examination of the multiple factors influencing the successful implementation of soft power. The combination of quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis techniques (Musingarabwi & Stralin, 2018) enables a more in-depth analysis of the subject, providing greater insight into the dynamics underlying soft power. Additionally, this approach offers the potential for a greater level of generalizability, creating the possibility for cross-case comparisons and the potential to develop more robust theories. The case study approach is therefore an effective tool for furthering the analysis of soft power and its implications on the international system.

Thus, given my research's theoretical orientation, I place emphasis on three major power's specific educational organizations and their policies. Nye himself (2004) suggested the direct and indirect methods for measuring soft power. He argues that measuring the extent of a country's soft power was essential for understanding its ability to influence international relations. The direct method is a quantitative approach that measures the number of activities or recourses that contribute to a country's soft power. It includes the number of foreign aid programs, international treaties, or cultural exports. The indirect method is a qualitative approach that looks at how a country's policies and activities are perceived by other countries or international organizations. It includes the number of international awards a country received or how favourably a country's policies are viewed by international community. This research focuses on the first type of soft power. Working with the official documents based on the direct method, which I divided into five groups (further) will allow a more understanding how foreign policy of the three major power fits their soft power philosophy. While the quantitative part of this study will look at the number of quotas that are given to Kyrgyz students and how much the three Major Powers invest financially and institutionally in educational projects. The outcome of the second qualitative round might confirm the early findings from the first round of data collection.

In conducting a qualitative study, official documents from public authorities in Great Britain, Russia, and Turkey will serve as the primary sources of evidence. These sources can be broadly categorized into five groups, each of which will contribute to the overall analysis of political discourse. The first group consists of various strategies and plans from key ministries and departments, including work plans, foreign policy concepts, reports, and strategic reviews from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Commonwealth Affairs, Ministry of Defence, Department of International Development, Ministry of Business, Innovation and Training, and the special committee of the House of Lords on soft power. These documents, referred to as "political discourse" by Dijk (1997), represent the text and talk of professional or political institutions and will be instrumental in advancing our understanding of the political concept. While most of these documents are available in English, I possess the necessary language skills to read and work with them in Russian and Turkish without the need for translation. Ultimately, this research focuses on political discourse analysis, with a particular emphasis on the political concept.

The sources can be classified into five groups. The first group consists of official statements and documents that are issued by the Central Asian states, the British, Russian, and Turkish institutions. The second group includes reports and key publications from expert and analytical centres. These reports regularly publish soft power ratings of countries, country brand indexes, and other important information. The third group is comprised of speeches and interviews given by leaders, foreign ministers, and government officials. These speeches and interviews are available on various websites, including those belonging to political parties, public organizations, the press, and the media. The fourth group is made up of statistical data and information, including state statistics from the United Kingdom, European Union, Russian, and Turkish international organizations, United Nations, UNESCO, British Council's reports, Rossotrudnichestvo's reports, Russkiy Mir, TIKA, FAO, UNDP, and Aga-Khan reports.

Thus, the initial set of documents includes meetings between representatives of different countries, both bilateral and multilateral. These documents form a foundation for international relations within the post-Soviet region across various areas and serve

as a basis for relationships between countries. Some of the most critical documents in this category are:⁹

Table 1:

The Treaty on the Basics of Interstate Relations between the Republic of Kyrgyzstan and the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic of July 21, 1991
the Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance between the Republic of Kyrgyzstan and the Russian Federation of June 10, 1992
the Declaration on the Expansion and Deepening of Russian-Kyrgyz Cooperation of March 28, 1996
Joint statement following the official visit of Russian President V. Putin to Kyrgyzstan on September 19-20, 2012
Agreement between the Kyrgyz Republic and the Russian Federation on economic cooperation for 2000-2009
Agreement between the Russian Federation, and the Kyrgyz Republic on the procedure for the use of Russian military facilities on the territory of the Kyrgyz Republic and the status of service members of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation in the Kyrgyz Republic of July 5, 1993;
Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of September 6, 2008, N1315 "On some issues of public administration in the field of international cooperation";
Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of May 12, 2008, N 724 "Issues of the system and structure of federal executive bodies"; Regulations on the Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States, Compatriots Living Abroad, and International Humanitarian Cooperation;
Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of November 13, 2009, No. 1283 "On Approval of the Regulations on the Representation of Rossotrudnichestvo Abroad and Representatives of the Agency in the Diplomatic Representation of the Russian Federation";
Regulations on the representative offices of the Federal Agency outside the Russian Federation and representatives of this Agency as part of the diplomatic mission of the Russian Federation;
Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of August 10, 2011, No. 1065 "On Approving the List of Information on the Activities of the Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States, Compatriots Living Abroad, and on International Humanitarian Cooperation;
Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of May 7, 2012, No. 605 "On measures to implement the foreign policy course of the Russian Federation"; Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of May 8, 2013, N 476 "Issues of the Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States, compatriots living abroad, and international humanitarian cooperation";
Decree of the President of the Russian Federation No. 640 of November 30, 2016 "On Approval of the Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation".

The official documents in question offer an all-encompassing and thorough examination of the relationship between Kyrgyzstan and Russia, spanning from 2000

⁹ Table1, 2,3 (See all references in the primary sources of the bibliography)

to 2021, providing an extensive array of information and details on various aspects of the interaction between the two nations.

Table 2:

Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of September 6, 2008, N1315 "On some issues of public administration in the field of international cooperation"
Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of May 12, 2008, N 724 "Issues of the system and structure of federal executive bodies";
Regulations on the Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States, Compatriots Living Abroad, and International Humanitarian Cooperation;
Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of November 13, 2009, No. 1283 "On Approval of the Regulations on the Representation of Rossotrudnichestvo Abroad and Representatives of the Agency in the Diplomatic Representation of the Russian Federation";
Regulations on the representative offices of the Federal Agency outside the Russian Federation and representatives of this Agency as part of the diplomatic mission of the Russian Federation;
Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of August 10, 2011, No. 1065 "On Approving the List of Information on the Activities of the Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States, Compatriots Living Abroad, and on International Humanitarian Cooperation;
Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of May 7, 2012, No. 605 "On measures to implement the foreign policy course of the Russian Federation";
Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of May 8, 2013, N 476 "Issues of the Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States, compatriots living abroad, and international humanitarian cooperation";
Decree of the President of the Russian Federation No. 640 of November 30, 2016 "On Approval of the Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation"

The second category consists of significant documents such as political and legal papers, foreign policy concepts, and national security strategies. These documents play a vital role in determining Turkey's diplomatic relations with Russia and Central Asian nations, including Kyrgyzstan.

Table 3:

Comprehensive framework for the development of the Kyrgyz Republic until 2010 dated February 3, 2005,
the National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation until 2020 of May 12, 2009, the Concept of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation (1993, 2000, 2008, 2013, 2016),
Decision of the Council of CIS Heads of State of June 21, 2000 "On the establishment of an anti-terrorist center of the member states of the Commonwealth of Independent States",
Concept of State Policy in the Religious Sphere for 2014-2020 of November 14, 2014, the Foreign Policy Concept of the Kyrgyz Republic of January 10, 2007,
the Treaty on Eternal Friendship and Cooperation between the Kyrgyz Republic and the Turkish Republic of October 24, 1997,
the Fifth Meeting of the Intergovernmental Kyrgyz-Turkish Joint Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation of September 5, 2008,
Protocol of the seventh meeting of the intergovernmental Kyrgyz-Turkish joint commission on trade and economic cooperation dated August 13-15, 2013,

Protocol between the Ministry of Defense of the Kyrgyz Republic and the General Staff of the Turkish Republic on the provision of material and technical assistance for the armed forces of the Kyrgyz Republic of 24 January 2007,
Report on the activities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey for 2011; British Council annual reports 2016-2017;2013-2014;2015-2016;
DAC Peer Review of the United Kingdom. OECD Journal on Development; UK Government. Single departmental plan: 2015 to 2020;
Overview of projects and activities funded by the British government in Kyrgyzstan.

It is noteworthy to mention the comprehensive reports on the administrative activities carried out by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey for 2014 and 2015. These reports offer valuable insights into Turkey's strategies and actions in Central Asia, shedding light on its regional objectives and goals. Moreover, the book "Strategic Depth" by former Minister of Foreign Affairs Ahmet Davutoglu, who served in the years 2009-2014, and former Prime Minister of Turkey (2014-2015), provides a more in-depth and nuanced understanding of Turkey's foreign policy strategies in other critical regions of the world, beyond Central Asia. It is also worth mentioning the Reports on the administrative activities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey for 2014 and 2015. This made it possible to study the activities of Turkey in Central Asia and consider its goals in the region. The work of the Minister of Foreign Affairs (2009 - 2014) and the Prime Minister of Turkey (2014 - 2015) - Ahmet Davutoglu, "Strategic Depth", which allowed us to get acquainted not only with the vision of Turkish policy in Central Asia but and form an idea of a strategy on the new strategy of Ankara's foreign policy in all critical regions of the world for the latter.

The third group of sources includes speeches, official speeches, and interviews with notable figures such as heads of state, heads of government, heads of international organizations, ministers, and leading theorists of international relations from Russia and foreign countries. These sources are crucial for objective analysis and assessment of the issues addressed in the dissertation. Specifically, an interview with:

An extensive interview - "Significantly more resources need to be allocated to soft power than is currently being done" with Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov was conducted and broadcast on the radio stations "Moscow Speaks", Sputnik, "Echo of Moscow", and "Komsomolskaya Pravda."

An interview with Abdullah Gul, Turkey's Ambassador to Russia from 1988-1993, was conducted by V. Vural on "Euronews" TV.
On March 12, 2012, an interview with Mr. Ahmet Davutoğlu was published in the AUC Cairo Review in Egypt.
An Interview with Evgeny Primakov - What Does Political Myopia Lead to in a World Without Russia? (Diplomatic Academy of Russia)
An interview with the former president of Kyrgyzstan, Kurmanbek Bakiyev, was conducted by M. Abylov, the former ambassador of Kyrgyzstan to Turkey from 2005-2009, and published in the newspaper "Zaman".
Recep Tayyip Erdogan welcomed the new parliament and the reformed state structure of Kyrgyzstan during his 2011 speech in the Kyrgyz parliament.
Interviews with F. Gulen and A. Knyazev discussing F. Gulen's school activities.
An interview with British Ambassador Charles Garrett in Kyrgyzstan: To protect and develop democracy, everyone in the country must play a role.

1.3 Limitations of Research

The thesis has several limitations. The most significant limitation of the research was the availability of official government data. Limitations also affected qualitative data, as case study analysis primarily depends on subjective evaluation. Even when documents are available, they can be short on details. Besides access to official documents, government agreements are also restricted access. Also, the delimitations define the study's frames and boundaries, and the limitations are influenced by the author, both making an essential part of understanding this study's purpose (McQuarrie, 2006).

Moreover, three case studies are bounded by time and will investigate educational projects only from 2000 to 2021 onwards. The main aim is to facilitate a modern depth analysis of Turkish, Russian, and British educational projects while focusing on the Kyrgyz post-soviet educational system after 2001. As I mentioned above, Russia and Turkey during this period have institutionalized their soft power concept. And the UK implemented a new 'creative economy' approach in the region only in 2015, aiming to use soft power tactics to gain a competitive edge in the region. This switch allowed for an increase in collaborations between the UK and Kyrgyzstan and helped to capitalize their influence in the region. Consequently, this 21-year period is a critical juncture

in the application of soft power within the Kyrgyz Republic and represents the successes and failures of these strategies in comparison.

Also, it should be noted that the research does not assess the effectiveness of the three major soft power strategies in the Kyrgyz Republic. Instead, it will conduct a comparative analysis of these strategies.

1.4 Structure of the thesis

This paper is organized into six chapters. The first chapter covers the purpose, theoretical and conceptual frameworks, research designs, and research methods used for this study. It explains why the case study method and mix-method policy analysis were chosen and provides details on the official documents and agreements used during the research process. The chapter also outlines the research's scope, limitations, and significance and defines important terms used throughout the study.

The second chapter begins with an exploration literature review by defining the term 'power' from different parallel concepts and identifying that Nye's soft power concept is inadequate with significant current international relations changes. Next, the paper will critically examine the soft power concept by employing Gramsci's hegemony notion. The study will show that soft power is a form of power, despite its 'softness', with "the ability to make others want the same thing you want." In this regard, soft power already stands in a different semantic row with hegemony and cultural imperialism. Then the subchapter will overview the literature - on soft power and language, education and soft power and religion through Gramscian understanding of cultural hegemony.

In the third chapter, I will delve into the topic of Russian soft power and how this concept fits into their foreign policy philosophy. Specifically, I will conduct a literature review that examines the Soviet Legacy in Kyrgyzstan's cultural and educational institutions, as well as the special status of the Russian language within the Republic. I will also examine a case study on Rossotrudnichestvo, which explores how Russia implemented soft power through educational channels in the Kyrgyz Republic between 2000 and 2021. Finally, I will analyze and discuss the findings and data collection presented in this chapter.

In the fourth chapter, I will delve into the literature review of British soft power and its relevance to their foreign policy in Kyrgyzstan. Additionally, I will examine the case

study of the British Council and how Britain utilized soft power via education in the Kyrgyz Republic between 2000 and 2021. The results and information gathered will be analyzed at the conclusion.

In the upcoming fifth chapter, I will delve into the topic of Turkish soft power and how it relates to their foreign policy in Kyrgyzstan. I will explore how language and religion are tools the Turkish government uses to exert their soft power in their dealings with other Turkic countries. Additionally, I will examine a case study of TIKa and their implementation of soft power through educational channels in the Kyrgyz Republic over the past two decades.

In the final chapter, the thesis provides a generalized observation and comparative analysis of the three Major Power activities in the Kyrgyz Republic. Additionally, it offers recommendations for further research endeavors.

Chapter 2

Literature review and the theoretical framework

This chapter discusses an in-depth analysis of the concept of soft power. Nevertheless, first, it would be necessary to name the central concepts of my research – Nye's soft power and Antonio Gramsci's hegemony of notion. The following section will trace power 'genesis' to better understand Nye's concept of soft power. At the same time, the thesis bridges the Gramscian cultural hegemony approach to soft power. Thus, the first subchapter reviews the nature of power from different concepts by placing soft power in the general power debate, especially into two concepts- Steven Luke's (1974) third face and Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz's (1962) second face of power. These sections cannot cover all the contributions to the power debate, as this would be impossible; instead, they are meant to provide a framework for the most relevant ideas to comprehend soft power better. The second subchapter compares Nye's soft power concept with Antonio Gramsci's hegemony theory in the general power debate. Finally, the third subchapter overviews literature - on soft power and education and soft power and religion through Gramscian understanding of cultural hegemony. To summarize these subchapters, I argue that Gramscian theory of hegemony is a suitable theoretical framework to pave the way forward to analyzing empirical data of the three major power's educational channels.

2.1 Joseph Nye's soft power

Scholars of IR have studied the soft power concept coined by Joseph Nye for more than 30 years. In the past twenty-two years, against the backdrop of large-scale reformatting of the international relations system, globalization, the information revolution, and the intensification of civil society and public diplomacy, the role of soft power and "soft" foreign policy factors have been growing in world politics, states, global institutes, and transnational actors. As a result, political power in the modern world increasingly includes a mechanism of attraction and persuasion.

However, what is soft power in Nye's words? Joseph Nye (2011, pp.9-24) defines it as "the ability to affect others through the co-option means of framing agenda,

persuading, and eliciting positive attraction to obtain preferred outcomes". Another term for soft power is co-option power, which is the capacity to form the preferences of others by appealing to shared values and beliefs (Nye, 2004, pp 6-8). At the same time, Nye carefully distinguishes soft power from propaganda, which is defined as "the deliberate, systematic, and organized efforts to employ methods of persuasion to achieve predetermined goals, to benefit those who orchestrate the process." (Taylor, 2006, p.6). Nye states that persuasive power is based on attraction and emulation and is associated with intangible power resources such as culture, ideology, and institutions (Henry & Harris, 2020). Cooper (2004, p.173) also emphasizes the importance of legitimacy in soft power since state activities must be considered legitimate to enhance soft power. However, distinguishing between tangible and intangible resources is different from what distinguishes hard and soft power. Thus, realists recognize that power can come from intangible sources, such as Waltz's (1998) "competence". Furthermore, Nye (2011, p.21) acknowledges that there is a relationship between tangible and intangible power resources, noting that intangible resources such as patriotism and morale can strongly affect a military's capacity to fight and win through threats of force. Therefore, resources typically linked to soft power can produce hard power behaviours and vice versa.

The perception of soft power has been widely debated in the International Relations (IR) academic community. As Breslin (2005) observed, the interpretations of soft power range from neutral scientific to biased and positive to critical. Joseph Nye's outstanding work, *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power* (1990), is credited for introducing the concept of soft power, which goes beyond military and economic influence. Edward H. Carr's (1949) perspectives expanded this concept further by showing that power over opinion is just as important as military strength and economic growth. To further understand the concept of soft power, it is pertinent to consider the broader context of power in social sciences (Onuf, 2009) and review the nature of power from different parallel concepts.

2.2 The nature of power from different parallel concepts

The field of International Relations (IR) comprises various schools of thought, but for a long time, realism has dominated the discourse by treating power as its exclusive prerogative. The founder of the school of political realism, Hans Morgenthau (1982), argued that the concept of political power is one of the most complex and controversial problems of political science. Gilpin (1987) believes that this category is one of the most problematic in the science of international relations and political science. From ancient times philosophers and scientists addressed the concepts of "power". What exactly is it? - 'power', 'influence', 'authority'. In the XVI century Niccoló Machiavelli in his work "The Prince", wrote about ways of acquiring and retaining power, believing that the power of the sovereign should be based upon a strong foundation: good troops and good laws. The famous British international relations theorist E.H. Carr (1949) also was on the side of the realist conception. The interwar period and the rise of the Nazis in Germany influenced Carr's ideas about power and strength. Carr identifies three types of national power in international relations: economic, military and "power over opinion". The latter was considered by Carr's a sort of propaganda of the time. Thus, for many centuries the power of states was implied first as a military power, then in the XX century, non-military factors of power had become more meaningful as economic, cultural, or informational power. Realists and neo-realists Kenneth Waltz (1998) and John Mearsheimer (2001) first focused on understanding power as a potential opportunity or even as a resource that corresponds to a set of characteristics inherent in states. Representatives of these schools talk about the possibility of adding certain elements of national strength to the existing resources of a nation to achieve excellence, and their "balance of power" theories are based on the redistribution of available forces between 'great powers. For example, Gilpin (1975, pp.789-790) proceeds from the definition of power as "military, economic and technological capabilities of states". In the second half of the XX century, there was a new vision of power: as a relation or a sort of dependence between subjects. Representatives of various sciences (philosophers, sociologists, psychologists, and political scientists) sought to comprehend the strength and power as a factor determining the behaviour of participants in such relationships or dependencies. For example, one of the theorists

of political science, R. Dahl (1957) defines the term "power" as the ability of subject A to achieve from subject B actions that he would not have committed without influence from A. From this definition, their reflections on 'power' are repelled by many international researchers, including Nye. In this context, 'power' can be understood as a resource state, but at the same time, it exists only in the context of relations between participants asymmetric in nature. From this definition, it follows that the power is not absolute but a relative category: it can be represented as a function of the resource ("resource base"), which the subject has at its disposal. The processes of globalization of the second half of the XX century determined specialists to formulate new approaches to understanding the phenomenon of power. Both researchers and representatives of the political establishment began to recognize the growing importance of international and non-governmental organizations, as well as transnational companies, which led to a revival of scientific interest in liberal ideas - neoliberalism and transnationalism. The famous neo-liberalist J. Rosenau (1990) argued that the national states are no longer central to international governance, and now they are giving way to the private sector and non-state players. Nye (2014), in his definition of soft power, repels from understanding power the possibility that one participant in international relations could achieve change in the behaviour of another. Nye (2014) speaks about "attractiveness" as the relationship between the subject and the object of application of 'soft power', considering culture, values, and foreign policy as resources on which attractiveness is based. However, the British researcher E. Lock (2010) notes that J. Nye focuses on the "agent" in his concept "he does not conflate agent and structure". According to Lock, Nye often becomes aware of the power as an available resource. Most definitions describe power as the ability to achieve the desired behaviour of certain actors. However, it is very difficult to predict whether the available power is sufficient to achieve target results, despite the military power and the possession of modernised weapons. The big and well-armed states were often defeated by weaker enemies. Thus, the perception of potential state power or power as a resource was not justified in terms of control over results. For example, the United States, during the Vietnam War, demonstrated that excellence in terms of resources is not a guarantee of military victories. Probably under the influence of the Vietnamese war, some American researchers looked for a new way of understanding power. In a 1976 article, American researcher Hart (1977) proposed a new approach to reasoning about power and its measurement. According to Hart, power can be

understood in three different ways: 1) as control over resources, 2) as control over actors, and 3) as control over events and results. Hart argues that the third option is the best because it allows us to consider the interdependence of participants in international relations and the possibility of collective action. Thus, IR scholars are still debating power, and the notion of soft power is based on several important concepts that were developed in the previous century. Further, I will focus on Lukes (1974) and Bachrach and Baratz's (1962) ideas that have a close relation to the study of soft power.

Thus Lukes (1976), as a Marxist, in his third face of power argues that the power of domination, states that power is the ability of individuals or groups to exercise control over another individual or group. This type of power is based on the notion that one group is in a position of superiority over another group. But at the same time his idea of "structural power", is a type of power that is exercised through the structure of social and political institutions, rather than through direct or coercive methods. This type of power is exercised by shaping the preferences and attitudes of individuals, and it is often invisible and difficult to identify. Therefore, we can see the similarities between Luke's theory of power and Nye's soft power including the idea that power is exercised through the structure of social and political institutions, as well as the notion that can be exercised through persuasion, attraction, and influence. Both theories also emphasize the importance of culture in understanding power dynamics and the ability of actors to shape the preferences and attitudes of individuals.

In the book 'The Second Face of Power', Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz (1962) note that the main idea is the concept of "non-decision making". This type of power is exercised by powerful individuals or groups who can shape the agenda and prevent certain topics from being discussed or considered. Nye himself also relies on the same concepts of non-decision-making that allows for the exercise of power through persuasion and influence, rather than direct or coercive method. Therefore, Nye's concept of soft power also is very close to Luke's third face of power and the second face of Bachrach and Baratz and could continue the idea of "hegemony", which Italian Marxist theorist Antonio Gramsci developed in his "Prison Notebooks"(1948). Gramsci wrote that political and civil society are equally important and that "the combination of force and consent, which balance each other reciprocally without force predominating excessively over consent". Therefore, Gramsci's hegemony concept includes "intellectual and moral leadership whose principal constituting elements are consent

and persuasion rather than coercion". Bachrach and Baratz (1962) argue that "power is exercised when A participates in the making of decisions that affect B. But power is also exercised when A devotes his energies to creating or reinforcing social and political values, and institutional practices that limit the scope of the political process to public consideration of only those issues that are comparatively innocuous to A, to the extent that A succeeds in doing this B is prevented, for all practical purposes, from bringing to the fore any issues that might in their resolution be seriously detrimental to A's set of preferences". Lukes (1976) added that this approach considers the possibility of forming a political agenda, eliminating undesirable questions, and maintaining the "status quo". However, in Luke's opinion, this consideration of the topic of political power is too narrow: when A wants B to do something against its will, or when A wants to control the range of issues that B can raise, then we also need to consider a third face - "power based on consent". The concept of "soft power" by Nye really reminds the "third face of power" by Lukes: here, the discussion opens to talking about the formation of preferences and desires based on attractive ideas and values as sort of role models. In addition, Nye talks about the possibility of control over the agenda in international relations and its formation, which echoes the "second face" or power measurement.

Summing up, the concept of Nye and its understanding of soft power in international relations is diverse and contested. His concept of soft power is based on scientific achievements in various humanitarian disciplines, studies of philosophers, sociologists, political scientists, and international experts devoted to power and power, and power in international relations. However, soft power is a form of *power*, despite its "softness", with "the ability to make others want the same thing that you want". In this regard, soft power could stand in a different semantic row with hegemony and cultural imperialism. As hegemony focuses on creating consensus, some ideas and values become "common sense" (Gramsci, 1971, 372). Nye (1990) recognizes the significance of Gramsci's concept but appears to reject its "element of adversarial manipulation", which he sees as a way of achieving compliance by fooling subordinate nations. Therefore, this radical view of power has an evident clash of interests (Nye, 1990, 125). In this regard, Gramscian conceptualization of hegemony, which rejects the hard or soft power distinction, is highly beneficial. Hegemony encompasses coercion, resource distribution, and the influence of ideology and requires a degree of consent. This makes it possible to analyse how different elements of these

combinations evolve. The following subchapter proposes using this approach to consider soft power as the ability to shape international discourse so that specific policies, worldviews, and narratives become accepted as Gramscian “common sense”.

2.2 Does Soft power mean soft hegemony?

When analyzing the components of the soft power concept, many researchers (Kara-Murza (2007), Çevik (2019), Dymchak (2019), Lester (2000), Cerami (2013), Tol&Baskan (2018) find certain similarities between the provisions contained in the works of Nye and the work of cultural hegemony of the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci. In order to determine the nature of the interconnectedness of the concepts of Nye's soft power cultural hegemony by Gramsci, it is necessary to analyse their actual content.

Antonio Gramsci was a pivotal figure in Italian politics, advocating for a neo-Marxist movement through a critical analysis of the socio-political sphere with an eye to cultural elements. As such, his focus on revolutionary processes has long been considered a critical factor in understanding the complexities of politics. Gramsci's methodology was informed by a close analysis of the tactics employed by the Bolsheviks in the early twentieth century and how they succeeded in toppling the Russian Empire (Giachi, 2016). Despite the potential success of such tactics, Gramsci understood the need to employ alternative strategies in different European countries if revolutionary progress was to be achieved (Lazzarato, 2001). Emphasizing the importance of cultural change in addition to political transformation, Gramsci suggested a variety of tactics for the left to mobilize against their political opponents (Raban, 2010). By drawing attention to the limitations of the Bolshevik methods, Gramsci provided a new perspective from which to approach and ultimately resolve the problems of European political systems (Mouffe, 2014). In particular, the difficult moment was to identify the reasons for the failure to use tactics in Western European countries to combat an existing political system similar to that used by the Bolshevik-led coalition of the left in the Russian Empire.

The main result of Gramsci's theoretical research can be called the formation of the concept of "cultural hegemony", which later formed the basis of socio-political doctrines and ideologies of some political movements. According to Gramsci, cultural

hegemony is the dominance of the ruling class's ideology as a form of false consciousness over the worldview and interests of a culturally heterogeneous class society. The picture of the world fixed in society and considered the standard of "common sense" is an artificially created construct produced by the ruling class, largely false. "Common sense" is opposed to the so-called "good sense" - a point of view and a form of worldview inherent in the oppressed masses, which are heterogeneous and correspond to their interests and are produced directly by the conditions of their existence and socio-economic situation. Kristalynsky (2014) states that civil society institutions produce "common sense" as a form of false consciousness. By civil society itself, Gramsci understands a network of private organizations of the ruling class, not directly included in the apparatus of state power: professional, cultural, public, religious, charitable organizations and political parties, the mass media. Through institutions such as the school, the church, and the commercial and non-profit sector, the ruling class instils its ideological attitudes and worldview both on the main oppressed class (the proletariat) and on adjacent and "borderline" social groups. Kristalynsky (2014) states that civil society institutions produce "Common sense" as a form of false consciousness. By civil society itself, Gramsci understands a network of private organizations of the ruling class, not directly included in the apparatus of state power: professional, cultural, public, religious, charitable organizations and political parties, and the mass media. Through institutions such as the school, the church, and the commercial and non-profit sector, the ruling class instils its ideological attitudes and worldview both on the main oppressed class (the proletariat) and on adjacent and "borderline" social groups. Thus, a developed civil society is an integral element of the "integral state", including a political society. Gramsci himself defines the "integral state" as follows: "It is the whole complex of practical and theoretical activities by which the ruling class justifies and maintains its domination and succeeds in obtaining the active consent of those whom it governs". (Lester, 2000, pp.34-36).

Gramsci's "Prison Notebooks" mentions that opposition to the hegemony of the ruling class and the establishment of the hegemony of new forces in the presence of such hegemony, and, consequently, consent in civil society, is "molecular" in nature. Due to non-state institutions that contribute to the rooting of views ruling class in the minds of other strata of society, opposition to hegemony should be carried out not through direct, forceful influence on state structures but through a change in opinions and

moods in the minds of each person. At the same time, the main "battlefield" is precisely civil society. Thus, Gramsci only indicates possible methods of counteracting the existing hegemony without developing this idea to a concept level. At the same time, Nye singled out three types of power: Hard power is "the ability to get others to act in ways that are contrary to their initial preferences and strategies" (Nye, 2011). In contrast, soft power is "the ability to get others to want the outcomes you want" (Nye, 2014). Furthermore, smart power is the "balance of hard and soft power" (Nye, 2005). Thus, the main difference between these types of power is the tools that contribute to the exercise of power: the projection of hard power is realized by imposing one's will by violent methods or the threat of their use, while mechanisms provide soft power for coordinating foreign policy actions and involving in cooperation of a broader nature, as a rule, based on common cultural, political, economic and ideological values that favour such cooperation and allow it to influence other countries. Hard power, as a rule, is direct, while soft power, in turn, is applied indirectly and indirectly. A country's soft power, according to Nye, rests on three resources: "its culture (in places where it is attractive to others), its political values (when it lives up to them at home and abroad), and its foreign policies (when others see them as legitimate and having moral authority)." The subjects of the application of soft power can be both state and non-state actors (transnational corporations, global NGOs, celebrities). At the same time, the key channel of the most direct possible application of soft power is the so-called public diplomacy. Public diplomacy is understood as a set of systemically interrelated academic, educational, cultural, and other events and programs, the primary purpose of interaction and impact on the civil society institutions of other countries, their state and business elite. The main objective of such events is to form a positive image of the state abroad. The subjects of public diplomacy, as a rule, are state bodies, NGOs, mass media, private market actors and individual actors. Thus, if the culture, politics, and values on which it is based are attractive to the population of external actors, public diplomacy is able to create conditions conducive to the growth of soft power. Public diplomacy can be carried out through information technologies, including the Internet, through the formation of cultural, scientific, and educational centres.

In summarizing, several conclusions can be drawn: Thus, Gramsci made a theoretical and methodological breakthrough in the political thought of the 20th century. It is important to note that he returned the concept of "civil society" to the scientific discourse. Secondly, the Gramscian "cultural hegemony" concept and Nye's soft

power have similarities: First, in both concepts, the central aspect of the possibility of power influence is the dominance in the cultural environment, the area of meanings and values that form the thinking of the object (Gramsci's "hegemony" and its "molecular influence" and Nye's "attractiveness"). Hegemony refers to a political system in which dominance is maintained through the use of institutions, ideas, and beliefs expressed in universal terms and by incorporating the interests of disadvantaged groups without jeopardizing the dominant group's power (Kisileva,2015,319). Secondly, both concepts indicate that the main field for both the application of "molecular influence" and the implementation of "attractiveness" is civil society and its institutions (directly or indirectly controlled by the state). Thirdly, within the framework of both concepts, one of the subjects of influence can be and are representatives of the creative intelligentsia.

In this light, soft power can be defined as the ability to shape international discourse so that certain policies, worldviews, and narratives become accepted as "common sense," thus allowing for establishment of power relations. This approach implies that Nye defines *soft power* as a subtler way of using universal values to maintain or regain a dominant role in the international arena.

Thus, hegemony, as conceptualised by the influential Italian Marxist philosopher Antonio Gramsci, provides a valuable analytic tool for understanding global soft power dynamics in the educational sphere, particularly in culture and education. Education is instrumental in delivering and propagating soft power agendas, which is why Gramsci's concept of hegemony — which focuses on consensus-building — is of particular importance. By shifting the traditional focus from the outcomes to the underlying consensus-building process, Gramsci's concept of hegemony provides a deeper and richer understanding of the forces behind the global exploitation of soft power (Cox, 1993). This is a particularly important point, as it reveals interactions between those deploying and resisting the effects of soft power, which are so crucial today in the global educational context. In order to further explore how language, education and religion — interact with soft power, the following subchapters will discuss the applicability of education and soft power, language and soft power, and religion and soft power in detail.

2.3 Education and language as a tool of soft power

J. Nye (1990,20) himself, in his works, singled out several main tools of soft power, which, from his point of view, are the most effective and efficient: cultural attractiveness (culture), ideological attractiveness (ideology), attractive domestic policy and foreign policy. In other words, soft power refers to the ability to shape ideas and concepts. A deep penetration into the audience's thoughts is necessary to effectively wield this power, resulting in a shift in attitudes and behaviours. Ultimately, this can significantly impact a country's social mentality and relationships on an international scale. In addition, Nye notes the main semantic blocks, which, of course, required and still require their clarification and decoding. In this regard, a discussion continues in political science about specific tools for the implementation of soft power. One of the ways to strengthen the position in the political arena is the introduction of language, which is a significant factor in constructing ideologies, beliefs, and values (Chomsky, 1957; Bourdieu, 1977; Hymes, 1974; Fishaman, 1972). Language emerges as the most influential tool in this transformative process. The relationship between language and culture has a dual nature. Language is not only a means of communication between representatives of different ethnic groups but also conveys cultural aspects from representatives of one people to another. Transiting culture through language is one of the most effective methods for exchanging social experiences. Thus, Schweitzer (1978, p.117) considered language policy as "a set of measures taken by the state, party, class, social grouping to change or preserve the existing functional distribution of languages or linguistic subsystems, to introduce new or preserve the linguistic norms in use." In the context of soft power, language holds immense potential for fostering intercultural dialogue and cooperation. A shared language enables individuals from different backgrounds to engage in meaningful exchanges, bridging gaps and promoting mutual understanding. It provides a means for promoting diplomatic relations, trade, and cultural exchange, strengthening bonds between nations. While popular cultural resources like music, film and television, fashion, and cuisine capture attention momentarily but quickly fade away, language, as a social norm, possesses a lasting and far-reaching allure and appeal. For example, Marxist philosophy places great emphasis on the importance of language in society,

recognizing that language serves not only as a means of communication but also as a social phenomenon that reflects the real-life experiences of people. Language is closely tied to social interactions and realities, making it inseparable from social language and research when studying any aspect of society. Furthermore, studying a language requires an understanding of the society in which it is spoken, as social, historical, and political factors shape all languages.

Language has undergone a long historical evolution. Initially, it was created to facilitate communication and transmit information. Even now, communication remains its primary function. However, with the language's development and society's enrichment, its functions have become diverse. For instance, the written language records information, literature has a lyrical function, and professional language aids research. Consequently, language creation and development are the result of social development. In turn, language meets the needs of social development. Over time, language has acquired new meanings and deeper connotations. It is deeply integrated into the local population's culture and inseparable from their culture. Language is imprinted in people's hearts and minds as the basis and symbol of national culture. The degree of recognition and understanding of a language indicates the nationality's perception and identity. The worldwide distribution and use of a language in a certain area and context demonstrate a country's cultural soft power.

International relations involve dialogue, cooperation, and communication between countries. These relations allow countries to compete for material and economic power, but they also depend on language, society, and culture. Language is crucial in international relations, as it determines a country's status in the world political economy. The right to speak reflects a country's value in the political world. Language is not only the basis of existence but also the primary system for international political rights. Political activities in international relations include the study of linguistic symbols, the use of linguistic violence, and the narration and description of actions and events. Narratives shape people's understanding and cognition of things by constructing plots and actions through linguistic symbols. Thus, language has played a crucial role in international relations since its inception. It not only forms a critical part of international relations but also aids in comprehending the essence of discourse and consciousness. Countries increasingly prioritise soft power in contemporary international relations, and language is a significant component of a nation's soft power. Thus, English has become the universal language of the modern world, making

global communication and collaboration possible. Its extensive usage has made it the default language in various fields, including science, technology, business, and diplomacy (Crystal, 1997, McCrum, 2010). The prevalence of the English language allows countries like the United States and the UK to exert cultural influence globally. Through English, these nations export their literature, films, music, and other cultural products to a vast audience, shaping global trends and preferences. English also serves as a tool for promoting democratic values, human rights, and freedom of expression, which are integral to American and British ideals. Another example is the Soviet Union, which is home to over 100 ethnic groups (Kuzembayeva & Li, 2022). Due to the complexity of different dialects, a common language is necessary for interethnic communication. Russian, spoken by the majority population of ethnic Russians, has been designated as the national language for communication. This language has significantly facilitated interethnic exchanges, promoting social harmony and national unity. During the Soviet period, the Russian language was not only used by the Russian nation but also played an essential role in transmitting the history and culture of various ethnic groups. The global reach of the Russian language has enabled the promotion of national cultural works on a broader scale to the formation of the Soviet national spirit and cohesion.

Therefore, in the age of globalization, countries have recognized the importance of promoting their language to enhance their international image and foster global understanding. By prioritizing language promotion, nations aim to spread their culture, values, and ideals beyond their borders. This is why language policy has played a crucial role in exercising soft power since the information revolution of the new millennium. Institutional structures must facilitate conscious efforts to influence the practical side of language and take advantage of technological developments that have shifted power away from governments and toward non-state actors.

Today, countries that actively promote their language often establish cultural institutions like language centres and institutes to teach their language to international students, professionals, and diplomats. This, in turn, promotes cultural exchange, strengthens diplomatic ties, and opens economic opportunities for the country. Non-state actors, such as large corporations, non-profit organizations, and special informal groups, are attractive to younger generations and can be harnessed to achieve desired social outcomes. International non-governmental organizations like the British Council, the Institute of Goethe and the Institute of Confucius serve as examples of a

shift in the cultural and linguistic paradigm of the international arena. Thus, as of December 2019, China has set up 550 Confucius Institutes and 1,172 Confucius Classrooms across 162 countries. By 2020, over 180 countries and regions worldwide have begun teaching the Chinese language, while more than 70 countries have integrated Chinese into their national education systems. Additionally, more than 20 million individuals in foreign countries study Chinese.¹⁰

Thus, soft power is based on two main tools: influence and resources - culture, ideology, values, economy, and language. In today's globalized world, language promotion is a valuable tool for shaping narratives, promoting cooperation, and building bridges between cultures and societies. Promoting a language through soft power is a key aspect of foreign language policy, implemented through various means such as cultural and exchange programs, grants, scholarships, and education.

Thus, the internationalization of education has also taken shape under the influence of soft power. Kissinger (1994, 356), Slaughter (2004), Nussbaum (2010), Stimpson (2006), Welch (2018), Held and McGrew (2005) discuss that education is an important tool in the exercise of soft power. Education can help to shape the values and beliefs of individuals, which can turn shape the policies of a nation. Thus, Knight (2014, pp.1-20) states that diplomacy, traditionally interpreted as the area of state management of international relations represented by ministries of foreign affairs, is gradually transforming into a multidirectional process with many actors, and a multi-active approach is a hallmark of modern diplomacy. Thus, not only is a wide range of government agencies emerging as critical players in diplomatic relations, but numerous civil society organizations, multinational corporations, and networks of experts are recognized as essential agents in managing international relations. As a result, higher education in the form of national and regional associations, universities and colleges, students and teachers, expert networks, foundations, and government institutions is today also one of the actors actively involved in international relations. In this regard, Botonero (2013, p.28) points out that the historical roots of the use of education in achieving foreign policy goals require "a revision of the concept of soft power developed by Nye, and, in particular, in terms of considering higher education as a source of soft power." Also, Torkunov (2012, 86-89) writes that "the Soviet Union

¹⁰ 8 more countries set up Confucius institutes or classrooms in 2019. Available at: http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-12/11/c_138623776.htm (accessed:07.07.2023)

for a long time successfully used higher education as an instrument of geopolitics and an "ideological weapon" in the conditions of bloc confrontation and the Cold War, long before the very concept of soft power arose." In this regard, the use of the soft power of education is becoming an extremely relevant area where soft power of education identifies three mechanisms by which it can work effectively: as a carrier of genuine values, as a resource that gives countries, and as a tool to achieve certain goals. Thus, Wojciuk and Michalek (2015, pp.1-20) state that all three mechanisms show how growing internationalization leads to more direct links between education, international relations, and foreign policy. The importance of the factor of internationalization of education in the context of expanding opportunities for promoting one's national interests is also noted by Chang Zhu (2013, pp.87-88). The author states, "Internationalization of higher education can be carried out to spread one's values and form a positive image of the country."

Also, one of the most important mechanisms for cooperation in the field of education in the international arena is educational exchange programs. Dolinsky (2014, pp.56-62) states that educational exchanges are a key element of public diplomacy and aim at developing national soft power". Thus, a singular political and socioeconomic system does not exclusively drive the United States of America. Still, it is shaped and affected by the vastly diverse cultures, nations, and political systems that contribute to its unique character (Rocha & Grove, 2017). This has resulted in native populations playing the most influential role when representatives of the country are needed (Ahmad, 2018). Such individuals offer a unique perspective into the development of the nation, its past, and potential routes for the future, acting as powerful instruments of intercultural communication (Young et al., 2016). Nye (2005, p.130) himself argues that cultural and educational exchange programs are the most effective way to influence US interests abroad, remarking: "Most important, however, will be the development of a long-term strategy of cultural and educational exchange that contribute to the development of a richer and more open civil society in the states of the Middle East." It is, therefore, the representatives of the native population who possess an acutely all-encompassing understanding of the virtues of America that are the most influential representatives - not the Americans themselves.

Thus, in the conceptual constructions, international exchange in the format of academic mobility is not only a factor in personal development but also an important social tool. Thus, Byram and Derwin (2008, pp.122-124) point out, analysing the

European experience, that “the policy of encouraging academic mobility of students in Europe is part of the general intention to create a European state”. Sheng-Kai (2015, pp.1-15) states that countries such as the United States, Great Britain and Australia for some time recognized the potential of soft power as various initiatives in higher education. As a result, many students studying abroad “end up returning to their home countries and taking up leadership positions in the public and private sectors.” Stetar (2010, pp.191-204) states that students who study abroad, returning, bring home “the perspective of the country in which they studied”. Likewise, Shields and Edwards (2010, p.284) contend that the model of modern academic mobility can significantly benefit peripheral states. Furthermore, they highlight how the host countries can use this mobility to further their foreign policy goals and augment their labour force with an additional pool of skilled workers; whilst creating the impetus for students to acquire new skills and knowledge.

Thus, higher education institutions are beginning to focus on the strategy of internationalization in order to obtain certain market advantages. The key goal is to occupy the most profitable and attractive niche in the market of educational services. Furthermore, this factor should be considered in the political aspect - the state must and can use universities in its political interests: “The instrumental model, in turn, is actively promoted and is widely represented today. The university is an instrument of the political agenda and aims to solve current social and economic issues. The influence of governments and external stakeholders, on the one hand, and the scientific entrepreneurship imperative, on the other, are the two main drivers of this approach” Deodato (2014, pp.6-7). Botonero (2013, pp.1-28) states that too active influence on foreign education systems, including through financial investment in foreign universities, is, in fact, one of the forms of “neo-colonialism”: “The idea that foreign investors will gradually monopolize national higher education systems where underfunded public universities will struggle to compete – one of the reasons higher education liberalizations is perceived as a threat in many countries”.

In conclusion, language, education, cultural and exchange programs, grants, and scholarships have become increasingly prevalent instruments of public diplomacy, where non-state actors such as universities and non-governmental organisations serve as a shift in the cultural and linguistic paradigm of the international arena. This aligns with the notion that most of the soft power is expressed by civil society rather than the government (Nye, 2004, p.24). A key enabler of this is language, which is

widely acknowledged to be a powerful tool for comprehending the intricate relationship between government and citizens, as suggested by Antonio Gramsci in *The Prison Notebooks* (1975, p.52). By leveraging various cultural channels to spread their national values, countries are keen to promote a positive image of their state while simultaneously exporting education and language abroad, where nations are engaging in a cultural and civilisational "competition" in the contemporary global landscape" (Torkunov, 2012, pp.86-89).

2.4 Religion and soft power

Today religious organizations play a significant role in world politics in maintaining interfaith peace, solving social problems and moral strengthening.

Recognizing religious organizations as actors in world politics is a long-term dispute. For many years, in the theory of international relations, the activity of sovereign states was considered the only factor shaping global political processes. The turning point in the study of this area was the work of Nye and Keohane (1972), *"Transnational Relations and World Politics"*, which expanded the idea of actor-hood in the international arena. Putnam (1998) discusses the role of religion in international relations in terms of soft power, claiming that a nation's cultural values and religious beliefs can be used to promote a nation's values, build trust, and create interpersonal connections with other nations, ultimately leading to greater cooperation and stability. In the context of the theory of neoliberalism, non-state participants are considered as actors of world politics, in addition to states, and the idea of transnational interaction of other actors in interstate relations is put forward, which leads to the transformation of the entire political model of the world. In the future, theses began to appear on the need for a more attentive attitude toward non-governmental actors in general and religious ones since religion is central to many modern political and social events.

The most prominent religious actors in world politics include the Roman Catholic Church, the Ecumenical (Constantinople) Patriarchate, the Russian Orthodox Church, Protestant denominations, international religious non-governmental organizations (World Council of Churches, Conference of European Churches, World Conference on Religion and the world, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, etc.). Thus, religious actors in international relations act as the state's soft power. Religion has unique features because, unlike other "soft power" resources, it can influence a

person's consciousness, appeal to his feelings, "influence the values, behaviour and collective choice of large groups of people and indirectly influence the decision-making process in power structures"(Miheev, 2008, pp.166-140). Braun and Clarke (2019) and Butler (1993) claim that actors can choose in a cycle of repeating certain actions that were originally neutral and without any particular purpose. Through the continual performance of these actions, they become naturalized, fixed, habitual, and even ritualized, resulting in the creation of certain facts and influences. Acharya (2004) states since religious actors exist this is a useful method to reinforce the legitimacy and efficiency of local authorities.

Nevertheless, what role and how does religious soft power play in foreign policy change? Religious soft power plays a significant role in foreign policy change by leveraging religious beliefs, interpretations, and arguments to advocate for policy shifts (Reed, 2013). Religious actors can shape their narrative and interpretation of events to rationalize their push for change, creating a reality that aligns with their interests and favours their desired outcomes. By criticizing the existing status quo, they undermine the legitimacy of local institutions and create a space for their proposed policy changes to gain traction and support (Bloomfield, 2016)

Furthermore, during times of crisis, religious actors can exploit arguments of emergency to suspend ordinary procedures and shift the burden of proof onto those who oppose the change. This manipulation of the crisis narrative allows them to galvanize support for their cause and bypass established norms and procedures. This strategy enables them to bring about systematic change and justify the departure from entrenched norms by portraying their actions as necessary to navigate the crisis and protect the interests of their religious community or followers. In essence, religious soft power in foreign policy change operates by leveraging religious beliefs, interpretations, and arguments to shape and manipulate narratives, delegitimize existing institutions and norms, and exploit crises to facilitate the implementation of desired policy shifts. This highlights the significant influence that religious actors can have on foreign policy agendas and the potential for religious soft power to bring about meaning.

Based on Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony, the Church and religion play a major role in establishing and maintaining dominant cultural norms. Religious actors can also use this soft power to influence foreign policy change (Menegazzi & Moser, 2011). Gramsci believed that the ruling class uses the Church and religion to instil a sense of

moral obligation in the working class, reinforcing the existing social order and preventing progressive change (Gramsci, 1929).

Gramsci also argued that the Church and religion can control the masses through fear and guilt. By promoting religious dogma and moral standards, they maintain social order and conformity to existing power structures (Bowen, 2003). Religious actors can manipulate religious narratives to discourage the masses from pursuing alternative political or social ideologies, thus reinforcing the status quo. However, Gramsci also recognized that the Church and religion can provide hope and meaning, which religious actors can use to advocate for policy changes (Gramsci, 1929). Religious soft power can be utilized to mobilize individuals and communities by presenting a vision of a better future that aligns with their beliefs.

My case studies deal with conceptualizing cases of Russia and Turkey using religion as a soft power. Thus, Gramsci (1971) proposed a distinction between culture and religion that has since sparked much debate and discussion among scholars (Berger, 1967, Horton, 1967, Asad, 1993). Thus, sociologist Peter Berger (1967) argued that religion is not simply a subset of culture, but rather a key component in shaping cultural values and beliefs. He introduced the concept of 'religious plausibility structures', which refers to the cultural systems that shape an individual's perception of reality and belief in the supernatural. This concept highlights the interplay between culture and religion, and how religion can influence cultural ideologies and norms.

However, Gramsci's distinction between culture and religion can be understood as follows: culture encompasses the entire system of social norms, values, beliefs, and practices of a society, while religion is a specific aspect of culture that deals with matters of faith, spirituality, and morality. Essentially, culture shapes all aspects of human life, while religion is a subset of culture that deals specifically with beliefs and practices related to the divine or supernatural. Gramsci's understanding of culture and religion is notable for challenging the prevailing view of religion as a dominant force that shapes and controls culture. He argued that culture is an ever-changing and dynamic entity that is shaped by a variety of social, economic, and political factors and that religion is only one of these factors. This was a departure from the traditional Marxist view that religion was a mere tool of the ruling class to maintain their power over the working classes.

Therefore, the distinction between culture and religion proposed by Gramsci has been a valuable starting point for understanding the complex relationship between these

two phenomena. The thesis will unpack the foreign policies of Russia and Turkey are rooted in their respective religious influences, namely, Orthodox Christianity and Sunni Islam. In 2016, Russia's foreign policy concept included adopting new soft power instruments such as "methods and technology; information and communication methods; value orientations, the spiritual and moral potential of world religions; and the prospect of civil society" (Concept of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation, 2016). As such, the Russian Orthodox Church (the world's largest Orthodox denomination) plays a prominent role in Russia's soft power implementation. Additionally, Turkey's foreign policy gives special attention to the countries in the region of Central Asia due to their shared religious heritage and Turkic past (Bölükbaşı & Bozkurt, 2017). In particular, the increasingly crucial role in the country's relations is given to Islam. Thus, religion is vital in forming Russia and Turkey's soft power in world politics.

Thus, the Russian Orthodox Church and Turkey's Islamic centres provide an example of the extensive utilization of soft power as an instrument of foreign policy. As noted by Fahim and Ghazouani (2019), religious actors possess significant potential for soft power due to their relative invisibility of influence, long-term and value-historical orientation, and the ability to shape the worldview of congregants through the use of teachings and authority. In an era of increasing influence from such actors, these influences have become valuable assets not only for matters of religion but also for political, economic, and social issues (Fahim & Ghazouani, 2019).

Thus, we can see that Gramscian hegemony on the religion factor and Nye share several similarities. Thus, Gramsci's conception of hegemony and Nye's model of soft power both demonstrate the importance of 'persuasive power' (Viotti & Kauppi, 2017) in the exercise of power and control. While Gramsci's framework is primarily focused on the religious sphere, Nye's perspective is more wide-reaching, incorporating state, political, economic, cultural, and social spheres. Despite the different scopes of their models, both are driven by the same underlying idea that dominant powers exercise their control by generating public consent, mobilizing opinion, and creating consent (Viotti & Kauppi, 2017). From this perspective, both Gramsci and Nye recognize the value of persuasive power, and its ability to shape values, ideas, and identities.

Building upon the work of Gramsci (1971), I propose to analyze language, education, exchange programmes, creative industries, and religion as a form of cultural hegemony. Considering the hegemonic power of culture, it is argued that these

elements can be used as means of political and diplomatic influence (Luft & Cao, 2017). Furthermore, language is a powerful tool for persuasion and population control (Lemke, 1997). Through education and exchange programmes, a country can also gain influence by promoting its culture as superior (Zein-Elabdin & Kuziora, 1998). Moreover, creative industries can potentially shape international perceptions of a nation, both positively and negatively (DeNardo, 2005; McGuire, 2011). Lastly, religious values and practices, coupled with diplomatic relations, have been proven to be a highly effective instrument in changing an individual's opinion of another nation (Ram, 2007).

Consequently, my thesis further aims to explore the connection between culture and nation by analysing the empirical data gathered by Rossotrudnichestvo, the British Council, and TIKa during their soft power activities in Kyrgyzstan from 2000 to 2021.

Conclusion

This chapter aimed to unfold Nye's soft power and bridge it through the Gramscian cultural hegemony approach. On the one hand, the chapter described soft power by analysing Joseph Nye's definition, putting his formulation through the different concepts of power from its 'genesis'. On the other hand, the chapter highlighted how language, education, and religion were connected to the concept of soft power. Finally, this chapter proposed the Gramscian notion of cultural hegemony, which represents a means by which dominant powers can maintain and grow their own power and interests through their educational systems and religious beliefs. Going forward, this approach allowed me to define the Gramscian notion as a suitable theoretical framework to pave the way forward to analysing empirical examination of the three major power educational channels in the subsequent chapters three, four and five.

Chapter 3.

The empirical data of Russian soft power, on the example of Rossotrudnichestvo's activities in Kyrgyzstan from 2000 to 2021

This chapter reviews the Russian soft power strategy's specifics, mainly focusing on the selected case study – Rossotrudnichestvo and how Russia implemented soft power through their educational channels in the Kyrgyz Republic from 2000 to 2021. The aim of this chapter is threefold. First, the subchapter discusses and tracks the evaluation of Russian foreign policies under the government of Vladimir Putin and how the soft power concept fits into the current Russian foreign policy philosophy. Second, the subchapter mainly focuses on the Soviet Legacy in Kyrgyzstan's educational system and the Russian language's special status to show chronological events that influenced on the formation of the contemporary Kyrgyz educational system. Third, the subchapter reviews and tries to systemize Russian soft power policy objectives in Kyrgyzstan through the Rossotrudnichestvo "targets", which are written in the preamble of the Agency as a case study of the thesis, analysing the main instruments of Russian soft power in the country.

3.1 The foreign policy of the Russian Federation and its 'Russian way' of understanding soft power.

The literature on Russian foreign policy commonly reflects Russia's controversial relationship with the West and Russia's struggle with its own national identity after the collapse of the Soviet Union. In the Soviet era, the ideological foundation was based on Marxist-Leninist principles, spreading worldwide socialism, whereas the post - Soviet era did not have a stable ideological base. However, since the 2000s, when Vladimir Putin came to power with his concept of "greatpowerness"¹¹ (velikoderzhavnost) (Russian Foreign Concept, 2000, January 10)¹² and his pivotal

¹¹ During President Putin's reign from 2000 to 2014, the concept of Russian 'greatpowerness' (velikoderzhavnost) changed. This shift was evident in Russia's reluctance to label itself as a great power and a focus on protecting its interests rather than expanding its status. While this shift may have contained Russian aggression, it also showed the risks of deviating from the country's established identity as a great power, which is crucial for maintaining stability.

¹² The concept proceeded from the refusal of the new Russia's foreign policy from ideologized bipolarity, i.e., from the habitual division of the world into two opposing world social systems, declared the rejection of the predominant reliance on military force

Munich speech in 2007 based on the ideas of multipolarity and 'coexistence' on the rule of international law, Russia's foreign policy completely changed its discourse. Putin's philosophy of 'coexistence'¹³ and reformism has led to the exploration of alternative strategies to hard power tactics in international affairs. Thus, since 2006 Joseph Nye's concept of soft power was seen by the Kremlin as applicable to their new foreign policy and began to be used in the official foreign policy discourse - as their "priorities shifted to the development of own soft power tools, based on the active involvement of civil society institutions in foreign policy decision-making"¹⁴.

However, in the beginning, Russian policy focused on finding ways to counter the soft power 'exerted on them from abroad' - in 2004, the ex-Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia, I.S. Ivanov, highlighted the "model of soft power as the shadow domination of the USA." (Ivanov, 2004, pp. 5-14). Russian theorists Tsygankov (2013) and Troiski (2011) stress "that security in the post-Cold War era is not just comprised of hard power, but also has softer dimension, such as economic, political, societal, environmental, human, and informational aspects" where Russia "developing its own approaches and formats" (Budarev, 2015). Thus, Putin's foreign policy course in the early 2000s acquired precise forms with distinctive vital features - one of them was the multi-vector approach to 'counterbalance' the West (Tsygankov, 2006,154). Furthermore, Russia tried to build comprehensive relations and establish a dialogue both with Western countries and with the former republics that were part of the USSR, Asia-Pacific, Latin America, and Africa (Ibragimov,2020), following the plan of the ex-foreign minister of the Russian Federation Yevgeniy Primakov (1999, pp. 60-72) - "Russia should not mimic any pre-existing models, such as the Western one. Since Russia is a distinct geopolitical and cultural entity, it should become its own model, a centre of autonomous power in a multipolar world, guided mainly by its interests".

as a means of foreign policy, recognized the importance of "forming a viable economy in Russia", "assisting national industry, national entrepreneurship in general in entering foreign markets, etc. The new concept also recognized the importance for new Russia of friendly and constructive relations with the USA, countries of the European Community, Japan, China, India, Turkey, and other states. Also, it needs to take into consideration the concept of the Supreme Council, and the emphasis was placed on those areas of Russian foreign policy that were traditional for the USSR: the development of relations with the countries of Central and South-Eastern Europe, incl. with countries that used to be part of the CMEA and the Warsaw Pact. The CIS, the Arab East, Asia, and Africa were also mentioned as significant areas of the new Russia's foreign policy since Russia's geopolitical considerations and economic interests required this. See the full concept at: <https://docs.cntd.ru/document/901751578?marker=6540IN> (accessed:01.06.2023)

¹³ Speech and the following discussion at the Munich Conference on Security Policy. Available at: <http://www.en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/24034> (accessed:01.06.2023)

¹⁴ For the first time, according to the official transcripts of the Russian Foreign Ministry, Minister S.V. Lavrov mentioned soft power on December 11, 2006. Available at: <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/6780>

Thus, it is seen that the 'Russian way' of understanding soft power is interpreted differently from Nye's soft power based on – non- coercion and attraction. However, Nye (2013) himself stresses that countries such as China and Russia, which have declared their commitment to soft power, have failed to become attractive to their desired international audience. He believes that one of the core miscalculations made by China and Russia is not understanding that "the development of soft power needs to be a zero-sum game" (Nye, 2013, 145). Even though Russian officials and academic circles have undertaken some discussions about soft power, mainly to analyse and customize it to Russia. Western academia continues to focus mainly on a few cases – the US and the EU. This deficiency results in a substantial gap in the academic literature and an overall lack of comprehension of how other actors use the concept of soft power, as well as - demonstrated by the current crisis in Ukraine – a misinterpretation of Russia's foreign policy beliefs, motivation, and actions (Osipova, 2014,58). Thus, since the Ukrainian crisis in 2014, Russia has been cited as a major practitioner of 'hybrid warfare' on the former USSR Republics using military and non-military levers of power (Krastev& Galeotti,2015; Hammes, 2018).

The failure of Euro-Atlantic integrations forced Kremlin to make a sharp turn in the second half of the 2010s. Outwardly, it looked like a movement from Greater Europe to Greater Eurasia, perceived by many as a turn to the East. (Trenin, 2019). Putin prioritized strengthening the Russian position with BRICS, ASEAN, and RIC and started integration with Central Asia, primarily within the framework of energy projects, since the price of energy resources began to proliferate. Due to the growing importance of the Central Asia region in terms of international security (operation in Afghanistan) and energy factor, the region has become a place where the interests of Russia, the United States, China, and the European Union (EU) have met (Sahakyan, 2021; Karaev, 2008, pp. 604-619). These conditions pushed Russia to sign the Agreement on a free trade zone on October 18, 2011, to promote the expansion of economic cooperation with the CIS member states, mainly through the improvement of the legal framework to increase the integration process with the Central Asian direction and active integrated with the EurAsEC (Eurasian Economic Community) and create the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO).

Meanwhile, despite of encountered Russian power with the US (the wave of 'colour revolutions' in Georgia (2003), Ukraine (2004) and Kyrgyzstan (2005) and the 'Arab Spring' later in 2011), Moscow has been attempting to strengthen its power of

attraction (*in 2013, the concept of soft power was first time included in the Foreign Policy Concept, where, along with the definition, soft power is described as a tool to increase the effectiveness of Russian foreign policy*)¹⁵ in its vicinity and further afield by cultivating its cultural and historical links through soft power strategies such as language programmes, student exchange and a memorable date as the Victory Day with their 'Immortal Regiments' in the former USSR Republics. Kremlin strengthened its position in the Russian language with the support of compatriots in the CIS countries (the Concept of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation 2013) while Rossotrudnichestvo started the programme "Russian language for 2016–2020", which also provides for its distribution outside Russia, mainly in CIS countries¹⁶. Thus, Rossotrudnichestvo strives to develop a network of Russian Centres for Science and Culture Abroad (RCSC), which should turn into a platform where everyone can be introduced to Russian culture. In addition, several funds have appeared that provide grants for the development of public diplomacy as the Gorchakov Fund and Russkiy Mir, forming a network of Russian Centres and Cabinets of the Russian World (RCSC), which are similar in their functionality to the activities of the RCSC.

Furthermore, a separate channel is the Russian Orthodox Church, and its numerous parishes abroad are serving as the Russian soft power tool. For a long time, it has remained the only core of unity and spiritual support for the Russian people abroad. Thus, John and Carol Garrard (2008) argued that, despite the post-Soviet religious revival, the Russian Orthodox Church was a 'hidden mainstream' and the most influential religious organization that has been credited with numerous accomplishments, including greater access to educational institutions and the military, as well as the restoration of property that had been taken away during the Soviet period (Blitt, 2010). President Putin repeatedly stresses the Russian position "on the protection of traditional values, the values of the traditional family and the moral basis of civilization of every nation"¹⁷ and the Church actively helps to increase the "clericalization of the country" (Lisovskaya& Karpov,2010).

Along with this, Russia applied Stability and Cooperation Diplomacy (Liu,2022) to preserve its status as a great power, maintaining cordial relations with the West (the

¹⁵ The Concept of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation. Available at: <https://docs.cntd.ru/document/901764263> (accessed 05/02/2023).

¹⁶ The programme "Russian language for 2016-2020", Available at: <https://rs.gov.ru/> (accessed: 05/02/2023)

¹⁷ Message of the President to the Federal Assembly. December 12, 2013. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/news/19825> (Accessed: 05/01/2023)

Kremlin managed to persuade the EU that it could be a reliable economic partner in projects such as the Nord Stream and Baltic pipeline) ensuring stability in the CIS region (establishing Custom Union and Eurasian Economic Union) and domestic socio-political stability as well as furthering a policy of cooperation and abstaining from conflicts with other countries.

Nevertheless, it needs to be stressed out that Russian soft power is still in its infancy and formalization, forging its own development path. Even K. Kosachev (2012), the head of Rossotrudnichestvo, acknowledged that “Russia has yet to develop a specific export model and, thus, cannot export it”. Studies by Ovsepiyan (2017), Connolly (2018), and Kornilov & Makarychev (2015,241) contend that Russia’s discourse on soft power oscillates between two conceptual interpretations: It can be seen either as an omnipresent tool that each state utilizes internationally or as a country-specific instrument which allows for the development of a Russian version of soft power that distinguishes it from the Western one. Thus, in the first case, Russia would replicate the Western example. In the other case, it would have to create a conceptual alternative to the mechanism of soft power employed by countries that are regarded as competitors or adversaries by the Kremlin, primarily the USA and the EU- while “the Kremlin accuses the West of using soft power to interfere the domestic affairs of thirds parts, Russia’s soft power institutions as Russia Today TV, Russian World Foundation has been modelled from the Western homologues” (Makarychev, 2015, Ferrari & Aldo, 2020). Thus, these studies indicate the differences and limitations of Russian soft power.

Summing up, the foreign policy of Russia during the Putin era, from 2000 to 2021, has been characterized by an emphasis on restoring Russia’s status as a great power, reaffirming its sovereignty, and expanding its influence throughout the world. Although, in 2016, Russia entered the top 30 countries in terms of the use of soft power, attaining the 27th rank. Despite this accomplishment, it is evident that the utilization of soft power within Russian foreign policy has yet to be fully developed. It should be noted that while the Russian interpretation of soft power deviates significantly from Nye’s definition, there is also a lack of clarity in the terminology used by Russian academics and politicians. Russia’s interpretation of soft power includes using cultural and political instruments, economic aspects (establishment of the Customs Union and Eurasian Economic Union), and the use of non-governmental organizations. Additionally, Russia’s definition of soft power incorporates the

'humanitarian dimension' of foreign policy, like the notion of public diplomacy. However, its soft power is geographically limited to certain groups and 'friendship societies' (Wilson, 2015) as right-wing Europeans and former USSR Republics.

The thesis further will focus on the evaluation of Russian soft power in Kyrgyzstan in detail, but first, it is necessary to characterize the features of these relations within Russian Central Asian policy on the Kyrgyz example. Second, I am going to unpack the Kyrgyz education system chronologically after the accession to the Russian Empire in the second half of the XIX century, then the system of education during the Soviet period to show how the Soviet legacy and the russification of the region influenced on the current educational system of modern Kyrgyzstan. Also, to identify the status of the Russian language in modern Kyrgyzstan, where the Russian language still has the status of an official language among the countries of the former Soviet Union.

3.2 The Soviet Legacy in Kyrgyzstan.

The thesis above has concluded that the Russian interpretation and understanding of soft power has its unique way of using cultural and political instruments. It deviates from the original Nye's soft power definition. Several schools argue that Russia's presence in Central Asia is primarily driven by hard power rather than soft power (Cooley & Heathershaw, 2012; Pifer, 2006). However, "in the historical memory of the peoples of Central Asia, Russia appears instead not as a colonizer but as a modernizer of local societies" (Nosov & Bochevera, 2008, p.10) and Russian culture is regarded as civilizing (Borisov & Panarin, 2008, p. 103). Often referred to as "the big brother", Russia is the former colonial power (Mazhikeev & Edwards, 2020). In this way can be said that Russian soft power presence has been for more than 160 years since it acceded to the Russian Empire in 1855. The Russian Empire and later the Soviet Union significantly influenced on the development of the Kyrgyz education system and the modernization of all spheres of life among the peoples of Central Asia by introducing a cultural, linguistic, societal, and economic process. To unpack this approach, one needs to back in history and look at the basement of the formation of the Kyrgyz Soviet society.

Education of Kyrgyz people after the accession to the Russian Empire.

After the accession of Kyrgyzstan to the Russian Empire in the second half of the XIX century, the Russian Empire paid attention to the creation of "educational" institutions to "educate useful citizens, and worthy sons for our Motherland, Russian Empire" These organizations of public education in the region seemed to be a matter "all the more necessary and urgent." (Sahadeo, 2018, pp.33-37). Thus, the conquest and annexation of Kyrgyzstan by the Russian Empire brought with it a policy of literacy and public education in the region, with a particular focus on promoting the Russian language among the local population. This was done to create social groups loyal or close to the Russian minority and to facilitate the assimilation of the locals into the Tsarist imperial order. As such, the Russian language became a primary tool for realising the Empire's colonial interests. One of the means of "Russification" of the local population was to be Russian-native schools, introduced in 1884 and combining Muslim 'mektebs' and the Russian school of literacy, with the introduction of Russian as the state language into them. This tool of imperial policy was intended to break up the traditional education system and demonstrate the superiority of the Russian language and culture. As a result, this policy significantly impacted the educational and linguistic processes in the region. It led to the rapid assimilation of the local population into the Russian cultural and linguistic environment and the establishment of the Russian language as the official language. The introduction of the Russian-native school system also had far-reaching consequences for the development of the local culture, leading to the emergence of a new, hybrid cultural identity. Thus, at the beginning of 1870, the first Russian Empire civilian and church elementary educational institutions started operating on the territory of Kyrgyzstan. The first schools were opened in Karakol on October 1, 1874, consisting of two classrooms, a library room, and an entrance hall. It had 33 boys, and three girls enrolled, all receiving free education. In 1879, permission was granted to open a one-class female parish school in Karakol (Przhevalsk)¹⁸. The same year, a Russian elementary school was opened in Pishpek, and in 1880 in Belovodsk, 1882 in the villages of Karabalty and Sokuluk, 1888 in Dmitrievka (Talas) and two-class parish schools for males and females in Osh. In 1876, the teaching of the Russian language was officially accepted; meanwhile, the teaching of Islam was forbidden. By 1899 the Russian cultural expansion was in five

¹⁸ Osmonov, B. (2018). The History of Kyrgyzstan. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 8(3), 4-17.

central districts of Kyrgyzstan- Osh, Sokuluk, Tynaev, Dzhumgal, and Ketmen-Tyube¹⁹.

Therefore, the education of Kyrgyz people after the accession to the Russian Empire was largely aimed at assimilating them into Russian culture. The Soviet Academic V. Bartold (1912, pp.28-40) points out that "the principle was firmly pursued that classes in the Russian class should be conducted exclusively in Russian, and only with the help of the Russian language should children acquire "the necessary knowledge and development". During this time, the Russian language, culture, and religion were heavily promoted among Kyrgyz people. Thus, by 1917, a women's new method school had been established in the capital as part of the assimilation process. Lately, the Soviet rulers saw the practice of women in hijab as regressive and as an overall reduction of women's rights, which allowed the Soviet government to advance their ideological objectives (equality for all Soviet citizens, regardless of gender) and their practical aims (mobilizing the whole workforce to meet the increased need for labour) (Northrop & Taylor, 2004).

Thus, the history of relations between Russia and Kyrgyzstan in matters of education reflects the gradual increase in the role of the former in the educational and cultural development of the latter. This can be attributed to the establishment of educational establishments, the emergence of the first Kyrgyz printed books, and the introduction of the Russian language. In addition, the development of cultural and educational relations was facilitated by the activity of the Kyrgyz intelligentsia, which contributed to the increase in the number of educational institutions, the development of education and the spread of literacy. As a result, the development of educational relations between Russia and Kyrgyzstan in the pre-revolutionary period had a significant impact on the socio-cultural and educational development of the region and the establishment of the Kyrgyz intelligentsia, which became a cornerstone for the further development of the national consciousness.

Education during the years of Soviet power

The Soviet era saw a massive effort to eliminate illiteracy and a dramatic expansion in access to education, resulting in a dramatic increase in the number of schools, students, and teachers in Kyrgyzstan. The Bolsheviks sought to transform what they viewed as a 'pre-modern' society into one that reflected their ideological vision

¹⁹ *ibid*

(Akyildiz,2012). Thus, in 1919, courses in basic literacy were made compulsory for citizens aged 18 to 40²⁰. In addition, evening literacy courses were established in cities such as Bishkek and Tokmok. Since education expanded in all regions of Kyrgyzstan, the Latin alphabet was introduced in 1928-29 and was soon adopted in all Kyrgyz schools. However, in 1940 it was replaced with the Russian alphabet (Osmonov, 2018). The philosophy 'better-educated citizens meant better Communists' (Dowell,2016) pushed Soviet Kyrgyzstan for literacy and education to break away from pre-nomadic culture. Thus, by 1975, 86.6% of students were graduating from eight classes and continuing secondary education, and this figure rose to 98.6% by 1979. During this time, the number of schools in the republic rose fifteenfold, students increased by 114 times, and teachers by 230 times²¹. The opening of the Institute of Public Education in Kyrgyzstan's capital on October 25, 1925, marked the beginning of a long history of higher education in the country. Until 1932, this policy of education expansion remained in effect, but then the Stalinist security measures targeting minority groups resulted in a greater emphasis on Russification in language and education. Until the end of the Soviet Union, the educational system was dominated by 'Russification' - by the early 1980s, the country had developed an impressive educational infrastructure, with over 55,000 students enrolled in 10 higher educational institutions and over 40,000 enrolled in secondary educational institutions²².

Thus, since the Kyrgyz annexation by the Russian Empire and during the Soviet period, the educational system was heavily controlled and subordinated to the party principle and was heavily influenced by communist ideology. In higher, mainly secondary, and vocational educational institutions, all subjects were taught only in Russian, and the Kyrgyz language was limited. As a result, Kyrgyz people who lived in the capital and in the main cities and towns began to forget their native language, national traditions, and religion. Thus, the Soviet government was eager to cultivate national cultures as part of an ideological and strategic political decision and push to create the ideal 'Soviet' citizen (Dowell,2016).

Therefore, the Soviet period of Kyrgyzstan had a unique historical development which blurred traditional national borders and strengthened ethnocultural and social ties between different peoples. This was further enhanced by the commonality of religion

²⁰ *ibid*

²¹ Ministry of education of Kyrgyzstan, Available at: <https://edu.gov.kg/> (accessed: 20.02.2023)

²² *ibid*

and national or internal political movements of the late 19th to early 20th centuries. As a result, a new generation of the national intelligentsia was born, influenced by Muslim religious traditions and Russian secular cultural and educational traditions. This new generation of intelligentsia has played an essential role in the modern development of Kyrgyzstan.

Modern Educational system and the Status of the Russian language

After the collapse of the USSR in August 1991, Kyrgyzstan declared its independence and started to create its own domestic and foreign policies. As a result, the education system was modernized at all levels - the National Program "Knowledge", the Program of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic A. Akaev "Personnel of the 21st Century"²³, and the National Program "On the Accessibility of Education" ("Zhetkinchek")²⁴ became a foundation of the modern educational policy. The Kyrgyz education system experienced a shift from centralized curricula and state-required models of education to localized instruction due to decreased government budgets, regional economic disruption, and a weakened national government's ability to finance education (Dowell, 2016). However, the Soviet base and traditions of speaking Russian were still widespread before 2001 in all areas – industrial, scientific, cultural, educational, and household. Thus, before 2001 in the Kyrgyz Constitution, there was not any state obligation to teach the Kyrgyz and other languages in schools, whereas teaching in schools was conducted mainly in the Russian language. Nevertheless, since 2001, Putin's Russia has reapproached the Central Asian region by integrating processes in the EurAsEC and CIS agreements, raising a question with regulation migration flow, where Russian policy pursued the protection of the interests of compatriots in the Republic. The spreading of the Russian language was a key focus as it contributes to more "active cooperation between the Central Asian countries in the CIS organization" (Russian Foreign Policy Activity 2019).

However, later the political discourse of the "titular nation"²⁵ of the first Kyrgyz president and then Bakiev presidency retained - 'the fundamental idea of the

²³ Akaev, A. "National Program "Knowledge": The Program of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic A. Akaev "Personnel of the 21st Century". Official website of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2000. <http://www.gov.kg/ru/programmy/knowledgenational/>

²⁴ Zakon KR "Ob obrazovanii v KR" ot 30 aprelya 2003 No 92, Available at: <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/1216?cl=ru-ru>

²⁵ During the first Kyrgyz president's term and Bakiev's presidency, the focus was on restoring and enhancing the sovereignty of the Kyrgyz people. This required unity among the Kyrgyz people, which was deemed crucial to ensure stability in the country and gain the support of all residents of Kyrgyzstan. The emphasis on the Kyrgyz people's unity aimed to highlight the significance of the titular nation and maintain its position as the foundation of stability in Kyrgyzstan.

importance of reviving and improving the statehood of the Kyrgyz people, the thesis was added about the unity of the Kyrgyz as the foundation of the country's stability and the consent of the entire people of Kyrgyzstan' (version of the Constitution of November 8 and December 30, 2006, and October 21, 2007) (Hundlykova, 2009; Kagarlitsky & Ibragimov, 2012, pp. 173-194). The "Tulip" revolution of March 2005 marked a shift in the attitude towards language as a form of power, reflected in the educational sphere. The new version of the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic, adopted in November 2006, mandated that the state create conditions for citizens to learn the state language and two foreign languages in pre-school and primary education²⁶. In comparison, the previous version of the Law "On Education"²⁷ (April 2003) required that all educational institutions guarantee the knowledge and development of the Kyrgyz language as the state language and the study of Russian as the official language and one foreign language. The October 2007 version of the Constitution removed the provision for studying Russian as an official language, signifying a drop in its status. In 2007, the National Commission for the State Language initiated a policy that mandated 50% of all television channels switch to the national language. Furthermore, a statement was released by the commission advocating for the abandonment of the Russian-language names of settlements located in the Republic²⁸.

Following the revolution in April 2010, the issue of the Russian language became a highly debated and controversial topic. From 2010 to 2012, discussions about abolishing the Russian language's official status were held at the highest levels and covered by the press and academic conferences. In addition, the Kyrgyz-speaking Journalists' Association released an Appeal²⁹ on disseminating information in the Kyrgyz language. Furthermore, the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of the Kyrgyz Republic translated sermons and office work into Kyrgyz. The National Commission for the State Language also published a Statement advocating terminating all Russian-

²⁶ Zakon KR "O novoy redakcii Konstitucii KR" ot 15 yanvarya 2007 No2, Available at: cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/1?cl=ru-ru (accessed:23.02.2023)

²⁷ Zakon KR "Ob obrazovanii v KR" ot 30 aprelya 2003 No 92, Available at: <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/1216?cl=ru-ru> (accessed:23.02.2023)

²⁸ Appeal of the National Commission on the State Language under the President of the Kyrgyz Republic. Available at: <http://www.gezitter.kg/society/1499/> (accessed 20.02.2023)

²⁹ Obrashenie Nacionalnoy Komissii po goduratvennomu yaziku pri presidente KR, Available at: <http://www.gezitter.kg/society/1499/> (accessed:23.02.2023)

language settlement names in the Republic. However, in 2012 during Putin's visit to Kyrgyzstan, the Presidents made a joint statement [...to provide state support for the spread of the Russian language in Kyrgyzstan and the Kyrgyz language in Russia...] as Russia has a unique source – migrants, around (1,63 million Kyrgyz people work in Russia). Thus, during 2010–2020 Kyrgyzstan received \$ 20,1 billion in money transfers from Russia. Later in 2014, Russia contributed the authorized capital of the Russian-Kyrgyz Development Fund of USD 500 million. According to the OECD,³⁰ from 2010–2019, Russian direct investment through technical assistance and humanitarian aid to Kyrgyzstan was USD 1.18 billion. 69,1% of Russian direct investment with direct budget support is debt relief operations.³¹

Table 4: Russian direct investment to Kyrgyzstan. Based on Foreign direct investment, net inflows, statistics of Central bank of Russia, foreign aid. Available at: https://cbr.ru/vfs/statistics/credit_statistics/direct_investment/18-dir_inv.xls

Country	2010	2015	2019	2010-2019
Kyrgyzstan	472,8	1144,1	278,9	4453,7

Table 5. Money transfers by individuals from Russia to Kyrgyzstan, USD million. Available at: based on Central bank of the Russian Federation, "Cross-border transactions of individuals by main countries of counterparties" Transfers from Russia from 2010 to 2020, Available at: http://www.cbr.ru/statistics/macro_itm/m

Years	2010	2015	2020	2010-2020
Kyrgyzstan	1128,0	1383,0	1715,8	20136,1

However, despite numerous Russian infusions of investment, Kyrgyzstan adopted the National Program for the Development of the State Language and Improvement of the Language Policy in the Kyrgyz Republic for 2014-2020 in June 2014³². This program suggests transferring all government documentation to the Kyrgyz language and expects all organizations and business entities to conduct official business in Kyrgyzstan by 2020. Moreover, in 2018, the Ministry of Education and Science announced that enrolment exams must be in the Kyrgyz language in primary, secondary and higher professional education.

³⁰ Organization for Economic Co-operation and development. Available at: <https://stats.oecd.org/> (accessed 24.01.2023)

³¹ *Ibid*

³² Central Asian Bureau for Analytical Reporting (CABAR). Available at: https://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKewjc0furzbmBAxXwW0EAHa95DEYQFnoECBsQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fcabar.asia%2Fen%2Fkyrgyzstan-how-to-find-a-balance-in-language-policy%3Fpdf%3D14061&usq=AOvVaw06x9dFlp5vP_JTumO8OFXb&opi=89978449 (accessed 24.01.2023)

As a result of this initiative, in September 2019, President S. Jeenbekov acknowledged, "As the analysis shows, many measures outlined in this document have not been implemented. Currently, only 40% of office work carried out by ministries and departments is conducted in the Kyrgyz language, which has a negative impact on the authority of the state³³". To resolve it, the Kyrgyz government has adopted a National Development Strategy for 2018-2040³⁴, which strives to ensure the Kyrgyz language is used in all regions of the country, modernized to meet the needs of society, and used for full communication and to increase the competitiveness of citizens in the market of the Customs Union.

Therefore, the status of the Russian language in Kyrgyzstan is a highly politicized topic, particularly when the country is experiencing political instability or new initiatives to define national identity are launched. From 2000 to 2021, the Kyrgyz government implemented policies that have led to a decrease in the use of Russian. This has resulted in a degradation of Russian language proficiency, a loss of its symbolic value amongst Russian speakers, and an attitude of utilitarianism among Kyrgyz speakers. Contributing factors include the migration of people and a decrease in the number of hours allocated to studying Russian in schools and universities, with 80% of the population living in areas where the language is no longer in use. But at the same time, it is essential to note that Kyrgyzstan stands out from other former Soviet republics in that all sections of the population have an interest in learning Russian due labour migration to Russia and the availability of educational and employment opportunities. Since 2015, Kyrgyz nationals have been obligated to acquire and present a certificate denoting the successful completion of an examination in the Russian language to enter the Russian border. Thus, the position of the Russian language in Kyrgyzstan continues to be discriminated against, although its practical demand today is relatively high.

³³ President S.Zheenbekov. Sohranyat I priumnojat nash rodnoy yazik vajno nastolko, naskolko vajno berech godarstvennost I nexavisimost, Available at: http://www.president.kg/ru/sobytiya/15060_foto__prezident_sooronbay_gheenbekov_sohranyat_i_priumnoghat_nash_rodnoy_yazik_vaghno_nastolko_naskolko_vaghno_berech_gosudarstvennost_i_nezavisimost (accessed: 24.01.2023)

³⁴ Nacionalnaya Programma razvitiya gosuderstvennogo yazika I sovershenstvovaniya yazikovoy politiki v KR na 2014-2020. Utverjdena Ukazom Prezidenta KR ot 2 iyunya 2014 No 119, Available at: <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/63683> (accessed: 24.01.2023)

This thesis will further analyse Russia's soft power through an examination of the activities of Rossotrudnichestvo in Kyrgyzstan between 2000 and 2021. The subsequent subchapter evaluates Russian soft power policy objectives via the Rossotrudnichestvo "targets," as articulated in the preamble of the Agency, which serves as a case study for this thesis.

3.3 Rossotrudnichestvo

Rossotrudnichestvo is a Russian government organisation with a mission to promote education, science, and culture abroad established in 2008, Rossotrudnichestvo facilitates the international exchange of students, academics, and experts and supports Russian language and culture programs in other countries. The organisation has also been instrumental in developing a network of Russian Centres established in numerous countries worldwide. As of 2021, there are more than 180 Rossotrudnichestvo centres located in more than 60 countries around the world. This network serves to promote and strengthen the Russian language and culture, as well as to provide an avenue for the dissemination of Russian culture, science, and educational programs abroad. Moreover, Rossotrudnichestvo has successfully utilised its platform to facilitate bilateral educational exchanges and recruit international students to Russian universities and research institutions.

Thus, based on the State program – “Foreign Policy Activity”³⁵ and the Russian Concept of Foreign Policy 2013, where soft power first appeared as "an integral part of modern international relations", foreign policy activity can be divided into three sub-programs:

1. The development and implementation of national policy and legal regulations in the field of international relations of the Russian Federation
2. Financial obligations of the Russian Federation to ensure interstate structures established by CIS member-states
3. Activities in International Humanitarian Cooperation (IHC) and International Development Assistance (IDA)

This subchapter examines the objectives of Subprogram 3 pertinent to the Kyrgyz Republic that were set forth at the opening of the Rossotrudnichestvo headquarters in

³⁵ State program of the Russian Federation "Foreign policy activity". Available at: http://www.mid.ru/foreign_policy/official_documents/-/asset_publisher/CptICk6B6Z29/content/id/698403 (accessed 15.06.2022)

the Republic. Further, I try to systemize and unpack Russian soft power policy objectives through the Rossotrudnichestvo "targets", which are written in the preamble of the Agency.

a. To promote Russian science, culture, and education in foreign countries.

The Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States Affairs, Compatriots Living Abroad, and International Humanitarian Cooperation, commonly known as Rossotrudnichestvo, is an autonomous Russian federal government agency under the jurisdiction of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs³⁶. The Agency was created from its predecessor agency by Presidential decree, signed by Russian President Dmitry Medvedev on 6 September 2008, to maintain Russia's influence in the Commonwealth of Independent States and foster friendly ties to advance Russia's political and economic interests in foreign states³⁷. In order to gain an understanding of how Rossotrudnichestvo works in the Kyrgyz Republic to maintain and strengthen the prestige of the Russian educational system, it is necessary first to examine the intuitional and regulatory framework on which the Federal Agency operates³⁸. (See the footnotes).

Thus, the Agreement on cooperation in education between the Kyrgyz Republic and the Russian Federation, which has been in effect since March 29, 1996, became an integral existence of the Russian educational presence in the Republic. Kyrgyz students are still drawn to the high quality of Russian education, its geographic

³⁶ Official website of Rossotrudnichestvo; Available at: <https://rwp.agency> (accessed: 16.02.2023)

³⁷ *Ibid*

³⁸ Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of September 6, 2008, N1315 "On some issues of public administration in the field of international cooperation"; Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of May 12, 2008, N 724 "Issues of the system and structure of federal executive bodies"; Regulations on the Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States, Compatriots Living Abroad, and International Humanitarian Cooperation; Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of November 13, 2009, No. 1283 "On Approval of the Regulations on the Representation of Rossotrudnichestvo Abroad and Representatives of the Agency in the Diplomatic Representation of the Russian Federation"; Regulations on the representative offices of the Federal Agency outside the Russian Federation and representatives of this Agency as part of the diplomatic mission of the Russian Federation; Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of August 10, 2011 No. 1065 "On Approving the List of Information on the Activities of the Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States, Compatriots Living Abroad, and on International Humanitarian Cooperation; Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of May 7, 2012 No. 605 "On measures to implement the foreign policy course of the Russian Federation"; Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of May 8, 2013 N 476 "Issues of the Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States, compatriots living abroad, and international humanitarian cooperation"; Decree of the President of the Russian Federation No. 640 of November 30, 2016 "On Approval of the Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation".

proximity and shared mentality. Russia is a major destination for migration in Central Asia, and its higher education system is highly appealing (Letnyakov& Emelyanova, 2017). Thus, In the 2013/2014 academic year, a total of 80,910 students from the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries studied in the Russian Federation, with 3,591 of them coming from Kyrgyzstan³⁹. This cohort of international students studying in Russia has the potential to enhance the role of the Russian language in Central Asia by providing an emerging academic base for its dissemination. Thus, the Russian Ministry of Education, with the assistance of Rossotrudnichestvo, has provided Kyrgyz students with free education opportunities since 2009. As per the Agreement between the government of the Kyrgyz Republic and the government of the Russian Federation on cooperation in the field of higher education (Moscow, 29 March 1996), approximately 370-400 budget places (quotas) are allocated to citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic in Russian universities on an annual basis (see the appendixes, the official response to the researcher from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Education of Kyrgyzstan).

Years	Quotas (budget places for Kyrgyz students)
2009-2010	115
2010-2011	159
2011-2012	121
2012-2013	156
2013-2014	115
2014-2015	465
2015-2016	445
2016-2017	360
2017-2018	364
2018-2019	347
2019-2020	330
2020-2021	370
2021-2022	375

Table 6. Source: the official letter of the Ministry of education of Kyrgyz Republic to the researcher (k-2594 from 19.10.2021)

³⁹ Facts of Education (2016). Academic mobility of foreign students in Russia. Issue 7 (July 2016). Moscow, Russia: NRU HSE

Since 2014, the Representative Office of Rossotrudnichestvo in Kyrgyzstan has been responsible for the selection of documents for candidates applying to budget places in Russian universities. Furthermore, eight branches of Russian universities functioning in the Republic serve as a pillar of Russian language education in the Republic:

The Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University (KRSU) was opened in 1993 in accordance with the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance between the Kyrgyz Republic and the Russian Federation (Moscow, 06/10/1992), Decree of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic (Bishkek, 09/28/1992) and the Agreement between the governments of the Russian Federation and the Kyrgyz Republic on the conditions for the establishment and activities of the Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University (Bishkek, 09.09.1993), the Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation (Moscow, No. 149 of 02.23.1994), the order of the Chairman of the State Committee RF for higher education (No 326-128/1 of February 14, 1994) and by order of the Minister of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic⁴⁰. Agreement on the conditions of activity of the Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University, signed by the Ministers of Education and Science of the Russian Federation and the Kyrgyz Republic on April 30, 2008, in Moscow. According to the KRSU data, at the beginning of 2020, the total number of students in all forms of education was 9110 people annually. On June 29, 2018, by order of the President of the Russian Federation, V. Putin, the staff of the Interstate Educational Institution of Higher Professional Education “Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University named after the first President of the Russian Federation, B.N. Yeltsin” (Sharipov, 2021) was commended “for his great contribution to the preservation and development of the Russian language and culture in the Kyrgyz Republic and Central Asia.”⁴¹

Based on interstate agreements, branches of well-known Russian universities operate in the Kyrgyz Republic, which together provide a Russian educational presence. There are:

Bishkek branch of the Russian University of Economics by G. V. Plekhanov is the foreign educational, methodological, and scientific division of the leading state

⁴⁰ Kyrgyz- Slavic University website; Available at: https://www.krsu.edu.kg/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=846&Itemid=125&lang=ru (accessed 17.02.2023)

⁴¹ *ibid*

economic university of the Russian Federation, operating on the territory of the Kyrgyz Republic. The specialization of the branch is the training of highly qualified personnel in trade and economic specialities based on the state educational standards of the Russian Federation with the issuance of a diploma of the Russian state sample to graduates. The basis for the formation of the branch was an agreement on the establishment and functioning of branches of universities in the states - parties to the Treaty on the Customs Union and the Common Economic Space of February 26, 1999; an Agreed decision of the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation and the Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic "On the establishment and functioning of the branch of the Moscow State University of Education and Science in Bishkek dated November 29, 2001⁴².

The Baltic State Technical University "VOENMEH" branch, named after D. F. Ustinov in Bishkek, was founded in 2004. The branch conducts training in information systems and technologies", "machines and technology of metal forming", and "economics and management of an enterprise." VOENMEH students' study in Bishkek for two years and then continue their education in St. Petersburg.

Also, there are two branches of one of the first non-state universities in Russia – the **Moscow Institute of Entrepreneurship**, which was opened in Bishkek and Karakol cities.

The Bishkek branch of the educational autonomous non-profit organization of higher education "**International Slavic Institute**" (**BFISI**) is a structural subdivision of the educational autonomous non-profit organization of higher education "International Slavic Institute". The Bishkek branch of the International Slavic Institute was registered in December 2000. At present, due to a name change, the Bishkek branch of the educational autonomous non-profit organization of higher education "International Slavic Institute" has been re-registered. In the CF MSI, the educational process is carried out by linguistics, finance and credit, jurisprudence, general and clinical psychology and correctional pedagogy, humanitarian, natural science, and mathematical disciplines.⁴³

⁴² World Intellectual Property Organization. Agreements. Available at: https://wipolex-res.wipo.int/edocs/lexdocs/treaties/en/acucez/trt_acucez.pdf (17.02.2023)

⁴³ Bishkekskiy filial obrazovatel'noy avtonomnoy nekommercheskoy organizatsii visshego obrazovaniya Mejdunarodniy Slavyanskiy Institut; Available at: <http://bilim.akipress.org/profile:2273/bishkekskii-filial-obrazovatelnoi-avtonomnoi-nekom/?from=bilim&place=list> (accessed 17.02.2023)

The Russian State Social University (RSSU) branch in the city of Osh of the Kyrgyz Republic has been operating since 1996. It is currently the only branch of the RSSU not only in Kyrgyzstan but throughout Central Asia, in the branch 950 students' study.

In 2019, there was established **a branch of Moscow State University in Osh. M. V. Lomonosov**, such branches are already operating in Dushanbe, Tashkent, Astana, Yerevan, and Baku.⁴⁴

Also, Russia's educational presence is not only in higher education - based on a joint project between the subsidiary of Russia's Gazprom and Rossotrudnichestvo -the Gazprom secondary school was also opened on September 2, 2019, in Bishkek. Kyrgyz Republic President S. Jeenbekov, Bishkek Mayor A. Surakmatov, and Gazprom Deputy Chairman V. Markelov attended the school's grand opening⁴⁵. The school has 33 classrooms, 960 places, and 55 teachers. The purpose of the work of the Gazprom Kyrgyzstan School as a resource centre in Bishkek is to prepare applicants from Kyrgyzstan, which should include Russian compatriots, to enter Russian universities. Currently, the school has official relations with such Russian university centres as the Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology, the Russian State Pedagogical University, and the St. Petersburg National Research University of Information Technologies, Mechanics and Optics. The school provides applicants with an opportunity to obtain pre-university training in Russian and courses in mathematics, physics, and chemistry. Additionally, the school provides advice and information on university admissions and the application process. The research conducted by the Gazprom Kyrgyzstan School seeks to evaluate the success of the school's mission and its effectiveness in preparing applicants for university entrance in Russia. In addition, the students should receive Russian and Kyrgyz state-recognized certificates upon graduation. This project is part of a more considerable effort from Russia to create a social-cultural environment through pre-university training abroad.

Furthermore, on November 11, 2019, an Agreement on Cooperation was signed between the Federal Agency for the CIS Affairs, Compatriots Living Abroad, and International Humanitarian Cooperation and the Department for Foreign Economic

⁴⁴ Filial MGU v Kyrgyzstane mogut otkryt v Oshe, Available at: https://24.kg/obschestvo/125517_filial_mgu_vkyrgyzstane_mogut_otkryit_voshe/ (accessed 24.07.2022)

⁴⁵ Shkola Gazprom Kyrgyzstan oficialna otkryla svoi dveri dlya uchashihsya, Available at: <https://kyrgyzstan.gazprom.ru/press/news/ 2019/09/> (accessed 23.07.2022)

and International Relations of the City of Moscow, as attested to by the head of Rossotrudnichestvo and the Minister of the Government of Moscow, respectively. Thus, there are ten Russian institutions officially operating in the Republic:

Table 7: Russian institutes and schools in Kyrgyz Republic

1. Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University (KRSU)	1993
2. Bishkek branch of the Russian University of Economics by G. V. Plekhanov	1999
3. The Baltic State Technical University "VOENMEH" branch, named after D. F. Ustinov 2004	2004
5. Moscow Institute of Entrepreneurship in Bishkek	2000
6. Moscow Institute of Entrepreneurship in Karakol	2000
6. "International Slavic Institute" (BFISI) 2000	2000
7. The Russian State Social University (RSSU) branch in the city of	1996
8. Branch of Moscow State University in Osh. M. V. Lomonosov	2019
10. Gazprom school	2019

Other measures include Russia's initiative to create 2008 a network university based on master's programs. Its essence was that citizens of the CIS could, after graduating with a bachelor's degree in their own country, enter a master's program in Russia. This project aims to develop cooperation and inter-university relations in the field of higher education in the territory of the CIS countries. According to the latest data from the Ministry of Education and Science of Russia, the network university project has been successfully implemented, and more than 60,000 students from 15 countries have graduated from master's programs since its inception.⁴⁶

In the past ten years, Kyrgyzstan has seen a decline in the number of foreign nationals participating in educational programs facilitated by Russian instructors in Russian universities and their subdivisions. However, this phenomenon has been accompanied by a paradox wherein the decrease has been accompanied by an increase in interest in Russian language studies, as evidenced by the number of students enrolled in 2005/2006 (11,991) as compared to 2015/2016 (14,667) (Arefiev, 2017, p. 320). Despite the heightened interest, the shortage of qualified Russian teachers has led to a shift in these students opting to attend Turkish-Kyrgyz

⁴⁶ Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation. Available at: https://edu.gov.ru/en/about/strategy/network_university/ (accessed 16.01.2022)

Universities or other institutions of higher education, as opposed to Russian universities.

b) To support compatriots abroad

The Kremlin has identified those Russians who found themselves outside of the nation's borders following the collapse of the Soviet Union as the 'Russian World' and views it as a major vehicle of external influence (Chepurin, 2006). In order to promote and consolidate the activities of the Russian diaspora, Rossotrudnichestvo has implemented the program for compatriots 2015-2017⁴⁷, which involves the interaction of numerous organizations such as Cossack, Orthodox, Slavic, educational communities, and youth, research, and ethnic centres. Through this program, Rossotrudnichestvo seeks to ensure the maintenance of the intellectual, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds of Russian-speaking communities, as well as developing educational, cultural, research, and religious ties and providing support to youth and socially vulnerable compatriots. This program has been carried out in 77 countries, including Kyrgyzstan. In Kyrgyzstan, there are forty⁴⁸ officially registered Russian-speaking associations, of which a number are actively engaged in providing cultural and economic support. Nonetheless, only a portion of them are actively functioning⁴⁹.

Despite a decrease in the number of Russian compatriots in Kyrgyzstan, by 2020, the organizations of Russian compatriots have managed to form a significant sector of civil society in Kyrgyzstan. This is due, in part, to the Coordinating Council of Russian

⁴⁷ The Russian Government's Program for support and protection of the rights of compatriots living abroad 2017-2017. Available at: http://www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/0/C9D614E4C0B7B2FAC3257D4B004C3B4C (accessed 15.01.2022)

⁴⁸ Directory of public associations of Russian compatriots. Available at: http://korsovet.kg/spravochnik_organizacii (accessed 15.01.2022)

⁴⁹ the key associations include The Cossack Cultural and Economic Centre "Vozrozhdeniye" (1993), the Russian Unifying Union of Compatriots (2008), Russian in Kyrgyzstan (2008), the Russian Centre 'Harmony' (2005), We are Compatriots (2008), the Vladimir Society for the Support of Images and Culture (2004), The Slavic Foundation, the Public Association "Kyrgyz Society of Blockade of Leningrad" (1994), the Public Foundation "Centre for Support of the Russian Language and Cultural Heritage "Russian Heritage" (2012), the Public Association of Veterans of the Great Patriotic War and Labour "Red Carnation" (2006), the Public Association "Union of Folk Art of Russian Compatriots "Russian Soul" (2007), the Association of Legal Entities "Kyrgyz-Russian Association - New Economic Initiatives" (2013), the Public Foundation for the Support and Protection of the Rights of Russian Compatriots "Freedom" (2015), Public Foundation "Heritage of Victory" (2019), Public Association "Union of Compatriots of Kyrgyzstan" (2019).

Compatriots in Kyrgyzstan (CCRCK), which serves as the executive body of the Council of Organizations of Russian Compatriots in Kyrgyzstan and works in close collaboration with the Russian Embassy in Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Consulate General and the representative offices of Rossotrudnichestvo. CCRCK functions as a consultative representative body, providing coordination of the activities of public organizations of Russian compatriots, aimed at consolidating efforts to address issues in the social, legal, economic and humanitarian spheres, as well as strengthening bonds with Russia and utilizing the intellectual, economic, and social potential of representatives of the Russian diaspora, in order to enhance its standing in the system of interstate economic relations with Kyrgyzstan. Subsequently, the Cultural and Business Centre - "House of Moscow", was established in January 2008, aiming to provide support to compatriots. In recent years, they have successfully executed several initiatives, such as organizing events to commemorate Victory Day in the Kyrgyz Republic, conducting a competition titled "My Language is Your Friend" for Bishkek school teachers to be awarded as the "Best Russian Language Teacher in a Kyrgyz School," and donating laptops and other computer equipment to gymnasium schools No. 70 and No. 13 in Bishkek on behalf of the Government of Moscow⁵⁰. The House of Moscow also strives to support and develop the Russian language and culture, assist veterans, and more. Additionally, they offer recommendations for topics to be included in the agenda of meetings for the Russian-Kyrgyz Intergovernmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technical, and Humanitarian Cooperation.

An Agreement on Cooperation was signed on November 11, 2019, between the head of Rossotrudnichestvo, the Minister of the Government of Moscow, and the head of the Department for Foreign Economic and International Relations of the City of Moscow⁵¹. The agreement covers many areas, including education, culture, science, support for the Russian language abroad, and developing contacts with compatriot organizations. Additionally, the agreement provides for bilateral cooperation through

⁵⁰ The information portal "Russia in Kyrgyzstan" was created by the Public Foundation "Russian Heritage" with the support of the Embassy of the Russian Federation in Kyrgyzstan. The information portal "Russia in Kyrgyzstan" helps in the correct formation of public consciousness of different population segments. The portal is a multi-level association of various information necessary for compatriots. The project aims to help users find information on topics of interest, acquaint them with the latest news, and provide data on interstate documents and agreements signed between the two countries. Presented on the website - www.rusinkg.ru.

⁵¹ Rossotrudnichestvo, Government of Moscow, and the Department for Foreign Economic and International Relations of the City of Moscow (2019). Agreement on Cooperation. Retrieved from <https://www.sto-puteshestvij.ru/mediacenter/pravitelstvo-moskvy-i-rossotrudnichestvo-podpisali-soglasenie-o-sotrudnichestve.html>.

a program that organizes short-term trips for foreign states' young representatives of political, public, scientific, and business circles to Moscow. The goal of these trips is to familiarize them with Moscow's history, science, culture, and socio-economic potential.

Also, it is important to mention that Russian compatriots are actively involved in representative offices of international organizations that promote Eurasian integration processes. One such organization is the International Association of Veterans of the 'Alpha Anti-Terror Unit', which was established in Moscow in 2010. In the Kyrgyz Republic, the Association of Veterans of the Alpha Anti-Terror Unit was registered on May 20, 2011, with over 200 members⁵², including veterans of other special units of the Kyrgyz Republic. Thus, the structure of the Association also includes children's sports and military sports clubs: 'Alfa Zhashtyk Military Patriotic Club', 'Alpha Youth Union', 'Alfa Zhashtyk Sports Club', 'Historical Fencing Club' In addition, in the Kyrgyz Republic, where the Association is engaged in military-patriotic education. Thus, 'Alpha Anti-Terror Unit' with the cooperation of Rossotrudnichestvo has paid special attention to the Great Patriotic War in order to form a new Eurasian reality, Eurasian identity, and solidarity. This historical memory has become the basis for the adoption of the international idea of the "Immortal Regiment" in Kyrgyzstan, with more than twenty thousand citizens taking part in 2016, and increasing to 30-35 thousand in 2017, 45 thousand in Bishkek in 2018, and an impressive 60 thousand people in 2019. In 2018 and 2019, the "Immortal Regiment" in Bishkek was headed by the President of Kyrgyzstan, S. Jeenbekov. Furthermore, even under the state of emergency due to the coronavirus pandemic, Kyrgyzstan applied for participation in the Immortal Regiment online march with more than 140 thousand applications, demonstrating the strength and importance of the movement (Satybaldieva, 2020, pp.439-461).

In addition, since 2017, the Alpha Anti-Terror unit, in conjunction with the Security Council of the Kyrgyz Republic, the Pikir Club⁵³ of Regional Experts of the Kyrgyz Republic, and the Eurasians - New Wave Foundation, has regularly convened the Bishkek Anti-Terrorism Forum of the EAEU Member States under the auspices of the

⁵² International Association of Veterans of the Alpha Anti-Terror Unit. Available at: <https://alphagroup.ru/section/show/10> (accessed 15.06.2022)

⁵³ "Pikir" is an analytical platform organized in 2014 by independent political scientists of Kyrgyzstan "in order to develop interaction between the state bodies of the Kyrgyz Republic, scientific and expert organizations, industrial enterprises, agricultural producers, educational institutions". More information is available at: <https://pikir.kg/>

Office of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic. Further, the Association has participated in events such as the expert meeting “Priorities of the KR Chairmanship in the CSTO”, the round table “CSTO Air Base in Kant: a guarantee of security and stability in the KR and other states of Central Asia”⁵⁴, the round table “Chairmanship The Kyrgyz Republic in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization: Prospects and Current Areas of Political, Cultural and Humanitarian Cooperation”, and the International Conference “Results of the Kyrgyz Republic’s Presidency in the EAEU: New Vectors for the Development of Eurasian Integration in the Economic and Security Spheres”.

Apart from the Coordinating Council of Russian Compatriots in Kyrgyzstan activities, it is essential to note the work of the Association of Guilds of Compatriots that was established in 2010 following revolutionary events in Kyrgyzstan. The Association is comprised of around 170 Russian-Kyrgyz companies of varying sizes and disciplines. This Association was created in response to the economic crisis, capital outflow, closure of production, as well as inter-ethnic tension and nationalist appeals and actions of radical political forces, which resulted in the displacement of more than 28 thousand Russian compatriots from Kyrgyzstan. The Russian Companies Association is comprised of prominent entities such as Gazpromneft-Asia, Gazpromneft-Aero Kyrgyzstan LLC, Polyus Kyrgyzstan LLC, Sky Mobile LLC (Beeline), SKY Development LLC, and the offices of Rossotrudnichestvo in both Bishkek and Osh.

Meanwhile, it needs to stress the Orthodox presence as one tool to support compatriots in the Republic. The Department of Education and Catechesis of the Bishkek and Kyrgyzstan Diocese is committed to preserving the Russian language, Orthodox culture, and Russian compatriots’ historical memory.⁵⁵ The religious association Bishkek and Kyrgyzstan Diocese of the Central Asian Metropolitan District of the Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate) was registered by the State

⁵⁴ CSTO to hold a round table in Bishkek on security issues in the Central Asian region. Available at: https://odkb-csto.org/news/news_odkb/odkb_provedet_v_bishkeke_kruglvy_stol_po_voprosam_obespecheniya_bezopasnosti_v_tsentralno_aziatском_#loaded (accessed:24.03.2023)

⁵⁵ Bishkek and Kyrgyzstan Diocese. Available at: <https://pravoslavie.kg/> (accessed 14.02.2023)

Commission for Religious Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic on April 19, 2013, and included in the Unified Register of Religious Organizations.⁵⁶

Russian compatriots in the Kyrgyz Republic mainly profess Orthodoxy, represented by the Bishkek and Kyrgyz diocese of the Central Asian metropolitan district of the Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate), which includes 26 Orthodox churches, six deaneries, consisting of 46 parishes (Table 8) convent in Balykchy, the school of St. Vladimir Equal-to-the-Apostles in Bishkek, an Orthodox school in Kant, an Orthodox school in Karakol and Sunday Orthodox schools in the cities of Bishkek, Jalal-Abad, Karakol, Kant, Manas, villages Leninskoe, Kok-Zhangak, Novo-Pokrovka, Tyup, Sokuluk and Voyenno-Antonovka.

Table 8. Kyrgyzstan Diocese of the Central Asian Metropolitan District of the Russian Orthodox Church

Deanery	Deanery parishes	Location
Bishkek Deanery	Holy Resurrection Cathedral	Bishkek
	Church of the Holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Grand Duchess Olga	Bishkek
	Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary	Leninskoe
	Church of the Intercession of the Holy Mother of God	Kant
	Temple in honor of the icon of God Mother of All Who Sorrow Radost"	Novopokrovka
	Temple in the name of the holy righteous John of Kronstadt	Manas
	Church of the Intercession of the Holy Mother of God	Tas-Tube
	Temple in honor of the Kazan Icon of the Mother of God	Vasilevka
	Temple of the Tikhvin Icon of the Mother of God	Alamedin
	Temple by Aleksandr Nevsky	At the Russian military base, Kant
Chuy-Tokmok Deanery	Temple in the name of the Holy Great Martyr George the Victorious	Tokmok
	Temple in honor of the Kazan Icon of the Mother of God	Orlovka
	Temple in the name of the Holy Apostle and Evangelist John the Theologian	Ivanovka
	Temple in the name of St. Seraphim of Sarov	Krasnaya Rechka
Belovodsk Deanery	Church of the Descent of the Holy Spirit	Sokuluk

⁵⁶ Certificate of state re-registration of a legal entity in the Ministry of Justice of the Kyrgyz Republic No. ГПЮ-0008030. Issued on May 28, 2013. Registration number 2487-3301-RO.

	Temple in the name of the Blessed Princes Boris and Gleb	Voenno-Antonovka
	Temple in the name of St. Nicholas	Panfilovka
	Temple in the name of the Holy Great Martyr Demetrius of Thessalonica	Sosnovka
Talas Deanery	Temple of the Holy Great Martyr Demetrius of Thessalonica	Talas
	Church of the Intercession of the Holy Mother of God	Pokrovka
Issyk-Kul Deanery	Church of the Holy Trinity	Karakol
	Temple in the name of the Holy Great Martyr Demetrius of Thessalonica	Teploklyuchenka
	Temple in honour of the Kazan Icon of the mother of God	Tup
	Temple in the name of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker	Ananyevo
	Temple in the name of Saint Blessed Xenia of Petersburg	Balykchi
	Temple in the name of Hieromartyr Benjamin, Metropolitan of Petrograd	Cholpon- Ata
	Church of the Archangel Michael	Semenovka
	Temple in the name of the Holy Right-Believing Prince Dimitry Donskoy	Tamga
Osh Deanery	Church of the Archangel Michael	Osh
	Temple of the Assumption of the mother of God	Djalal-Abad
	Church of the Prophet Elijah	Kyzyl-Kiya
	Temple in the name of St. Seraphim of Sarov	Kara-Kol
	Temple in honor of the Vladimir Icon of the mother of God	Mailuuusu
	Chapel in honor of the Tikhvin Icon of the mother of God	Khaiderken
	Church of the Intercession of the Holy Mother of God	Sulukta

Bishop Daniel of Bishkek and Kyrgyzstan highlighted the peaceful role of Orthodoxy in the region and the lack of religious conflict between Islam and the Russian population. He noted that this was because the primary goal of Orthodoxy was to nourish the Russian settlers spiritually and not interfere in Islamic affairs. This point of view is further supported by the registration of the Bishkek and Kyrgyzstan Diocese by the State Commission for Religious Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic, which has allowed the two religions to coexist peacefully for over 150 years⁵⁷. In 2022, Orthodoxy

⁵⁷ Episkop Daniil Bishkekskiy. Za 150 let v Kirgizii ne bylo ni odnogo konflikta pravoalavniy s musulmanami. Available at: www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/4919578.html

celebrated the 150th anniversary of its presence in the land of Kyrgyzstan. However, after the collapse of the USSR, the number of Islamic schools, institutes, and mosques increased in Kyrgyzstan. As a result, Islamic ideology penetrated public life, where the titular nation began to actively recall the "state-forming" role of the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC). However, despite efforts by Patriarch Kirill to consolidate foreign dioceses in Central Asia, including the creation of the Central Asian Metropolitan District of the Russian Orthodox Church, the Church's position in the region has remained relatively weak. In an attempt to strengthen its presence, the Russian Orthodox Church launched an Internet TV channel in 2015 specifically for the Orthodox of Central Asia. As a result, dioceses in the region began to conduct services in the local language, which was met with a degree of opposition from some representatives of Islam. Additionally, the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of the Kyrgyz Republic responded to the move by translating sermons and office work into the Kyrgyz language, sparking a nationwide debate on the status of the Russian language in the Republic in 2010.

However, official bilateral contacts at the level of state authorities of the two countries are maintaining the Orthodox presence in the Kyrgyz Republic as well as the concept of the state policy of the Kyrgyz Republic in the religious sphere for 2014-2020, where underlines - "Kyrgyzstan is creating a model of a secular democratic state with a predominantly Muslim population in the Central Asian region through effective state regulation of the religious sphere and increasing the level of cooperation between state bodies and civil society, primarily religious organizations and associations". Furthermore, Kyrgyz authorities always note 'increasing the religious literacy of the population of the country, the need to promote the ideas of religious tolerance and strengthening interfaith harmony in society, preventing religious radicalism and extremism⁵⁸'. Thus, in 2019 countries there was signed - 'Agreements on cooperation between the State Commission for Religious Affairs under the President of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Federal Agency for Nationalities of the Russian Federation, the purpose of which is to cooperate on the prevention of any form of discrimination based on religious affiliation and the prevention of the spread of radical and extremist

⁵⁸ Bishop Daniel took part in the meeting with the President of the Kyrgyz Republic Sooronbai Jeenbekov (November 20, 2019) Available at:// URL: <https://pravoslavie.kg/news/2512> (accessed 16.01.2022)

ideas'⁵⁹. This Agreement was concluded since the Orthodox presence is currently a severe factor contributing to curbing the spread of radicalism, extremism, and terrorism in the Kyrgyz Republic.

In addition, the Bishkek and Kyrgyzstan Diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church is committed to expanding existing opportunities and searching for new forms of support for Orthodox Russian compatriots. Through its divisions, such as the Department of Social Services and Charity, and the Department of Education and Catechesis, the Diocese utilizes various methods to preserve the Russian language, Orthodox culture, and the historical memory of Russian compatriots. Examples of such activities include the project 'In Memory of the New Martyrs and Confessors Who Served on the Land of Kyrgyzstan in the 20th Century'⁶⁰, which was implemented in 2016 and involves search expeditions intended to collect information about priests, monks and laity who were hiding in the first half of the 20th century, from persecution by the authorities in hard-to-reach places in Central Asia. In addition, the Department regularly conducts training seminars for diocesan Sunday school teachers, such as the on-site training seminar conducted on October 12, 2019, timed to coincide with the celebration of the day of the educator of the Kyrgyz Republic. Moreover, the Youth Affairs Sector of the Department of Education and Catechism has participated in events such as the VIII Congress of Orthodox⁶¹. In addition, the monthly eparchial newspaper 'Orthodox World' and the official website of the Bishkek and Kyrgyzstan diocese, *pravoslavie.kg*, both serve as mediums through which information regarding the ongoing work of the diocese with its Orthodox compatriots is disseminated. On February 26, 2020, the NTS Republican TV channel initiated the launch of a series of programs entitled "Orthodox Conversations", with the first episode focusing on the historical background of Orthodoxy.

The Rossotrudnichestvo, the Russkiy Mir Foundation and the Coordinating Councils of Compatriots are identified as the primary instruments of Russia's soft policy towards

⁵⁹ Agreement on Cooperation between the State Commission for Religious Affairs under the President of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Federal Agency for Nationalities of the Russian Federation (19 December 2019). Official website of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic. Available at <http://www.gov.kg/kg/news/view/6853> (accessed 17.01.2022)

⁶⁰ The youth department of the diocese took part in the "Listen to the one who is near" (December 11, 2019) Available at://: <https://pravoslavie.kg/news/2523> (accessed 13.01.2022)

⁶¹ *ibid*

compatriots in Kyrgyzstan. It is noteworthy that Rossotrudnichestvo's projects prioritize the 'Russian world' as opposed to the titular nation of Kyrgyzstan. Results of a scientific and analytical report by the Institute of the CIS (Baranchik & Goydenko, 2020) revealed that the prevailing sentiment of those surveyed is that the actions of Russia to support and protect its compatriots are insufficient. Particularly striking is the rising trend of compatriots disassociating with Russia, which suggests that compatriots residing in the former Soviet Republics may not be exclusively associated with Russia and some desire to resist reunion with compatriots living in Russia (Kosmarskaya, 2006). Thus, the concept of the "divided Russian nation" appears to contain an ambiguous notion of the loyalty of people who may not identify as part of the Russian diaspora and may not feel obligated to advance Russian interests.

c) To spread and strengthen Russian language worldwide.

The activities of Rossotrudnichestvo, in cooperation with the Russkiy Mir Foundation, are focused on consolidating the position of the Russian language, culture, and literature. By this stage, the Foundation has established three educational centres in the capital city of Bishkek, Kant, and in the south of the Republic in the city of Osh. The Federal Agency provides advanced training and Russian language courses at its centres of science and culture as part of the two main Federal programs: the Federal Target Program "Russian Language" for 2011-2015 and 2016-2020, approved by the Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation No. 492 dated June 20, 2011, with the Ministry of Education and Science of Russia as the state customer coordinator; and the Interstate program of innovative cooperation of the member states of the Commonwealth of Independent States for the period up to 2020. In addition, the Russian Centres for Science and Culture in Kyrgyzstan in Bishkek and Osh offer regular language courses in Russian studies, allowing students to comprehensively understand the language and culture. It needs to note, that despite the fact that the number of Kyrgyz citizens enrolled in Russian language courses at the Russian Centres of Science and Culture at the representative offices of Rossotrudnichestvo in 2013–2015 was relatively low, with 19 students enrolled in 2013, 23 in 2014 and 21 in 2015, the volumes of the supplies of textbooks and literature on the Russian language, literature, and culture of Russia by

Rossotrudnichestvo to Kyrgyzstan did not seem to correspond to the actual need, as in 2016 Kyrgyzstan only received 3,598 of textbooks.

Since 2008, the Russkiy Mir Foundation has implemented various projects to preserve the Russian culture and language in Kyrgyzstan (table 6) as – the 'New Generation' programme, which provides young people from political, social, scientific, and business circles with short-term study tours to Russia, the establishment of the Public Fund' Centre for Support of the Russian Language and Cultural Heritage in 2014, the 'Moscow Classics' project, which aimed to identify and involve the educated and intellectual youth of Kyrgyzstan to increase the development of knowledge in the field of culture, history and literature, and the opening of the Centre for Study and Testing of the Russian language in Jalal- Abad in 2015. Further, in August 2015, the private Kyrgyz-Russian educational complex "Satoris" was opened with the support of the Embassy of the Russian Federation in the Kyrgyz Republic, the Representative Office of Rossotrudnichestvo in Kyrgyzstan, the assistance of Gazprom International and the Public Fund "Russian Property". The next significant project is 'Ambassadors of the Russian Language in the World'. The project was created in 2015 and aimed to teach children in secondary schools in Kyrgyzstan during the week by introducing Russian culture, traditions, and language. This project is being implemented in cooperation with Kyrgyz-Slavic University (KRSU). Lately, the initiative was transferred to an Internet portal, 'Education in Russian'. For its implementation, the Russian government allocated 7.4 billion rubles (Report of Russkiy Mir, 2019). However, due to the lack of Internet access in many rural schools, the implementation of this initiative has been limited. Additionally, the Russkiy Mir Internet portal and Russkiy Mir TV and radio company, which released 376 educational, research, information, analytical, literature and historical programmes, have been unsuccessful in their attempts due to the lack of technical equipment in the Republic. Hence, an examination of Rossotrudnichestvo's activities in spreading the Russian language can be characterized as limited and can be attributed to the relatively limited use of soft power.

d. To develop, implement and monitor information and analytical policy to strengthen Russia's unbiased perception, cultural and humanitarian presence.

The information presence of Russia in Kyrgyzstan is established through the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic "On Mass Media"⁶², which has resulted in two agreements between the Russian Federation and the Kyrgyz Republic concerning mass media. The first agreement of 1995, "On the status of correspondents of the mass media of the Russian Federation in the Kyrgyz Republic and correspondents of the mass media of the Kyrgyz Republic in the Russian Federation,"⁶³ ensures that foreign correspondents will disseminate objective information about the political, socio-economic, and cultural life of the country. The second agreement of 1996, "On the procedure and conditions distribution of programs of Russian TV and radio broadcasting organizations on the territory of the Kyrgyz Republic",⁶⁴ has facilitated the distribution of Russian media programs in Kyrgyzstan. Collectively, these agreements have enabled a more significant presence of Russia in Kyrgyzstan and access to its media programs.

Russia has been actively investing in promoting its media assets in Kyrgyzstan. It has earned accreditation in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic for various newspapers, information bulletins, news agencies, radio and television channels. In 2015, Rossotrudnichestvo and the RTVi TV channel created a series of programs for foreign audiences dedicated to the Russian language, culture, and other aspects of cultural and humanitarian cooperation between Russia and other countries. Furthermore, the "St. George's Ribbon" information campaign was held in 70 countries, including Kyrgyzstan, to commemorate the 70th anniversary of Victory in the Great Patriotic War⁶⁵. Russia's efforts to promote its media assets in Kyrgyzstan demonstrate its commitment to strengthening and deepening its ties with other countries.

The thesis put all Russian media in the Republic to the table (below) and divided into four groups Internet sources, Radio and TV channels, journals and newspapers and

⁶² Zakon KR "O sredstvakh massovoy informacii" ot 2 July 1992, No 938- XII (в ред. от 22 мая 2018 г. No 53) Available at: <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/819?cl=ru-ru> (accessed 17.02.2023)

⁶³ Soglashenie mejdu Pravitelstvom RF i KR o statuse korrespondentov sredstv massovoy informacii (Moskva, 21 sentabrya, 1995). Available at: <http://base.garant.ru/1118765/> (1accessed:08.02.2023)

⁶⁴ Soglashenie mejdu Pravitelstvom RF i KR o poryadke i usloviyah resprostraneniya program rossiyskih teleradioveshaniy na territorii KR, Moskva, 28 Marta 1996, Available at: docs.cntd.ru/document/1901244 (accessed:08.02.2023)

⁶⁵ Report «On the Results of Activity of Rossotrudnichestvo for 2015» // http://rs.gov.ru/uploads/document/file/199/doklad_2015.pdf (accessed:16.08.2022)

accredited Russian media companies. In the information field of Kyrgyzstan, Russian-language media has an absolute advantage - 12 Russian media such as ITAR-Tass, Ria Novosti, Sputnik, etc. (Table 9), 27 journals and newspapers in the Russian language, eight radio and TV channels, and 16 internet sources that spread the Russian language in Kyrgyzstan to a certain extent contribute to the preservation of the Russian language and culture in the Republic.⁶⁶ Thus, “Rossiyskaya Gazeta” (the Russian Newspaper) publishes a daily newspaper with a circulation of 160,000 copies. In addition, “Nedelya”, published twice a month, “Rodina” magazine, and a website visited by 17–18 million users every month.⁶⁷

Table 9. Russian media in Kyrgyzstan

Internet sources	1.Diesel forum 2.Kaktus media 3.Kloop kg 4.CSA.kg 5.Novosti kg 6.AsialInfo 7.News-asia 8.Pravda.kg 9.Rossiia v Kyrgyzstane 10.Svodka-Akipress 11.STAN 12.Akipress 13.Tazar 14.Forum.kg 15.312.kg 16.Tazabek
Radio and TV Channels	1.Azzatyk radio 2.Mir 3.NTC. TV company 4.ELTR.TV company 5.OTKR.TV company 6.Piramida- Media holding 7.Almaz. Radio 8.5 Kanal.TV company
Journals and newspapers	1.Akipress 2.Argumenty I fakty-Kyrgyzstan 3.Vecherniy Bishkek 4.Vest 5.Delo nomer 6.Delovoy sobesednik 7.Dlya Vas 8.Komsomolskaya Pravda

⁶⁶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kyrgyzstan, Available at: <https://mfa.gov.kg/en> (accessed:16.08.2022)

⁶⁷ The website of “Russian Gazette”. Available at: <https://rg.ru/> (accessed:16.08.2022)

	9.Baromert 10.Liberr 11.Limon 12.Litaraturniy Kyrgyzstan 13.Megapolis 14.MK-Asia 15.MSN 16.Moy gorod 17.Obshestvenniy reyting 18.Poziciya profsoyuza 19.Portret nedeli 20.Pravo dlya vseh 21.Pravovoy vestnik 22.Rossiyskaya gazeta 23.Slovo Kyrgyzstana 24.Chuyskie izvestiya 25.Eho Osha 26.Russkoe slovo v Kyrgyzstane 27.Delo vesti
Accredited Russian media	1. Federal State Unitary Enterprise Information Agency (FGUP MIA) "Russia Today" 2." Zvezda" TV channel 3.Russian Agency for International Information "RIA Novosti" 4.Central Asian regional office of "Rossiyskaya Gazeta" in Bishkek 5.International information group "Interfax" 6."Argumenti I fakty -Kyrgyzstan". Newspaper 7. "Komsomolskaya Pravda" Newspaper 8."Moskovskiy Komsomolec" Newspaper 9. Informational agency and radio "Sputnik Kyrgyzstan" 10. "Dipkuryer" vestnik 11. International information group "Interfax" 12. Telegraph agency of Russia "ITAR-TASS"

Source: MFA Kyrgyzstan, Available at: <https://mfa.gov.kg/en>

e) To develop public diplomacy, scientific, educational, cultural, economic, informational, and other humanitarian ties with both state and non-state

structures of the CIS member states and other countries, international and regional organizations

By implementing this task, Rossotrudnichestvo strengthens the relationship between non-governmental organizations, foundations, and prosecutorial bodies as:

The Alexander Gorchakov Public Diplomacy Fund. The mission of the Fund is to 'encourage the development of public diplomacy and support the creation of public, political and business climate abroad'.⁶⁸ For this purpose, the Fund mainly distributes grants among non-profit organizations for holding round tables, seminars, conferences, and public lectures on foreign policy issues.

The Valdai Discussion Club is an international forum for dialogue on current international issues. It was established in 2004 to provide a platform for dialogue between Russia and the international community. Thus, the Valdai Club held a regional roundtable on security architecture in Central Asia in 2019. The roundtable took place in Kyrgyzstan and discussed the current security challenges facing Central Asia, including the role of the Shanghai Cooperation, and the development of military and security cooperation.⁶⁹

Russian International Affairs Council (RIAC) is an independent think-tank that aims to promote the development of a multipolar world order, strengthen international security, and promote Russian foreign policy. Thus, in Kyrgyzstan, RIAC launched the Kyrgyz-Russian Dialogue Forum in 2018. This forum serves as an inter-governmental platform for dialogue and exchange of experience between the two countries. RIAC has also conducted various seminars and roundtables on regional security, Russia-Kyrgyzstan cooperation, and the role of Central Asian countries in international politics.

Centre for the Support and Development of Public Initiatives Creative Diplomacy (PICREADI) develops and promotes public diplomacy and cross-cultural dialogue in Central Asia. The organization works in partnership with universities, civil society organizations and the media to promote cross-cultural dialogue and public diplomacy in the region. Thus, in Kyrgyzstan, in 2020, PICREDI organized a regional conference

⁶⁸ Official website of Gorchakov Public Diplomacy Fund. Available at: <http://gorchakov.ru> (accessed:17.08.2022)

⁶⁹ Valdai Discussion Club (2019, April 19). Valdai Discussion Club Holds Regional Roundtable on Regional Security Architecture in Central Asia. Available at: <http://valdaiclub.com/a/highlights/valdai-discussion-club-holds-regional-roundtable-on-regional-security-architecture-in-central-asia> (accessed:18.09.2022)

on the role of public diplomacy in Central Asia⁷⁰, a roundtable on the media and public diplomacy in Central Asia, and a series of training for civil society organizations and media personnel on public diplomacy and cross-cultural dialogue. Additionally, PICREDI has researched public diplomacy and cross-cultural dialogue in Central Asia.

Eurasia-Volga Information and Analytical Center (EVIAC) is an international non-governmental organization that promotes regional cooperation, democracy and security in Central Asia and the Caucasus. Through research, training and exchange programs, EVIAC has helped to strengthen democratic institutions, promote the rule of law and support economic development in the region. In Kyrgyzstan, for example, EVIAC has provided capacity-building training sessions and facilitated exchanges between Kyrgyz government officials and experts from other countries. Thus, EVIAC has organized conferences and seminars that bring together representatives of Central Asian countries, Russia, and other international organizations to foster greater understanding and cooperation among the countries in the region and promote the development of democratic institutions.

Information and Analytical Centre for studying socio-political processes in the post-Soviet space provide analysis, research and information on the post-Soviet countries' political, economic, social and cultural developments. The centre aims better to understand the challenges and opportunities in this region and promote dialogue and cooperation among the post-Soviet states. Additionally, the centre supports civil society organisations in post-Soviet countries and contributes to the development of regional cooperation.

Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed the Russian soft power strategy's specifics, mainly focusing on the activities of Rossotrudnichestvo in Kyrgyzstan. First, the chapter unveiled the Soviet legacy in the Republic and unpacked the 'russification' basis that influenced the modern Kyrgyz educational system formation. Second, the chapter considered the special status of the Russian language. Thus, on the identification of the data collection, the chapter has concluded the following:

⁷⁰ "Strengthening Public Diplomacy in Central Asia", October 20,2020. Available at: <https://www.picreadi.com/> (accessed:18.09.2022)

Rossotrudnichestvo was established in 2008 in a period of "a movement from Greater Europe to Greater Eurasia" and its ongoing activities were meant to assist in eliminating cultural differences, negative preconceived notions, and other obstacles that impede the development of international relations. The Kremlin sought to strengthen the Russian language and culture through the promotion of 'Russian World' concepts and 'traditional values' via the Orthodox Church. However, the 'Russian way' of soft power aimed to counterbalance the West rather than establish itself as a model of attraction. In the case of Russia, there is a mix of soft power components such as language, culture, religion, and education, but based on a political decision, use of force and non-democratic development. However, in Kyrgyzstan: 1) Russia is perceived as a friendly country and the closest ally; 2) The Russian language is losing its position in Kyrgyzstan, mainly due to the reduction of the non-titular Russian-speaking population in the country under the Program of Rossotrudnichestvo for compatriots. According to the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, by mid-2020, with 6 523 529 population, about 400,000 Russians remained in the Republic, including 344,950 Russians (5.3% of the population), 26,732 Tatars (0.4%) and about 20 thousand (0.35%) other Russian nationalities (Bashkirs, Chechens, Karachays, Balkars, Ingush, peoples of Dagestan, Kalmyks, Yakuts, etc.). 3) In the case of providing Russian soft power policy in Kyrgyzstan, Rossotrudnichestvo focuses on working with the 'Russian compatriots' instead of the titular nation; 4) The Russian mass culture has been a major influence in Kyrgyzstan. The Russian language is still widely used in education, television, radio, the internet, and newspapers. However, the problem is that the Russian soft power assets are largely based on outdated Soviet models and patterns;

4) Russia's role in the region is largely due to its unique source of influence – migrants. Between 2010 and 2020, Kyrgyzstan received \$20.1 billion in money transfers from Russia, which is several times higher than the total official assistance of other regional donors. This influx of capital has had a significant impact on the Kyrgyz economy and has made Russia a pivotal player in the region.

Thus, the analysis of the activities of the Rossotrudnichestvo has revealed that work with compatriots has yet to fulfil the tasks given to them effectively. This is due to a combination of factors such as soft deterrent measures imposed by local authorities, limited organizational and mobilization capabilities of compatriots structures, and the limited use of soft power resources, particularly in terms of offering educational

services by inviting students to study at Russian universities. Additionally, compatriots' structures have not paid sufficient attention to working with the younger generation of Kyrgyz society, particularly those who have already studied or plan to study in Russian universities.

To conclude, the 'Russian way' of soft power still needs a more comprehensive and long-term strategy for developing its own unique model of soft power. This conclusion can be drawn from the ambivalent attitude of the Russian government towards soft power and the 'transition' period during Putin's Concept of 'greatpowerness' from 2000 to 2021.

Despite losing its titular population, Russia still holds influence in Kyrgyzstan due to its economic ties in the frame of the EAEU and the diverse range of the Soviet Union heritage. Additionally, it can be surmised that the declining number of the titular Russian-speaking population does not necessarily indicate a waning influence of the Russian language in Kyrgyzstan, as the Russian soft power assets are mostly based on outdated Soviet models. Russia also retains its essential role in the region due to its migrant capital, which continues to shape the Kyrgyz economy and politics. Therefore, going forward, Russia will likely remain an, if not the most significant external influence in Kyrgyzstan.

Chapter 4

The empirical data of the British Council's activities in Kyrgyzstan from 2000 to 2021.

The chapter aims to analyse British soft power policy in Kyrgyzstan through its educational channels, mainly focusing on the British Council's activities. First, the chapter looks at the soft power concept and how the 'Britishness' concept fits into the British foreign policy philosophy. Second, the subchapter reviews the British Council's "targets", written in the Annual Reports of the Council to systemise its activities in Kyrgyzstan, mainly examining the policy instruments and organisational framework used by the British Council in Kyrgyzstan from 2000 to 2021.

However, the chapter also considers the work of the Department for International Development (DFID) in Kyrgyzstan and its projects in the educational and creative sphere to take a comprehensive picture of British educational activities, as before 2017, the British Council had little involvement in the region, and DFID carried out all activities. Following the terrorist attack in September 2001, British involvement in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) activities in Afghanistan and military-political cooperation with the countries in the Central Asia region commenced.⁷¹ In the 2000s, the British Foundation for the Prevention of Conflicts in Central Asia began its work, the purpose of which was proclaimed to reduce the potential for conflict and promote stability in the region through the UKaid channel. Thus, the UK National Security Strategy and the Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015 gave soft power particular attention, where DFID, funded by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, worked in the frame of the programme 'Conflict Pool' in Central Asia.

Therefore, the coordination of the work of the two above-mentioned British institutions plays a central role in the realisation of soft power policy. Notably, Kyrgyzstan was one of the Central Asian countries that received more than USD 122m in bilateral development assistance, where DFID launched twenty Youth Centres with early childhood education across Kyrgyzstan.

⁷¹ The UK's work in Afghanistan. Policy paper. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uks-work-in-afghanistan/the-uks-work-in-afghanistan> (accessed: 17.02.2023)

4.1 'Britishness' soft power approach and how it fits in foreign policy from 2000 to 2021.

In order to analyse British soft power policy from 2000 to 2021, the chapter suggests examining the primary documents and reports generated by the British government's special committee on the soft power of the House of Lords, Royal United Service Institute for Defence and Security Studies, Royal Institute of International Affairs (the Chatham House), British Council's annual reports and the British Academy's publications, as these government institutions prepared the prominent publications on the British soft power policy (Harvey, 2010).

Thus, at the beginning of the 2000s, the first of the British prime ministers who introduced the term soft power was Toni Blair with his "new doctrine of the international community"⁷². However, Blair's initiative of rebranding the country with the programme 'Cool Britannia' where creative industries such as fashion, design and architecture, software development, animation, music, contemporary art, literature, TV, and media were highly criticized inside the country - 'So much for Cool Britannia' summed up The Economist⁷³. The military campaign in Iraq cost the United Kingdom dearly and remains the most negatively assessed legacy of the Blair team worldwide and within the country. British soft power, which can be defined as its attraction to citizens of other countries and their respect for the UK, "has long suffered from the perception that the country's loyalty to the United States comes first" (Grant, 2007, p.8).

Considering the sad experience of his predecessor, Gordon Brown was a staunch defender of British values and promoted the idea of 'Britishness'⁷⁴. Further, the new British government led by conservative David Cameron, which came to power in 2010, updated the discussion on the problems of the country's soft power in the context of the 2012 Olympic games in the UK and the celebration of the Diamond Jubilee of

⁷² Doctrine of the International Community. British Political Speech. Available at: <http://www.britishpoliticalspeech.org/speech-archive.htm?speech=279> (accessed:23.02.2023)

⁷³ Compellingly dull // The Economist. 25.11.1999. Available at: <http://www.economist.com/node/326836> (accessed:23.02.2023)

⁷⁴ Brown G. Chancellor Gordon Brown's speech at the seminar on Britishness at the Commonwealth club, London. 27 February 2007 // The Guardian. Available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2007/feb/27/immigrationpolicy.race> (accessed: 23.02.2023).

Queen Elizabeth II (Tyerman, 2017). In 2010, the UK government adopted the National Security Strategy and its subsequent Strategic Defence and Security Review to 'ensure the country's safety in an age of uncertainty'. These policies highlighted the importance of soft power in light of defence spending cuts. In addition, the Foreign Office business plan included the commitment to create a long-term program to bolster the UK's soft power. A comprehensive report by the House of Lords - "Persuasion and Power in the Modern World"⁷⁵ was published in 2014 after extensive research and consultation with diplomats, government representatives, the media, businesses, and cultural and sporting organisations. This report provided a diagram of all the UK's soft power tools, where it seen its proactive position within the framework of international network structures and institutions (UN, EU, NATO, G20, G8, Commonwealth); the need to project the image of a strong country into the outside world, to adopt the British foreign policy to the world of many interconnections, developed communication (hyper-connected world); the work of British non-governmental organizations (NGOs), assistance to developing countries, the connection of the UK with the whole world through the English language, bringing up-to-date information about the UK to the world and the massive role of the BBC in these two directions, maintaining the UK's leading position in the field of education, which is facilitated by international scholarships for the education of international students, international academic cooperation. The importance of maintaining the substantial aspects of British cultural, creative, and sporting life, and the vital role of the British Council in this, were also noted.

Based on these principles, Cameron's new program - 'GREAT Britain' aimed to "encourage people from all over the world to come to the UK and attract more than £1 billion to develop British business and increase the influx of tourists to the country by 4 million people a year."⁷⁶ A wide range of government departments, public organisations in the country, and private companies participated in the implementation of the program: the Ministry of Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, the British Council, the Department of Trade and Investment, the Ministry of Business, Innovation and

⁷⁵ Persuasion and Power in the Modern World. House of Lords. Select Committee on Soft Power and the UK's Influence. Report of Session 2013–14. London, 28 March 2014. 155 p. Available at: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201314/ldselect/ldsoft-power/150/15002.htm/> (accessed: 23.02.2023).

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*-p.105

Professional Education, the British Office for Tourism, better known as VisitBritain, the Cabinet Office. Thus, in 2013, international tourists brought in record high revenues of over £20bn, up 13% from even 2012, the year of the Olympic Games, and tourism revenues are projected to grow further at 6% per annum. As practice has shown, the GREAT program has been quite successful -the UK Government report showed the GREAT initiative brought more than 500 million pounds, and the Committee recommended Government continue with the campaign, focusing on selected cultural events that have the potential to impact inbound tourism positively"⁷⁷.

In 2013, at the Liaison Committee of the House of Lords initiative⁷⁸, the ad hoc Committee on Soft Power and the UK's Influence was established. The Liaison Committee is responsible for interacting with the two Houses of Parliament. It also annually makes recommendations on the work of the House of Lords' special committees and evaluates their activities and the feasibility of creating temporary (ad hoc) committees. British Foreign Secretary William Hague noted that the English language and institutions such as the British Council, the BBC World Service, and the British universities are "beacons of democratic values" for the whole world (Holden, Thyhorn, 2013, p.2).

In March 2014, the British Academy published a report, "The Art of Attraction: Soft Power and the UK's Role in the World", where the authors structured all tools of soft power in two groups: society resources (culture and heritage, language, education system, human capital, socio-cultural institutions, business and innovation, sports) and state resources (political values, diplomacy, the institution of the monarchy) (Hill & Beadle, 2014, p. 22). The report highlighted the drastic changes that have taken place in global relations over the past few decades and asserted that these

⁷⁷ UK Government. Response to the House of Lords Select Committee report on soft power 2013-14. – 48 p. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/response-to-the-house-of-lords-select-committee-report-on-soft-power-2013-14> (accessed: 24.02.2023).

⁷⁸ Review of select committee activity and proposals for new committee activity — Liaison Committee. First Report of Session 2012–13 (paragraphs 39–43). Available at: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201213/ldselect/ldliaison/135/13504.htm#a10> (accessed: 24.02.2023).

developments would only continue to accelerate. They outlined several factors that contribute to this shift, such as

- The global community's ability to access information that was once held exclusively by states,
- The increased efficacy of individuals and groups in the digital age,
- The more significant clout of non-governmental organizations and protest networks,
- The complexities of today's commodity and value chains,
- The rise of urbanization,
- The asymmetry of modern weaponry,
- The emergence of transnational threats that weaken the power of traditional states,
- The enhanced ability for citizens of all countries to communicate and
- The ascent of non-Western states.

It is important to note that the report believed that the UK could increase its soft power by distancing from the US and the EU in foreign policy, despite the importance of the strategic partnership with them. Also, Nye (2013) noted that despite the attractiveness of American culture, US foreign policy is very unattractive, especially in the Muslim world. Ideas about the connection between cultural diplomacy and soft power are reflected in the report "Influence and Attraction: Culture and the race for "soft power" in the 21st Century"⁷⁹, prepared by the British Council in cooperation with the Demos Foundation in 2010, where the report of the British Council includes language, sports, education, popularization of national cuisine, and religion as the primary forms of expression of culture.

In March 2014, the British Academy published a report entitled "The Art of Attraction: Soft Power and the UK's Role in the World"⁸⁰, which provided a comprehensive overview of the various sources of soft power, categorized into two groups: societal resources (culture and heritage, language, education system, human capital, socio-cultural institutions, business and innovation, sports) and state resources (political

⁷⁹ British Council. Influence and Attraction. Culture and the race for soft power in the 21 centuries. Available at: <https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/influence-and-attraction-report.pdf> (accessed:25.02.2023)

⁸⁰ The British Academy. The Art of Attraction. Soft power and the UK's role in the World 2014. Available at: <https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/documents/322/the-art-attraction-soft-power-and-uks-role-world.pdf> (accessed:25.02.2023)

values, diplomacy, Monarchy Institute). In addition, the report identified five main dilemmas associated with the use of soft power, including the difficulty in distinguishing between "hard" and "soft power", the subjective nature of "soft power", the cost of maintaining it, the potential distortion of societal sources of "soft power" due to state intervention, and the need to constantly cultivate soft power sources in order to prevent complacency.

In the wake of Brexit, the British government released its long-awaited Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy in March 2021⁸¹. This review emphasized the importance of soft power to the UK and how organizations such as the British Council, BBC World Service, universities, museums, tourism, heritage and sport can bring greater prosperity and influence to the UK. Nevertheless, in an October 2020 digital roundtable hosted by Sanctuary Counsel and CPD, the UK group noted that these assets may not be enough to maintain Britain's soft power advantage in light of global challenges such as the pandemic and climate change. The Integrated Review aims to make the UK a "Science and Technology superpower" by 2030 (Integrated Review, p.7). However, the current government may not be able to achieve this goal due to the potential cuts in UK research budgets and slashing of development aid spending, which could impede international research collaboration.

Thus, the analysis of the main reports from the Special Committee, British Council, and Royal Academy on soft power. There is some consensus amongst British political and expert circles about what can be attributed to the UK's soft power sources. However, it is difficult for the UK to move away from its long-standing partners, the US and the EU, despite the calls of British parliamentarians to recognize themselves in a new way, not only as a Western country but also as a state which the cultural traditions of the West, East and South are mixed.

Thus, in particular, the UK's cooperation in the Central Asian region was conducted within the Strategy of the European Union⁸² toward the region, adopted in 2007. The UK still needs to develop a unified and comprehensive national strategy for Central

⁸¹ Global Britain in a competitive age. The Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign policy. March 2021. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/975077/Global_Britain_in_a_Competitive_Age- the Integrated Review of Security Defence Development and Foreign Policy.pdf (accessed: 25.03.2023)

⁸² Central Asia: Council adopts a new EU strategy for the region. Available at: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2019/06/17/central-asia-council-adopts-a-new-eu-strategy-for-the-region/> (accessed 25.03.2023)

Asia, “even though it is present in all five countries in the region” (Denisyuk & Danilovich, 2008, p.28) where the UK demonstrates its potential to become a ‘global power for good’ (Global Politics Institute, 2014) through its aids and military presence. According to a report by Chatham House (2019), the main challenge for the UK's foreign policy is to identify a credible and distinctive role for itself as an autonomous medium power with strong traditions of diplomacy, defence, intelligence, trade and assistance. As the UK is no longer affiliated with the EU, it remains an important player in NATO, the UN Security Council, and other international organizations.⁸³

The thesis further suggests reviewing British soft power institutions, mainly focusing on the British Council's activity in Kyrgyzstan in detail (written evidence on the UK's role in Central Asia)⁸⁴, and then evaluates their policy instruments and organizational framework from 2000 to 2021 to get a complete picture of the British power activities in the Republic. To systemize the Council activities, the chapter reviews the targets the Council has set.

4.2 British Council and its policy toward Kyrgyzstan.

The above analysis findings indicate that the UK's priorities in terms of soft power are based on common geopolitical, economic, and humanitarian interests. The British Council is tasked with carrying out the UK's soft power agenda in the realms of promoting culture and the English language, to foster educational, scientific, and technological exchange. These objectives are achieved through three main channels: cultural cooperation, English language dissemination and education development

⁸³ Speech of Sir David Lidington. Available at: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/european-institute/who-we-are/people/advisory-board/sir-david-lidington> (accessed:02.06.2023)

⁸⁴ Written evidence submitted by the FCDO (ECA0023). The Central Asian states of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan sit on the fault lines of great power competition between two of the UK's foremost competitors: China and Russia. Some of these states are in a time of considerable transition in their political and economic development and are re- evaluating their relationship with the rest of the world. All confront major challenges in competition for water and energy resources. In recent years the UK Government has cooperated with these states on issues including withdrawal from Afghanistan and energy security. This memorandum comprises the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's evidence submission for the Foreign Affairs Committee (FAC) inquiry into Central Asia (CA). It focuses on UK policy towards each of the Central Asian states - Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan - as well as towards Central Asia as a region. See more at: <https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/121001/pdf/> (accessed 02.06.2023)

through the specific target groups. Thus, the activities of the British Council until 2005 can be considered in two ways: based on geographic affiliation and target audience. These two forms of the British Council's activities can be divided into three primary directions: A, B, and C, where direction A focuses on the Commonwealth of Nations, Africa, and the Middle East; direction B on North and South America and the Asia-Pacific region, and the direction C on Europe.

In the Annual Report 2009/2010, the British Council detailed their programs in different countries and assigned them to one of the five categories: 1) lifeline countries, 2) building trust, 3) emerging economies, 4) developing countries, and 5) developed countries. The UK placed Kyrgyzstan in the "building trust" category and devised a program to "develop the bilateral relationship, and to promote security, democratisation and prosperity" (British Embassy Bishkek, Overview of projects and activities funded by British Government in Kyrgyzstan, 2014).

Thus, the UK established diplomatic relations with Kyrgyzstan in January 1992 and opened its embassy in Bishkek five years later in 1997. The same year, the Department for International Development (DFID) also had a presence in the country. Before this, the UK's interests in Kyrgyzstan were represented by the British Embassy in Kazakhstan (Almaty city). It should be noted that the events in the field of cultural interaction held by British Embassies, in most cases, do not have a systemic programmatic nature (Kharitonova, 2018). First of all, the activities of British embassies in cultural cooperation are considered a priority for those countries that are already covered by British Council projects. At the same time, Kyrgyzstan remains outside the priorities of British policy in the field of external cultural interaction and the promotion of the national language (in the 2012- 2013 financial year, the British Council invested a total of £785 million, while Central Asia and South Asia together was only £28,7 million). Thus, two countries working on the bilateral Agreement - the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland on cooperation in education, science and culture was signed in December 1994, in London (see all agreements in appendices of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs response to the researcher). Nevertheless, the British Council had a presence in Kyrgyzstan as an Information Centre in Bishkek. Initially, this was managed by the British Council Director in Russia and then Director in Kazakhstan. Unfortunately, the Centre was closed shortly after it opened in 1997.

Since then, any British Council activities have been managed without in-country representation, and the UK Department for International Development (DFID) has carried out all British soft power activities. Since its establishment in 1997, the UK's Department for International Development (DFID) has been deeply committed to Central Asia, South Caucasus and Moldova (CASCMD) region programme⁸⁵, with Kyrgyzstan being identified as the focal country. In this frame, DFID has implemented four major projects in conjunction with the World Bank, UNICEF, AKF, DPI, UNFP, UNDP, IFC, USAID, NDI and ACTED, with the objective of improving governance and the institutional environment for poverty reduction. These projects have included renovating buildings, training teachers, and providing pedagogical material in Ariet, Tash-Bulak municipality, Dostuk and Jim village, Kara-Suu rayon, and Osh oblast. In particular, the DFID-UNICEF Equity project has sought to provide equal access to services and improve living standards for communities in southern Kyrgyzstan, with the opening of 61 Community-Based Kindergartens (CBKs) in Osh, Jalal-Abad and Batken Oblasts providing early learning services to some 120 children each year⁸⁶.

However, in 2001, the United Kingdom (UK) government established the Global Conflict Prevention Pool (GCPP) as part of its 'joined-up government' project, aiming to reduce the number of people worldwide whose lives are adversely affected by violent conflict and diminish the number of disputes that occur. The GCPP integrated the conflict prevention efforts of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), Ministry of Defence (MOD) and Department for International Development (DFID)⁸⁷, thus enabling them to amplify the efficacy of their activities through improved coordination and common Strategies. Kyrgyzstan, which is one of the most impoverished nations in Central Asia, the UK government has implemented various programmes to promote democracy and human rights and to prevent regional conflicts and security. These projects have been funded by DFID through the 2009-2015 programming period, providing around £27,4 million *to the Overall UK priorities programme* in the Kyrgyzstan programme, which includes - support to UNICEF's equity programme in southern Kyrgyzstan, strengthening public finance management, deepening democracy in the Kyrgyz republic, rural water supply and sanitation project, Central

⁸⁵ DFID Regional Programme Evaluation. Central Asia, South Caucasus, and Moldova. Available at: <https://www.oecd.org/countries/moldova/40777252.pdf> (accessed 24.02.2023)

⁸⁶ DFID continues to support development of Southern Kyrgyzstan. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/dfid-continues-to-support-development-of-southern-kyrgyzstan> (accessed: 24.02.2023)

⁸⁷ DFID Regional Programme Evaluation. Central Asia, South Caucasus, and Moldova. Available at: <https://www.oecd.org/countries/moldova/40777252.pdf> (accessed 24.02.2023)

Asia regional migration programme, Central Asia programmatic poverty assessment, Central Asia investment climate programme (Table 10). However, this amount is only 0,2% of the total budget of British development assistance in 2012, which amounted to over £8,6 billion.

Table 10: British Embassy, Bishkek – Overview of projects and activities funded by British Government in Kyrgyzstan

support to unicef's equity programme in southern Kyrgyzstan	UNICEF	improved peace and stability and a lessening of ethnic tension in the conflict affected areas of southern Kyrgyzstan	2012 – 2015	£5 mln
strengthening public finance management	Ministry of Finance	to strengthen effectiveness, efficiency, and accountability of public finance management	2009 – 2015	£5 mln
deepening democracy in the Kyrgyz republic	USAID	improved service to the interests of the poorer citizens of the Kyrgyz republic through the role of parliament	2012 – 2015	£4 mln
rural water supply and sanitation project, phase 2	ARIS (community development and investment agency)	to strengthen the policy, legislation and delivery of safe water, sanitation and hygiene at village and family level in 3 oblasts (provinces) issyk-Kul, talas and naryn. adb target the remaining 4 oblasts chui, batken, jalal-abad and Osh	2009 – 2014	£1 mln
central asia regional migration programme	International Organization for migration, UN Women, World Bank	protecting the rights and enhancing the social and economic benefits of migrant labour and ensuring labour migration benefits both -sending and -receiving countries.	2010 – 2015	£5,9 mln
central asia programmatic poverty assessment	Governments of Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan National Statistics Committees	to strengthen national poverty assessment systems in tajikistan and the Kyrgyz republic to track and analyse poverty and human development outcomes.	2010 – 2015	£1 580 000
central asia investment climate programme	International Finance Corporation	the programme will promote investment climate reform, through improving the quality of legislation at the central government level, promoting compliance and implementation by large and small businesses in the major cities and in the rural areas of Kyrgyzstan and tajikistan.	2012- 2015	£3mln

Since 2001, *the Conflict pool for Central Asia* has been managed jointly by the Department for International Development (DFID), the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and the Ministry of Defence (MOD)⁸⁸. The British Embassy in Bishkek is the regional hub for the Central Asia Regional Conflict Adviser and the Project Officer, and the budget for 2013-2015 was around £7 million. The program was designed to enhance adherence to and proper implementation of international human rights regulations in the security and justice fields and to address the extent and gravity of conflicts and security issues impacting Kyrgyzstan's government and people.

title	Implementer	purpose	Duration	Amount
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⁸⁸ British Embassy, Bishkek – Overview of projects and activities funded by British Government in Kyrgyzstan

research in action	INTRAC	enhanced civil society capacity to research potential conflicts and improve accountability of local government by lobbying for basic rights and services to marginalised and vulnerable communities	2012 – 2015	£111,000
management of conflict over pasture resources	Camp 'Ala-too'	increased capacity of local institutions to manage the current conflicts over pasture resources in the watershed of Iylyk river in the south of Kyrgyzstan	2012 – 2015	£148,500
promoting resolution of the issues of statelessness in southern Kyrgyzstan	Ferghana Valley lawyers without borders	creating an enabling environment for stateless persons and people that lost documents proving their identity and citizenship due to the mass disturbances in the south Kyrgyzstan to get a legal status in order to participate fully in civic life and thus be less prone to resorting to extremism as a solution to exclusion	2012 – 2013	£45,080
community security and conflict prevention in ferghana valley phase iii (3 years)	Saferworld	communities and security providers work together to resolve local security problems and build confidence in the ferghana valley, including across borders and ethnic divides	2012 – 2015	£409,728
upstream conflict prevention in central asia (ucpca)	International Alert	improving ability of communities along the tajikistan-Kyrgyzstan border to resolve disputes at the local level and resilience to nationalism and radicalisation	2012 – 2015	£392,000
interaction of young people across ethnic lines and public discourse on youth's role in building peace and strengthening tolerance	UNICEF Kyrgyzstan	increased capacity of young people in conflict-prone areas in Osh and Jalalabad provinces to express themselves and interact in a meaningful manner across ethnic lines with the help of youth theatres. a nationwide public discourse on young people's concerns and their role in building peace and strengthening tolerance through a series of television programmes	2012 – 2015	£192,800
Osce secondee – bishkek	OSCE Centre in Bishkek	supporting Osce secondee – bishkek	2012 – 2013	£198,000
capacity building for conflict prevention in Kyrgyzstan	Institute for Public Policy	decreasing the conflict potential in the country by introduction of peace education to youth and providing experts analyses of the most pressing and conflict-sensitive issues to stakeholders	2013 – 2015	£240,000
enhancing capacity of the Kyrgyz republic for physical security and stockpile management of the salw and ca	OSCE Centre in Bishkek	strengthening the capabilities of the ministry of defence of the Kyrgyz republic to effectively manage and control the small arms and light weapons and conventional ammunition (salw and ca) stockpiles	2013 – 2015	£480,005
strengthening capacity to counter violent religious extremism in Kyrgyzstan	Search for Common Ground	state institutions and religious leaders effectively work together to prevent Islamist radicalisation and promote positive uses of Islam in resolving conflicts	2013 – 2015	£529,157
mitigating conflict through increased access to irrigation water	MSDSP KG	institutions and procedures put in place to mitigate conflicts over irrigation water in Naryn oblast	2013 – 2015	£249,769
human rights protection for conflict prevention and stability in the south of Kyrgyzstan	OHCHR Osh	improved human rights situation in the south of Kyrgyzstan with a reduced number of human rights violations, in particular in the area of administration of justice and fight against torture	2013 – 2015	£186,198

mitigating the effects of and the potential for conflict in Kyrgyzstan through targeted investments in the protection of the most marginalized children and youth	UNICEF Kyrgyzstan	the most vulnerable and marginalised girls and boys benefit from social services (psychological, legal and social support to child victims of violence and abuse as well as rehabilitation and re-integration support programmes (such as life skills programmes) for girls and boys who are about to be released from juvenile justice institutions) in targeted areas of the country that promote social cohesion between and within communities and the respect for child rights and help reduce inequities, tensions and conflict potential	2013 – 2015	£595,990
prevention and reduction of electoral conflicts, creation of favourable conditions for their resolution	Public Foundation Legal clinic "Adilet"	creating a favorable legal environment in the electoral process, improved observance and ensuring of electoral rights, increased public confidence in state authorities and reduced number of electoral conflicts in the Kyrgyz republic	2013 – 2015	£197,129.46
reducing the potential for conflict at the state borders through assistance in resolving the problem of statelessness and documentation of the population in border areas	Ferghana Valley lawyers without borders (public union)	reducing the potential for conflict at the state borders through assistance in resolving the problem of statelessness and documentation of the population in border areas in order to participate fully in civic life and thus be less prone to resorting to extremism as a solution to exclusion	2013 – 2015	£123,530
humanisation of the criminal justice systems of Kyrgyzstan and tajikistan through establishing criminal legislative codes in line with international human rights standards	Penal Reform International	criminal justice systems of Kyrgyzstan and tajikistan are strengthened and more humane through establishing criminal legislative codes that comply with international human rights standards	2013 – 2015	£159,612

Table 11: the Conflict pool for Central Asia 2013-2015

The Bilateral Programme Budget of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) was used to fund the Budget to encourage the observance of human rights, the rule of law, and democratic principles. This programme gave way to the launch of the Criminal Justice Dialogue, which involved visits between Kyrgyz and British experts to deepen their understanding of each other's criminal justice systems and reform the Kyrgyz system. Furthermore, the British Embassy held a series of events in Bishkek that included a film festival, poster and art competition, a debating tournament, and support for the Institute of the Ombudsman of the Kyrgyz Republic to raise public awareness of the Office and its roles through a weekly television programme⁸⁹. Additionally, the Roza Otunbaeva Foundation held a conference on "Public Accountability of Government and Civic Participation in Good Governance", where Aileen Walker, Director of Public Engagement in the Department of Information Services of the UK

⁸⁹ British Embassy, Bishkek – Overview of projects and activities funded by British Government in Kyrgyzstan, 2014

House of Commons, spoke at the conference about the importance of trust and transparency between the public and state institutions.

The final fourth programme - *The UK Ministry of Defence Engagement in Kyrgyzstan* aimed to strengthen the region's stability and security. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOD) signed in 2006 established defence relations between the UK and Kyrgyzstan and includes areas of cooperation such as the exchange of information and opinions on arms control, military doctrine, legal and medical matters, the provision of English language training, and staff, command and tactical training. Thus, three junior officers attended the British Military English Course at York St John's University in the UK (January-March 2013), arranged a one-week Media Operations Course for peacekeepers at the Frunze Military Institute (March 2013), sent Kyrgyz students to learn the English language for a two-week seminar.

Thus, in the period from 2000 to 2016, the United Kingdom's foreign policy towards Kyrgyzstan focused heavily on security cooperation and border conflicts. This was a marked shift from the previous decade when the UK had largely ignored the region. The UK's policy was driven by a number of factors, including the threat posed by terrorist groups in the region, the need to protect its own citizens, and the desire to promote stability in the region. However, the UK's policy was not without its critics, who argued that it was overly focused on security issues and neglected other important aspects of the region (Karjalainen & Barany, 2016, pp.3-18; Ziegler, 2008, pp.303-312). Although an educational policy was previously limited to brief English seminars for military officers, overhauling and refurbishing of buildings, and provision of pedagogical material for trainers, the landscape changed dramatically in 2018 with the commencement of the 'Creative Spark' programme implemented by the British Council. This unprecedented initiative significantly broadened the scope of educational policy that encompassed many other significant measures, such as the supply of educational equipment, curricular reform, and awareness campaigns to boost the quality of education. Further, to systematize the analysis of Britain's power policy in Kyrgyzstan, the British Council can be divided into four categories: promoting culture and language, fostering educational, scientific, and technological cooperation, developing business ties, and promoting public diplomacy.

1. Scientific, technical, and innovative cooperation and development of business relations.

The British Council's overall educational cooperation activities focused on the growth of the English language worldwide. To achieve this, they held events to showcase best practices, shared information about educational opportunities offered by UK institutions, supported academic mobility, and provided professional training for "educational agents" who promoted education abroad. Thus, 'the Creative Central Asia' (CCA) series of conferences was launched to encourage a new type of dialogue between the UK, and Central Asia centred around the cultural and creative economy. These events, held annually in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, were designed to create an influential and active leadership network. The first CCA forum was held in Astana in 2017 and focused on how to further strengthen the relations between cultural and creative leaders over the next three years. In 2018, the second forum in Astana discussed how to turn strategy into action and foster a thriving cultural and creative sector. The third forum was held in Tashkent in 2019, and the fourth forum was held virtually in March 2021. It was organized by the Creative Central Asia Network (CCAN), with support from the British Council and in partnership with the "Ololo" group of companies (Kyrgyzstan)⁹⁰. The forum's vision, objectives, and scope have remained the same. However, the 2021 conference was different regarding the mix of participants and themes of pandemic discussion while still focusing on practical action, such as developing frameworks for action and supporting toolkits.

Within the framework of the 'Creative Spark' initiative, three major collaboration was signed between the public and private entities (Table 12): 1) Enactus Kyrgyzstan and the City University of London. In addition, this joint system of Entrepreneurship and Enterprise training was further expanded with the help of AISEC, KGLabs, the American Chamber of Commerce, and the International Business Council in Bishkek,

⁹⁰ The link between the regional CCA and national (Kyrgyz) CPL programmes is Mr Daniyar Amanaliev, the founder and CEO of the Ololo group of companies, who was the Kyrgyz representative on the CCA advisory board and is an outstanding business leader. The striking success of the CPL process has been dependent on four interconnected factors: first, the quality of the leadership of the PIL leadership team in Bishkek; second, the sponsorship of the Ololo group and its critical role in the establishment (2021) of the Association of Creative Industries in the Kyrgyz Republic (ACI); third, the strong participation of a small group of public officials in the Ministry of Economy and Commerce; and fourth, the enthusiastic personal support and encouragement of Mr Charles Garrett, the UK's Ambassador in Kyrgyzstan from early 2019 until the end of 2022. See more information at: <https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/118671/html/> (accessed 02.06.2023)

allowing it to reach ten universities (AUCA, AIU, KRSU, KSTU, IUTI, OSHSU and KEU\DJaGU) located in Bishkek and other regions of Kyrgyzstan.

2) between Coventry University and Central Asian Crafts Support Association's Resource Centre in Kazakhstan focused on cultural heritage, capacity-building workshops on creative entrepreneurship and Heritage-sensitive intellectual property and marketing strategies, ultimately aiming to assist young entrepreneurs in Kyrgyzstan in developing more sustainable businesses. In order to do this, an innovative curriculum and toolkit for heritage-business training was developed, and partnerships with the UNESCO National Committee and the Kyrgyz Patent Agency were established to help tackle the barriers entrepreneurs face. As a result, entrepreneurs could market their products locally and abroad. In addition, the project targeted the neediest beneficiaries in remote villages and all regions of Kyrgyzstan, offering them the opportunity to access learning and development.

Also, in September 2020, Creative Spark, in partnership with Kyrgyz patent (The State Service for Intellectual Property and Innovation under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic)⁹¹, organised an online conference in Bishkek with Coventry University on 'Building Resilience of Central Asian Businesses Based on Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Post-COVID World'. This conference was part of a more comprehensive project, which included establishing an English Club in Kyrgyzstan hosted by Kyrgyz National University; this teaching model was shifted from face-to-face to online in 2020.

3) Middlesex University in London and Kyrgyz National University are focused on harmonising gender entrepreneurship, considering different age groups and balancing access to entrepreneurship resources in both rural and urban regions of the Kyrgyz Republic; efforts are being made to improve the living standards and quality of life for the people residing there through blended entrepreneurship and creativity courses. In its first year, 5,500 students and 230 faculty members took the training provided by Middlesex University, contributing to improving the Entrepreneurship course curriculum at Kyrgyz National University. Their primary focus is women entrepreneurship, so they have engaged various women entrepreneurs as guest

⁹¹ See in the appendices the response of the British Council to the researcher.

speakers and mentors for their teams. In 2020/2021, the focus was entrepreneurship and online teaching methods and training for the region's teachers. In addition, the project team have established an agreement to expand the collaboration network by involving the following regional institutions: Naryn State University is named after S.Naamatov; The University of Central Asia in Naryn; Issyk-Kul State University, named after K.Tynystanov; Osh State University.

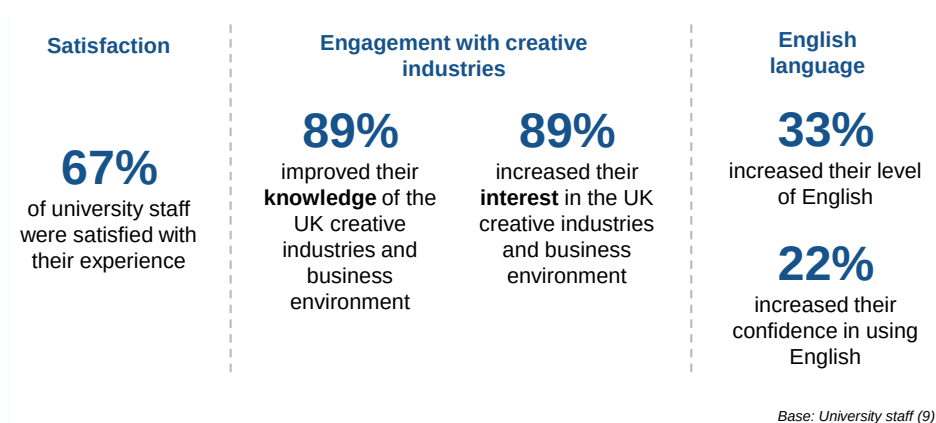
Kyrgyzstan partners	UK partners	Outcomes
Enactus Kyrgyzstan	City, University of London	▶ Conducted a high-level roundtable to show achievements of the Creative Spark programme. ▶ Delivered training for 7 mentors from 7 universities (American University of Central Asia, Ala-Too International University, Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University, Kyrgyz Technical University, Osh State Technical University, Kyrgyz Economic University, International University of Innovative Technologies). ▶ Re-designed curriculum at the 7 universities (listed above) to include entrepreneurship skills. ▶ Created a platform for creative events https://kultur-multur.kg/
Resource Centre in Kyrgyzstan of Central Asian Crafts support Associations	Coventry University	▶ Delivered training workshops to mentors (creative entrepreneurs in Intangible Cultural Heritage), with experts from the UK and other European countries. Mentors, under a 'train the trainers' model, deliver training to employees and other entrepreneurs. ▶ Further developed the online resource hub of education materials for heritage entrepreneurs. ▶ Developed a toolkit for heritage entrepreneurs on intellectual

		property, marketing, intangible cultural heritage.
Kyrgyz National University named after J.Balasagyn	Middlesex University Higher Education Corporation	► Opened a cooking skills hub for women from rural area from lower social-economic background. ► Delivered culinary and entrepreneurial masterclasses at the hub.

Table 12: British Council – Creative Spark in Kyrgyzstan

Overall, the British Council evaluated a positive partnership in the Creative Spark program of Year 3 in Kyrgyzstan. Thus, Kyrgyz local partners in Creative Spark reported being satisfied with their partnership, with one out of three expressing a high degree of satisfaction (10 out of 10 on a rating scale from 1-not at all satisfied to 10-very satisfied). Furthermore, the British Council's role in supporting these partnerships was highly valued. Two out of three local partners indicated that their involvement in the programme improved their perception of the British Council. In particular, the British Council was seen to be valuable in providing advice on cultural engagement with the UK and its higher education systems. Thus, 89% of correspondents improved their knowledge and increased their interest in the UK creative industries and business environment, and 33% increased their level of English.

Table 13: source- the report British Council- Creative spark in Kyrgyzstan 2022



2.Cooperation in the field of education

The work of the British Council in the areas of academic mobility and educational partnership is also based on targeted programs covering various regions of the world. Regarding Kyrgyzstan, British universities do not provide quotas for education for undergraduate and graduate programs. Interaction with Central Asian countries is limited to the implementation of the scholarship programs.⁹² They are only available through competitive selection in implementing scholarship programs. One of them is the official website, 'Education in the UK' (www.education.uk.org).

Furthermore, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office is directly involved in implementing scholarship programs to attract international students to receive higher Education in the UK. The most extensive scholarship program is Chevening Scholarships, funded jointly by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and private donors. This scheme covers 118 countries, excluding the USA and the EU, and offers scholarships for master's studies at leading universities in the UK. Within the program, there are 6-7 master's scholarships annually taken by Kyrgyz students through the program "Aga Khan Development Network-Chevening Scholarships". Thus, on December 6, 2001, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the United Kingdom and the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) signed an agreement to jointly fund scholarships for students from Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan⁹³. Also, it needs to be noted that since 2002, AKDN and one of their leading partners -the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, alongside the British Council⁹⁴, have been working in Kyrgyzstan to support and establish institutions and programmes that help create an 'economic dynamic'⁹⁵. These initiatives have included the main campus of the University of Central Asia (UCA) in Naryn, the Aga Khan School in Osh, the first Microfinance Company (FMFC), the Kyrgyz Investment Credit Bank, and the Medical and Diagnostical Centre in Naryn.

⁹² Meet Top UK Universities in Baku on October 26 // UK Government. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/world-location-news/meet-top-uk-universities-in-baku-on-october-26> (accessed 27.02.2023)

⁹³ UK and Aga Khan development network jointly sponsor new scholarship. Available at: <https://the.akdn/en/resources-media/whats-new/press-release/uk-and-aga-khan-development-network-jointly-sponsor-new-scholarships-press> (accessed 27.02.2023)

⁹⁴ AKDN partners. Available at: <https://the.akdn/en/who-we-are/our-partners> (accessed 27.02.2023)

⁹⁵ *ibid*

However, against the backdrop of events in the world arena due to the annexations of Crimea, the UK began to become more active in the Central Asia region⁹⁶. Thus, in 2015, Oxford International School (OIS) opened its first school in the capital city of Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, on a private business basis. As a member of the Council of British International Schools since 2017, OIS provides a British-style education for children aged 2 to 19, as well as an 'American-style college-preparatory programme for foreign expatriates and residents'⁹⁷. In 2017, OIS was accredited as a Cambridge International School and Cambridge Professional Development Centre. The following year, the British Council accredited British Study Centres (BSC) opened its doors in Bishkek, becoming the country's first UK English language teaching school. The BSC provided the Cambridge CELTA course to a cohort of Kyrgyz students while working in tandem with the Kyrgyz Ministry of Education on teacher training programmes and International Foundation Year and Young Learner summer camps. In response, Acting Minister of Education and Science Kanybek Imanaliev announced plans in 2023 to introduce "a three-part education system to Kyrgyzstan, combining Soviet, British, and National teaching methods⁹⁸", with the intention of having 90% of secondary school leavers reach a CEFR B2 level in their non-native language with the help of British Study Centres⁹⁹.

Also, it needs to note the work of John Smith Trust (JST), where the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) funds Wider Europe and Central Asia programmes and seeks to promote the British values such as good governance, the rule of law and social justice by helping a new generation of leaders from former Soviet Union countries. The JST Fellowship has already aided over 500 fellows from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan¹⁰⁰. The Trust is registered as a charity and is actively supported by all the major UK political parties and a broad range of organizations and individuals across the public, private and third sectors in the UK. ¹⁰¹

⁹⁶ BBC "Ukraine crisis: Britain to take 'more active role' in Central Asia". BBC News, 9 April 2014.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-26937331> (accessed 27.02.2023)

⁹⁷ Oxford International School in Kyrgyzstan. Available at: <https://oxfordois.wixsite.com/english/founder> (accessed 28.03.2023)

⁹⁸ *ibid*

⁹⁹ *ibid*

¹⁰⁰ The John Smith Trust Fellowship for Central Asia, Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/the-john-smith-trust-fellowship-for-central-asia>

¹⁰¹ *ibid*

Thus, the cooperation of the UK with Kyrgyzstan in education, science and innovation was limited to the implementation of the scholarship as mentioned above programs, the activities of the British Council offices and introductory programs for students. However, since 2015, there has been an increase in schools and English language curricula, where the government of Kyrgyzstan expresses plans at the level of law to introduce the British method as one of the education methods.

4.3. Developing business ties

The UK government's strategy for developing business relations has three main components. Firstly, the Department of Trade and Investment provides assistance to British companies that want to export their products and services to foreign markets. This assistance includes advice and support on market entry, product certification, trade regulations, and access to finance. In addition, the Department provides a range of services such as export promotion and market intelligence. Secondly, the UK government promotes investment in the British economy by foreign companies. This includes providing incentives for foreign investors and supporting foreign direct investment in the UK. The Department of Trade and Investment provides advice and assistance to foreign investors on setting up and running businesses in the UK, as well as providing access to financing. Finally, the Department of Trade and Investment works to improve the reputation of the UK and British companies as reliable business partners. This includes providing information on the UK's legal and regulatory framework, as well as promoting the UK as a business-friendly destination. In order to support its strategy for developing business relations, the UK government has a number of initiatives in place. These include the UK Export Finance Scheme, which provides loans and guarantees to British companies that are looking to export their products and services; the UK Trade and Investment Network, which provides advice and support to British companies looking to expand into international markets; and the UK Investment Forum, which facilitates dialogue between foreign investors and the UK government.¹⁰² The key agency responsible for implementing state policy in this area is the Department of Trade and Investment (UK Trade & Investment, UKTI). The Department is simultaneously part of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the

¹⁰² UK Trade& Investment guidance and regulations. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-trade-investment> (accessed:20.02.2023)

Department of Business, Innovation and Skills¹⁰³. The main activities of the Trade and Investment Department are to support British exporters and make the UK more attractive for foreign investment.

In the early 2000s, the Turkish office of the Department of Trade and Investment (DTI) was responsible for protecting the interests of British exporters and promoting the economy of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan as a viable investment opportunity¹⁰⁴. This was due to the Central Asian region not being a priority on the British foreign policy agenda then. However, in 2020, the Department for International Development (DFID) allocated £20 million¹⁰⁵ to create The Peak Bishkek Centre over a period of four years. This Centre has recently launched its first 12-week acceleration programme, tailored specifically for early-stage tech start-ups in Kyrgyzstan. It provides business training programmes and support for micro, small, and medium enterprises of various economic sectors, helping them bring their ideas and products to fruition and grow their businesses worldwide. The PEAK – British-Kyrgyz platform is a joint initiative between the British Council and the Kyrgyz Republic, which seeks to foster links between the two countries and contribute to the development of the Kyrgyz Republic. The platform provides a space for dialogue between the two countries, enabling the exchange of ideas and expertise in areas such as education, culture, business, and civil society. The platform also facilitates the sharing of best practices, knowledge, and resources to support the Kyrgyz Republic in its development efforts. The platform is a unique opportunity for the Kyrgyz Republic to gain access to the advanced knowledge and experience of the UK in various areas and for the UK to benefit from the Kyrgyz Republic's unique insights.

During the pandemic, PEAK has shifted to a hybrid model, providing training, mentoring and online and offline webinars. The first of these hybrid centres, the PEAK Osh Center, opened in early 2021, launching its first program for entrepreneurs in the Osh, Jalal-Abad and Batken regions. Thus, by 2021, the PEAK programme, implemented in Kyrgyzstan, was a successful attempt to support the country's economic growth. It included 158 start-ups across almost all sectors of the economy,

¹⁰³ *ibid*

¹⁰⁴ UK Trade & Investment Turkey // UK Government. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/world/organisations/uk-trade-investment-turkey> (accessed 21.02.2023).

¹⁰⁵ About Peak Enterprise and Innovation Programme. Available at: <https://peak.kg/en/about-us/> (accessed 21.02.2023)

excluding agriculture, the military industry, and areas restricted by the organisation's policy and Kyrgyzstan's legislation. Moreover, the programme was tailored to reach out to women, youth and returning labour migrants, offering them tailor-made programs. As a result, the PEAK had reached almost 3 thousand entrepreneurs in Kyrgyzstan, with around 200 entrepreneurs supported through business development programs and businesses. Moreover, the programme had achieved substantial success in promoting entrepreneurship in Kyrgyzstan, such as organising the national final of the World Entrepreneurship Championship for the first time in the country and supporting the 'Entrepreneur forum', where seven millionaires shared their experience in launching an effective business.

Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed the British soft power strategy's specifics, mainly focusing on the activities of the British Council in Kyrgyzstan. First, the chapter examined the main reports from the Special Committee, British Council, and Royal Academy on soft power. It concluded – that there is a consensus amongst British political and expert circles about what can be attributed to the UK's soft power sources. It has been observed that in order for the success of this approach to be achieved, it is essential that clear objectives be identified for each country, successfully taking into account the respective nation's economic and political perspectives. Furthermore, the coordinated involvement of governmental and non-governmental organisations is imperative to monitor and evaluate the policy's results effectively. Overall, this analysis reinforces that the UK's soft power strategy is an effective medium for diplomatic relations and international development.

Second, the chapter unveiled that, in most cases, all the events in the field of cultural interaction held by British Embassies do not have a systemic programmatic nature. The activities of British embassies in cultural cooperation are considered a priority for those countries already covered by British Council projects. At the same time, Kyrgyzstan remained outside British priorities before 2015. Consequently, the British

foreign policy concept of 'the global power for good' in Central Asia has failed due to a lack of attention paid to the region (Barshey, 2015, pp. 39-47). Interaction with Kyrgyzstan before 2015 was limited and focused more on security cooperation and border conflicts, where the Department for International Development (DFID) implemented the main role of all British power activities in the Republic since it opened in 1997. However, since 2015, the policy has sharply turned to 'Peak' creative projects, with an increase in the number of areas of cooperation that contributed to strengthening the UK's influence through soft power tools. This includes opening schools associated with Oxford and Cambridge, the British Study Centre, and work in the 'creative economy' area. Thus, the 'Creative Spark' initiative providing a framework programme for training entrepreneurs covered ten Kyrgyz universities and signed three agreements with the City of London University, the Coventry University, and the Middlesex University of London. The Peak platform for British-Kyrgyz cooperation has successfully attracted women, young entrepreneurs, youth, and returning labour migrants from Russia through its tailor-made programs. Additionally, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the United Kingdom and the British Council are the main partners in implementation of Aga Khan projects in the sphere of medicine, education, and finance.

Thus, British interests in the Republic of Kyrgyzstan are very diverse. The UK is determined to strengthen its presence in the Republic of Kyrgyzstan, as evidenced by British ex-Ambassador to the country Charles Garrett's declaration in an interview that the UK is determined to strengthen its role as a global player in Central Asia (Garette, 2020). Jones & Khamidov (2017, pp.255-276) noted that the British presence in Kyrgyzstan began with a study of the relations between the three language communities – Russian, Kyrgyz and Uzbek. Britain's careful attention to all these elements, along with targeted work with future elites and a positive image of the country, has allowed the UK to transition from presence to influence through the soft power policy. The government of Kyrgyzstan is also demonstrating a high interest in strengthening and building cultural relations with the UK, showing plans to introduce the British method as one of the education methods in schools. This approach is politically motivated, reflecting Bishkek's multi-vector external policy and the liberal views of some of its intellectual elite. Furthermore, Kyrgyzstan has financial interests in it, as the government desperately needs external aid, including from the UK.

Chapter 5

Turkey's soft power in Central Asia, in the case of TIKA's activities in Kyrgyzstan from 2000 to 2021.

Turkey's recognition of the independence of all Central Asian states and establishment of diplomatic missions in their capitals in December 1991 was a pivotal factor in activating policy in the region since four of the five states were of Turkic origin. Thus, Turkey used the opportunity of soft power to foster Turkic integration, aiming to position itself as a regional leader. To this end, in the early 1990s, Turkish lyceums, schools, and universities were established in Central Asia to cultivate a new generation in line with Turkish values (Vasiliev, 2018, p.110-128). The chapter aims to study integrative Turkey's potential for soft power toward Kyrgyzstan. It evaluates the specifics of Turkey's soft power policy and the reasons for its use in Central Asia, mainly focusing on the role of the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA) from 2000 to 2021 in the Kyrgyz Republic. The purpose of this chapter is threefold. First, the subchapter aims to assess Turkey's foreign policy under the Justice and Development Party (AKP) rule from 2000 to 2021, mainly focusing on examining Turkey's foreign policy and exploring how it is connected to the concept of soft power. Second, it primarily focuses on the empirical data of TIKA's projects in Kyrgyzstan. Third, it reveals the role of Islam in Turkey's efforts to promote a sense of Turkic brotherhood based on Muslim traditions, that ensures an enduring presence in Kyrgyzstan.

5.1 Turkey's foreign policy under AKP and Turkish formation of soft power

In the academic circle of Turkey and Western countries, there are different points of view regarding the causes and conditions for forming the Turkish potential of soft power. First, some argue that since the Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi (AKP) assumed power in the early 2000s, Turkey has undergone an array of transformative processes (Altınay, 2008; Kalin, 2011; Oner, 2013; Öktem, 2013; Çavuş, 2012). Some suggest that Turkey's discourse had been gradually growing and taking advantage of its soft power due to external factors in the 1990s in the Balkans, Middle East, South Caucasus, and Central Asia (Alieva, 2014; Pope & Pope, 2015; Evin, 2016; Aydintasbas, 2008; Yildirim, 2009; Oktem, 2010; Guney, 2013; Atacan, 2015). This

was due to President Turgut Ozal's pan-Turkism and Turanism¹⁰⁶ ideology, which enabled Turkey to expand its influence before the AKP's election in 2002 (Mufti, 2011, p.3). The third point of view is where Turkey has demonstrated its ability to use soft power in the Middle East after the decrease in the influence of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Iran in the region due to its "zero problems with neighbours" policy (Rubin, 2010).

However, without a doubt, in the new millennium, Turkey and its AKP leadership have shifted a significant paradigm by pursuing a foreign policy in its former Ottoman territories of the Middle East, Balkans, South Caucasia, and Central Asia (Alrmizan, 2022). The former Turkish Foreign Minister Ismail Cem argued that the European Union's enlargement policy created potential risks for Turkey, such as requiring Turkey to adopt a peaceful stance toward all its neighbours. Cem suggested that Turkey could develop a more substantial diplomatic role for itself in the region by expanding its net of regional ties, including to the Caucasus, the Middle East, and Central Asia. (Cem, 2004, pp.378-386). Despite having ethnocultural, historical, and economic ties to these regions, Turkey's unfamiliarity with many of the remote peoples, as well as its shared cultural and linguistic past, have hindered the formation of a favourable image of the nation as a leader of the Turkic peoples (Davutoglu, 2008, p.81). Furthermore, Ankara's Kemalist ideology of rejecting religion in politics and its military-strategic alliance with Tel Aviv has further limited Turkey's influence in the Muslim world and the Balkans, resulting in a conservative and often hostile attitude towards the country (Karagul, 2013).

The turning point was the EU membership negotiation at the beginning of the 2000s, where AKP's foreign policy aimed to reform the socio-economic and cultural fields, which led to tremendous economic growth from 2002 to 2012, with an average annual growth rate of 6%. As a result, per capita income has risen from \$3,000 to \$11,000, and the unemployment rate has decreased from 10.3% in 2002 to 8.2% in 2012, making it the lowest unemployment rate in Europe (Guzel, 2012). Indeed, this modernization process launched by the AKP began to strengthen Turkish soft power (Altunışık, 2008; Çandar, 2009, p.10) based on Ahmet Davutoglu's 'Strategic Depth' philosophy. This strategy marked a shift from the nation-state-focused defensive

¹⁰⁶ See. J. Landau's seminal work, *Pan-Turkism: From Irredentism to Cooperation*, 1995. Pan-Turkism is an ideology that refers to the core Turkic-speaking peoples living in an area that stretches from Central Anatolia to the Caucasus and Central Asia. Pan-Turanism, on the other hand, is a broader concept that includes people from Anatolia, Turkestan, and Mongolia. These terms originated in the 19th and 20th centuries, particularly in the Ottoman Empire, and were mainly used in response to (pan-)Slavism and (pan-)Germanism. Berna Pekesen, "Pan-Turkism," European History Online (EGO), 2019.

geopolitical legacy and Kemalist diplomatic tradition (Yesiltas, 2013, p. 680) and has been described as neo- Ottomanism, referencing the geographic extent of the Ottoman Empire (Tuysuzogly, 2014) linked to Ozal's neo-Ottomanism and the 'multi-dimensional' foreign policy of the Erbakan government (Kale& Sum, 2018, p.9; Murinson, 2006).

This time, the main focus of the Turkish political environment was centred on cooperation, creating friendly relations with other actors, and relying on diplomatic methods -This gave rise to the idea of "a new style of diplomacy" (Yesiltaş, Balcı, 2011, p.9), which sought to prioritise civil and economic power and the use of soft power as the primary policy mechanism over military power. However, the concept of soft power was rarely used in the rhetoric of Turkish politicians during the first term of the AKP (2002–2007). The term only began to appear in 2007-2008, when Davutoglu noted the concept of 'unseen soft power', which he associated with the diplomatic success of the country, achieved through its mediation activities in the region (Davutoğlu, 2008, p.90). Thus, in 2010, the Office of Public Diplomacy was established under the Prime Minister's Office to improve the effectiveness of Turkey's efforts in coordinating its soft power institutions. The Office worked in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, aiming to carry out public diplomacy, strengthen inter-institutional cooperation and coordinate the activities of public institutions and NGOs (Kalin, 2011, pp. 7–8). Notably, NGOs were declared 'an integral part of Turkey's foreign policy' (Davutoğlu, 2008, p.84). As outlined in the Official Decree (Kalin, 2011, p.8), the Office oversees the coordination between public agencies and civic organisations in three main areas: university programs, political communication activities, and media promotion activities, to guarantee a precise and effective representation of Turkey. Thus, AKP's strategy of utilising soft power led to the establishment of a new organisation and the revitalisation of existing ones, such as the Office of Public Diplomacy under the Prime Minister's Office, the Turkish Red Crescent (Kızılay), the Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA), the Yunus Emre Foundations, TRT (Turkish Radio and Television Institutions), and the Department for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (Yurtdışı Türkler ve Akraba Topluluklar Başkanlığı) to promote Turkey's interests and collaborate with governmental and non-governmental organisations to improve its image (Avatkov, Chulkovskaya, 2012).

In 2015, the international consulting company Portland published their Soft Power 30 study, aiming to identify the thirty most influential countries in the world. According to the results, Turkey ranked 28th overall¹⁰⁷. Breaking the ranking down further, Turkey was 21st in computer technology, 21st in the cultural sphere, 27th in business, 23rd in engagement, 25th in education, 27th in public administration, and 27th in the results of respondents' voting. Analysing the results of past years, the authors found that Turkey peaked in 2011 and 2012 due to their policy of "zero problems with neighbours" and good economic growth. However, the authors also pointed out the problems that have been increasing, such as the 'most unfair parliamentary system in the world'¹⁰⁸, regular violations of freedom of speech and the violent suppression of opposition protests. It needs to be noted if, initially, the "Turkish model"¹⁰⁹ was positioned as a practical synthesis of Islamic values, democratic social principles, and a flourishing market economy, then since the 2010s due to the Arab Spring and transformation of the policy of the ruling AKP, it began to emphasise the image of the "defender of Muslims and Turks" around the world (Starodubcev, 2016). In 2016, Turkey saw a 'non-dramatic but significant drop' (Starodubcev, 2016) in their ranking from the previous year, placing them in 32nd place. This was attributed to the events in the region, the Kurdish issue, the refugee crisis, and the crisis in relations with Russia.

The policies of Turkey's Justice and Development Party (JDP) from 2013 to 2017 prompted a massive debate about developing its soft power and the Gezi protests in 2013, which served as a signifier for a more illiberal domestic policy and a more unilateral foreign policy. The event was rooted in cultural concerns of the country's secular population about diminishing their lifestyle due to government pressure. Eleven fatalities and many injuries resulting from the government's forceful response to the protests caused worldwide condemnation, leading to questions about Turkey's democratic commitment. This challenged the European ethos and gave birth to the idea that Turkey's rhetoric of democracy was not supported by its domestic actions. It

¹⁰⁷ A Global Ranking of Soft Power 2016. The soft power 30, Portland. Available at: <https://portland-communications.com/pdf/The-Soft-Power-30-Report-2016.pdf> (accessed:02.04.2023); A Global Ranking of Soft Power 2019. Available at: <https://softpower30.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/The-Soft-Power-30-Report-2019-1.pdf> (06.02.2024); A Global Ranking of Soft Power 2017. Available at: <https://softpower30.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/The-Soft-Power-30-Report-2017-Web-1.pdf> (accessed:06.02.2024); A Global Ranking of Soft Power 2018. Available at: <https://softpower30.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/The-Soft-Power-30-Report-2018.pdf> (accessed:06.02.2024); Global Soft Power Index 2021: 15 Nations from MENA Feature. Available at: <https://brandfinance.com/press-releases/global-soft-power-index-2021-15-nations-from-mena-feature> (accessed:06.02.2024)

¹⁰⁸ *ibid*

¹⁰⁹ The Turkish model of development is a multifaceted approach that includes a combination of economic, political, and cultural factors. While soft power, such as cultural influence and diplomacy, is a key component of the Turkish model, it is also supported by economic policies aimed at promoting growth and development, and by political reforms aimed at modernizing and democratizing the country.

is possible that other non-democratic countries in the region could have seen the government's response as an attempt to restore order and stability in light of the protesters' demands. In addition, in 2013, the corruption scandal involving several members of the JDP over an illegal oil deal with Iran, which was under UN sanctions, brought to light the power struggle between Gülen and Erdogan. This escalated into an attempted coup, which Gülen allegedly organized, and the JDP's reaction to it had far-reaching implications for Turkish soft power. The government ordered the closure of numerous Gülen-supported establishments, such as TUSKON and the Gülen schools, which had become critical components in constructing Turkey's international image and providing essential services in many countries. Thus, for example, Kyrgyzstan declined to transfer Gülen educational institutions to the Maarif Foundation in 2017 instead, the Republic re-registering them under the name 'Sapat' (formerly Sebat). The Ministry of Education of the Kyrgyz Republic became one of the founders, claiming that acceding to Turkey's request would be an 'interference in the state's internal affairs'.¹¹⁰

Therefore, the domestic reformation and the closure of Gülen's schools harmed Turkey's soft power, considering the widespread presence of the school around the world and its high status. However, in Turkey, in close connection with this activity, the policy of providing humanitarian support to the region's countries was intensifying, which included debt write-offs as infrastructure and logistics projects within the designated areas (Donninelli, 2022). Despite the identified problems, Turkey steadily increased its global influence. Thus, the victory in the Karabakh conflict and the use of hard power in 2021 has been an effective tool that has given Turkic integration a new impetus in Central Asia and the South Caucasus.

To summarize, the concept of soft power has been applied to the politics of modern Turkey since the coming to power of the Justice and Development Party (AKP), which brought significant changes in the country. This new ideology and line of conduct aimed at making Turkey a regional and then global leader, taking advantage of its geographical position and cultural and historical heritage. Consequently, the country became an authoritative international player by combining soft foreign policy methods with coercive diplomacy and manufacturing consent.

¹¹⁰ President Atambayev: We will not close Sebat, but we will rename and change the Charter. Available at: <https://www.for.kg/news-393163-ru.html> (Accessed 05.04.2023)

Thus, it paved the formation of Turkish soft power in this chapter; the following chapter will focus on a detailed examination of Turkish soft power activities in Central Asia, on the example of Kyrgyzstan.

5.2 Turkey's soft power policy toward Central Asia, on the example of Kyrgyzstan.

Since the end of the Cold War, the discourse of 'Eurasianism' (Avrasyacılık) in Turkey can be viewed from several perspectives, including Western-oriented, pan-Turkism, Russian-oriented, and neo-Ottomanist Eurasianism (Tanrisever, 2000; Rowman & Littlefield, 2017). The most widespread is Western-oriented Eurasianism, which views Turkey as a connector between different parts of Eurasia, allowing it to modernize and Westernize Central Asia and beyond. This 'civilizing' interpretation is mostly accepted by secular elites (Asanov, 2019). Pan-Turkism Eurasianism, on the other hand, supports the idea that the core of Eurasia should be mainly populated by Turkic peoples and should be protected against other cultural and political groups, such as Russia. This opinion is shared by pan-Turkism and ultranationalist groups. Russian-oriented Eurasianism is the least popular and most anti-Western view, which suggests Turkey should abandon its alliance with the West and pursue an independent foreign policy. Some leftist parties endorse this opinion, such as the Vatan Partisi (formerly the Worker's Party of Doğu Perinçek). Lastly, neo-Ottomanist Eurasianism is a moderate perspective that does not confront Russia and keeps Turkey's Western-oriented -Islamist elites and parties, such as the AKP, supporting this idea (Tüfekçi, 2017).

Therefore, all of the varied interpretations of Eurasianism have one thing in common - a focus on a broader Eurasian geography that puts Central Asia at the forefront as an area where Turkish interests are paramount. The thesis will further consider the three distinct phases of the relationship between Turkey and Kyrgyzstan in the sphere of Turkey's soft power activities in the Republic. The first phase was in the early 1990s when President Turgut Özal strongly emphasized building cultural connections under the banner of Turkic Eurasianism. The second phase was the 2000s when President Erdoğan's rule was characterized by continuity, practical adjustments, the expansion

of economic and political ties, and increased collaboration in infrastructure and energy. And finally, the third phase, in the 2010s, when Erdoğan and the AKP deepened their control, especially after the 2016 coup attempt, and began to focus on security and military ties with the Central Asian countries, thus significantly strengthening the relationship with them.

The chapter suggests assessing Turkish soft power policy in Kyrgyzstan via the Official Decrees of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs¹¹¹ objectives in three main areas: cultural and educational cooperation, aid and economic communication activities, and media promotion activities that ‘guarantee a precise and effective representation of Turkey’, to create a comprehensive overview of Turkish soft power activities from 2000 to 2021, mainly focusing on TİKA’s projects in Kyrgyzstan.

Cultural and educational cooperation

The first phase of the relationship between Turkey and Kyrgyzstan was marked by the recognition of Kyrgyzstan as an independent country after the collapse of the USSR in December 1991. Driven by the belief in the ‘Turkic world’, President Ozal was determined to build a strong relationship with Kyrgyzstan based on pan-Turkism and Turanism ideology (Fida, 2018, Ozkan& Demirtepe,2012), where Turkish politicians had ambitions to extend the borders ‘from the Adriatic Sea to the Great Wall’ (Atabaki, 1998, p.342). In the beginning, in response to this, the first President of Kyrgyzstan, Askar Akaev, announced that the country was choosing the “Turkish model”¹¹² of development with a liberal economy (Balci, 2020). After Turkey signed a series of documents in the cultural sphere- *Joint Statement on Cooperation between their Ministries of Public Education in February 1992, a Protocol on Cooperation in the Field of Education and Culture in July 1993, an Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Education, Science and Culture in March 1992, an Agreement on the Establishment of the Turkological College in April 1992, and a Treaty of Eternal Friendship and Cooperation in 1997*¹¹³ to strengthen cultural base with the Republic to strengthen its position in the Republic.

¹¹¹ Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs Official Decree No. 2 (2018): Establishing an International Platform for Promoting Turkey in the Field of Education; Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs Official Decree No. 3 (2018): Establishing a Comprehensive Strategy for Promoting Turkey’s Political Interests, Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs Official Decree No. 5 (2018): Establishing a Media Promotion Strategy for Enhancing Turkey’s International Image. Available at: <https://www.mfa.gov.tr/decrees-of-turkish-ministry-of-foreign-affairs.en.mfa>.

¹¹² Denisenko, E, 1992, *Nezavisimaya gazeta*. Kyrgyzstan vybiraet Tureckiy put razvitiya, 03.01.1992, p.3.

¹¹³ The official response from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kyrgyzstan to the researcher regarding the Agreements between Kyrgyzstan and Turkey.

Thus, in 1993, the University of Economics and Entrepreneurship was established in Jalal-Abad, Kyrgyzstan, which was the first university to be opened by Turkey in the region. This came following the signing of the Research Protocol between the Turkic World Foundation and the Jalal-Abad City Hall (Cetin, 2009). The university consists of two faculties: the Faculty of Management and the Faculty of Social Sciences and Pedagogy. The Faculty of Social Sciences and Pedagogy includes two departments, the Department of History and the Department of Turkish Language and Literature. On the other hand, the Faculty of Management is comprised of the Department of Management and the Department of International Relations.

On September 30, 1995, the governments of Turkey and Kyrgyzstan signed an agreement in Izmir¹¹⁴ to establish Kyrgyz-Turkish Manas University in the capital, Bishkek. The university was named in honour of the Epic of Manas, a leading literary work describing the exploits of a key figure in Kyrgyz history and their national hero. Its mission is to provide joint education and cooperation between the Kyrgyz and Turkish youth, as well as other Turkic peoples, through a focus on the culture of Turkic-speaking peoples both in and out of the classroom. Currently, Kyrgyz-Turkish Manas University is a legal entity with scientific autonomy akin to universities in Turkey and is home to 5,556 students from 16 countries. Education is provided free of charge, with students receiving scholarships and the most outstanding students being rewarded with a separate scholarship for their academic performance. The university consists of two institutes, nine faculties, three higher schools, modern educational laboratories, and a technopark and employs 486 teachers, of which 170 are international instructors. It offers a variety of undergraduate and graduate programs and professional development courses and has an active research centre dedicated to advancing knowledge in various fields¹¹⁵. By 2021, Manas University had a total of 11 423 graduates, working in 43 countries.¹¹⁶ Manas University consists of 11 faculties, one vocational school, 41 departments, and several research centres, such as the Centre for Study of Turkic Civilization, Biodiversity and Biotechnology Research Centre, Central Asian Studies Research Centre, Project Co-ordination Centre, and Centre of Distance Learning. In the academic year 2017/2018, the university received funds from the Turkish government in the amount of \$34,832 and funds from

¹¹⁴ The official website of the Kyrgyz-Turkish University Manas. Available at: <http://www.manas.edu.kg/index.php/ru> (accessed 03.04.2023)

¹¹⁵ *ibid*

¹¹⁶ *ibid*

international sources in the amount of \$73,220 and 152,500€¹¹⁷. Additionally, students are able to take part in 35 student clubs, such as Photography Club, Alpinism Club, Poetry Club, Cooking Club, and Ecology Club. This multifaceted and high-quality education at Manas University has led to it being highly rated amongst higher educational institutions in Kyrgyzstan. The quality of education at Manas is confirmed by the rating of higher educational institutions in Kyrgyzstan¹¹⁸.

Thus, the Kyrgyz-Turkish Manas University, a recipient of free education, is Turkey's largest intellectual investment in Central Asia, including Kyrgyzstan. By 2021, the Turkish government provided \$80 million to the university, whereas the Ministry of Education of Kyrgyzstan funded a total of less than 2 billion soms (\$35 million) to finance higher education in the country from 2008 to 2010¹¹⁹. Notably, Manas University has seen an increase in its role due to its involvement in the National Strategy for Sustainable Development of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2013-2017¹²⁰, as well as the Concept for Strengthening the Unity of the People and Interethnic Relations in the Kyrgyz Republic¹²¹. This comes as the status of the Russian language in Kyrgyzstan has been questioned (see Chapter 2). This implementation was launched under the decree of the President of Kyrgyzstan, A. Atambaev, dated July 1, 2013. It aimed to reform the gradual transition of higher education from Russian to the Kyrgyz language. This is particularly pertinent as approximately 80% of universities in the country provide education in the Russian language, with only 20% of students studying in the Kyrgyz language. Thus, Turkey is contributing to the reform of the Kyrgyz educational system by funding the training of local specialists at Manas University and expanding the teaching of the Kyrgyz language at the university, which will enhance the quality of education in the country.

In the 1990s, Gülen's leadership led to the establishment of another educational network, Sebat International Educational Network. This organization includes 16 Kyrgyz-Turkish high school lyceums, 11 primary schools, the Ataturk-Alatoo

¹¹⁷ The official website of the Kyrgyz-Turkish University Manas. Available at: <http://www.manas.edu.kg/index.php/ru> (accessed 05.04.2023)

¹¹⁸ Kadri A, Razvitie otnosheniy mejdu Turciy I Kyrgyzstanom v oblasti obrazovaniya, nauki I kultury, 2016, No 5-3 (18). p. 32.

¹¹⁹ National Statistic Committee Report, Kyrgyzstan, Bishkek, p.30

¹²⁰ The decree of the President of Kyrgyz Republic from the 1st of July 2013 № 155. Available at: <http://cbd.miniust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/61664> (accessed 03.04.2023)

¹²¹ *Ibid*

International University, the Silk Road International School, the International School 'United World International School', the Centre for the Study of Languages and Computer Literacy, as well as three incomplete secondary schools (table 13). Currently, there are a total of 9872 pupils and 2453 students enrolled in the aforementioned educational institutions. The lyceums Sebat have been noted to be some of the leading general education schools due to the individual pedagogical and psychological approach to teaching a child, as well as the interactive involvement of the parents. The admission procedure varies depending on the institution in question. Starting April 2, 2021, entrance examinations for 6th- grade students will begin in all regions of the republic. These examinations are conducted in two rounds.

To date, 9872 pupils and 2453 students are studying in the above educational institutions¹²². According to the results of the educational process, the lyceums Sebat occupy leading positions among general education schools. This result is based on an individual pedagogical and psychological approach in the process of teaching a child, as well as interaction with parents. The order of admission depends on the institution you have chosen. From April 2, 2021, entrance examinations for students of 6th grade begin in all regions of the republic.¹²³ These exams are held in 2 rounds. At the Sapat International Educational Institution, the department heads are directing teachers to incorporate information technology into their teaching, such as interactive whiteboards, the Internet and the development of teaching aids. Additionally, the scientific-methodical centre of the institution is running the "School of Young Teachers", which provides special training seminars for teachers who have worked for 1-3 years. Upon completion of these seminars, the teachers receive special certificates. Furthermore, with the support of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic, the International Educational Institution Sebat is holding a mathematical Olympiad among students of 6 classes of general education schools in order to develop an interest in the study of mathematics, as well as to identify and support gifted children.¹²⁴

The Kyrgyz-Turkish Lyceums in Kyrgyzstan offer a unique educational experience in comparison to other secondary schools in the country, as they provide instruction in natural and mathematical subjects in English, as well as courses in the humanities,

¹²² The International educational institution Sapat. Available at: <https://sapat.edu.kg/en/about-us/> (accessed:25.04.2023)

¹²³ *ibid*

¹²⁴ *ibid*

such as national and world history, native language, Kyrgyz literature, geography, fine arts, and physical culture - all in the state or official language. Moreover, students attending these schools are obligated to learn Turkish. In addition, these lyceums boast a high level of technical equipment, with 25 laboratories in informatics, 16 in physics, 15 in chemistry, and 15 in biology, as well as 1,763 computers, 277 multimedia devices, and 76 interactive whiteboards.

Notably, that Kyrgyzstan was the only Central Asian state that, following the military coup in Turkey in 2016, did not transfer Gülen educational institutions to the Maarif Foundation.¹²⁵ Instead, the Republic re-registered them under a new name - from Sebat to Sapat. This resulted in heightened tensions around the potential closure of these schools, culminating in the kidnapping of the head of the Sapat network, Orhan Inandi, in May 2021. Social media reports suggested that Inandi had been taken to the Turkish embassy, although the Turkish side denied this. Nevertheless, on July 5, Erdogan announced that Inandi had been taken to Turkey, while the Turkish Ambassador to the Kyrgyz Republic, A. Dogan, stated that Inandi was 'recognized solely as a citizen of the Republic of Turkey'¹²⁶. In 2020, as a response to the current situation, the Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Türkiye Maarif Vakfı (Maarif Foundation) Fund signed a memorandum. Subsequently, in 2021, the Maarif Foundation opened its first comprehensive school in Bishkek. Maarif International Schools are renowned for their enriched educational system that is designed in accordance with the guidelines and instructions of the Kyrgyz Ministry of Education and Science. The school offers a student-centred program considering students' personality, character, and temperament. Moreover, English, and Turkish are studied at all levels of the curriculum, from Preparatory to Grade 11. The school consists of kindergartens, universities, and seven disciplines – history individuals and society, ethics, mathematics, physics, astronomy, biology, chemistry, geography, technology, Kyrgyz, Turkish, Russian literature, music, and youth military training.

¹²⁵ The movement, led by Turkish Islamic scholar Fethullah Gülen, has been accused of engaging in various activities perceived as undermining the government in Turkey. The presence and activities of the Gülen movement in Kyrgyzstan have raised concerns about religious extremism, influence over educational institutions, and potential political interference. These issues have contributed to tense relations between Kyrgyzstan and Turkey, as well as debates and discussions within the country regarding the role and impact of the Gülen movement. However, Kyrgyzstan was the only Central Asian state that, following the military coup in Turkey in 2016, did not transfer Gülen educational institutions to the Maarif Foundation. Instead, the Republic re-registered them under a new name - from Sebat to Sapat. See in wake of blown coup, Turkey takes global aim at Gülen movement. Available at: <https://www.rferl.org/a/turkey-gulen-movement-global-aim/27872225.html> (accessed:25.04.2023)

¹²⁶ Turkish Ambassador recognized Inandi as citizen of Turkey. Available at: <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/turkish-ambassador-in-kyrgyzstan-inandi-recognized-solely-as-citizen-of-turkey/1866289> (accessed 03.04.2023)

Furthermore, students at Maarif International Schools are provided with a means of transport that is equipped with GPS navigators, allowing parents to monitor their children's travel through the city.

Thus, in light of the most recent incident involving the Gulen school, Ankara is endeavouring to restore the pre-existing lyceums by providing additional resources through the establishment of a new Foundation. This endeavour reflects Kyrgyzstan's commitment to ensuring that the lyceums can maintain their high educational provision and offer students a quality educational experience.

Table 13: Turkish Educational institutions and lyceums in the Kyrgyz Republic

Source: International Educational Institution "Sapat", official website-<https://sapat.edu.kg/en/glavnaya-english/>

1.Lyceum named after C. Aitmatov (Bishkek)	1992
2.Issyk-Kul Lyceum named after Z.Bektenov (village Choktal)	2004
3.Talas Women's Lyceum "Meerim-Sapat" (Talas)	2002
4.Osh Lyceum "Sapat" (Osh)	1998
5.Jalal-Abad Women's Lyceum named after Z. Nurmatov (Jalal-Abad)	1995
6.Incomplete educational institution "Seitek-Jal" (Bishkek)	2013
7.Incomplete educational institution "Seitek" (Bishkek)	2012
8.Incomplete general education school "Akyltai" (Bishkek)	2014
9.Silk Road International School (Bishkek)	2000
10.International University "Ata-Turk-Alatoo" (Bishkek)	1996
11.Kyrgyz-Turkish University "Manas"	1996
12.Women's Lyceum Aichurek (Bishkek)	1193
13.Educational complex "Maarif"	2021
14. Bishkek-Turkish school	1999
15.Kyrgyz-Turkish lyceum "Anadolu"	1993
16.Kyrgyz-Turkish women's lyceum "Anadolu"	1992
17.Bishkek Centre for learning Turkish language	1996
18. Jail Lyceum "Sapat" (village Ak-Bashat)	2002
19. Tokmok Lyceum "Sapat" (Tokmok)	2014
20. Kadamjai Lyceum named after Semetey (Kadamjai)	1993

21.Tokmok Lyceum named after J. Balasagyn (Tokmok)	1994
22.Kyzylk Lyceum named after I. Razzakov (Kyzyl-Kiya)	1994
23.Issyk-Kul Lyceum named after H. Karasaev (Karakol)	1992
24.Jalal-Abad Lyceum named after Kurmanbek Baatyr (Jalal-Abad city)	1993
25.Osh Lyceum "Sema" (Osh)	1992
26.Naryn Lyceum named after K. Subakozhoev (Naryn)	1993
27.Lyceum "Manas-Ata" (Talas)	2004

Alatoo-Ataturk University (AIU) was established in 1996 as a self-governing, commercial, educational institution independent of the Turkish Ministry of Education. This topic was susceptible in the aftermath of the coup attempt on July 15. Sebahattin Balf, the Kyrgyz rector of the Ankara-funded Manas University, organized a forum to denounce the attempted putsch.¹²⁷ During this forum on July 18, he warned his fellow citizens that the Gulen group could equally make "people in Kyrgyzstan do terrible things in their own country".¹²⁸ Despite this, the University still operates in Kyrgyzstan. It boasts several of its facilities, such as its Scientific Journal 'Alatoo Academic Studies', the Eurasian Journal of Business and Economics, its own Science Department, 6 Labs, and the Smart Class. AIU is also participating in the ERASMUS programme, which includes 21 European Universities for scholarships¹²⁹. Erasmus+ is the International Credit Mobility Program sponsored by the European Union, providing participants with academic, personal, and cultural development at one of the European universities with the benefit of 800/850 euros monthly and 820 euros for travel expenses¹³⁰. AIU students with excellent academic achievements and a good level of English can participate in the competition, with successful candidates being awarded Erasmus grants. The International Relations Office (IRO) facilitates and coordinates Erasmus+ students' mobility programs based on open, transparent and

¹²⁷ In wake of blown coup, Turkey takes global aim at Gulen movement. Available at: <https://www.rferl.org/a/turkey-gulen-movement-global-aim/27872225.html> (accessed:25.04.2023)

¹²⁸ *ibid*

¹²⁹ Guidelines for Outgoing Erasmus Student. Available at: <http://www.iro.alatoo.edu.kg/view/public/pages/page.xhtml?id=8685> (accessed:25.04.2023)

¹³⁰ *ibid*

merit-based policy. The IRO's internal selection process for students within Erasmus+ KA1 is carried out according to specific criteria.

Apart from university cooperation in the Republic, it needs to note the formation of the International Organization of Turkic Culture – TURKSOY. TURKSOY is an organization that was founded in 1993 as a result of cooperation between the Ministries of Culture of the ex-Soviet Union Republics¹³¹. It is essentially a UNESCO of the Turkic World, and its fundamental goals are to strengthen the ties of brotherhood and solidarity between the Turkic populations of Eurasia, to transmit the common Turkic culture to future generations, and to introduce it to the world¹³². The organization has 6 founding members, namely Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Turkey, as well as 8 observer members. Through its activities, TURKSOY seeks to promote Turkic culture on the world stage and provide a platform for the Turkic people to share their culture and traditions. President of Kyrgyzstan Sadyr Japarov highlighted the importance of TURKSOY as “a spiritual bridge connecting the Turkic-speaking countries, noting the great work that the organisation has done and the significant authority it has achieved on the international stage”¹³³. Sultan Raev, representative of Kyrgyzstan in the Organization and Secretary General of TURKSOY informed “the President of the plans to strengthen the activities of TURKSOY further and promote the culture of the Turkic peoples, including Kyrgyz culture, Kyrgyz folklore, and the epic Manas”¹³⁴. The organisation's primary focus is to contribute to the integration of the Turkic peoples and unite them through culture. Since 2000, TURKSOY has been actively involved in Kyrgyzstan, facilitating collaboration between Turkic-speaking countries, and providing support for cultural exchange. The most notable event was the World Nomad Games, which was held in Kyrgyzstan in 2014, 2016 and 2018. At the Third World Nomad Games, which took place in September 2018 on the shores of Issyk-Kul Lake, it was decided to host the Fourth World Nomad Games in Turkey in 2020. However, the coronavirus pandemic postponed the event to 2022 and did not occur in Iznik, Bursa province. Additionally, in collaboration with local Kyrgyz authorities, TURKSOY unveiled a monument of

¹³¹ The International Organization of Turkic Culture TURKSOY. Available at: <https://www.turksoy.org/en-US/history> (accessed:25.04.2023)

¹³² *ibid*

¹³³ President and head of TURKSOY discuss World Nomad Games. Available at: https://24.kg/english/232490_President_and_head_of_TURKSOY_discuss_World_Nomad_Games/ (accessed:25.04.2023)

¹³⁴ *ibid*

Chingiz Aytmatov on December 12, 2019. The monument is located in the park that bears his name in the *Keçiören Municipality* of Ankara.

In June 1993, the Turkish Ministry of Culture organized a Congress of Writers from Turkey and the Turkic-speaking countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) to create a common alphabet for the Turkic countries. This was intended to be a transition from Cyrillic to the Latin alphabet. However, only Azerbaijan took a noteworthy step in this direction in 2001. Subsequently, in 2013, the question of transitioning all Turkic states to a single Turkic alphabet was raised within the frame of the Turkic Council organization again. Seven years later, in 2023, the first meeting of the Organization of Turkic States' "Common Alphabet Commission" is expected to be held in Kyrgyzstan to unify this transition. On January 18, 2023, the Jogorku Kenesh, Kyrgyzstan's unicameral parliament, passed the first reading of the constitutional law "On the state language of the Kyrgyz Republic", officially designating Kyrgyz as the sole state language and Russian as an official language.¹³⁵

Back in June 1993, the Turkish Ministry of Culture organized a congress of writers from Turkey and the Turkic-speaking countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). The main focus of this prominent collaboration was the creation of a common alphabet for Turkic countries, with a transition from Cyrillic to the Latin alphabet. However, only Azerbaijan took a noteworthy step in this direction in 2001¹³⁶. In 2013, the question of transitioning all Turkic states to a single Turkic alphabet was raised within the frame of the Turkic Council organization. Seven years later, in 2023, the first meeting of the Organization of Turkic States' "Common Alphabet Commission" is expected to be held in Kyrgyzstan in order to unify this transition. Subsequently, on January 18, 2023, the Jogorku Kenesh, Kyrgyzstan's unicameral parliament, passed the first reading of the constitutional law "On the state language of the Kyrgyz Republic", officially designating Kyrgyz as the sole state language and Russian as an official language. These developments signify a notable step towards promoting the

¹³⁵ Kyrgyzstan took a step to reduce the use of the Russian language. Available at: <https://www.azattyk.org/a/32230422.html> (accessed: 04.04.2023)

¹³⁶ The Decree of the President of Azerbaijan on the establishment of the day of the Azerbaijani alphabet and the Azerbaijani language (August 9, 2001). Available at: http://files.preslib.az/projects/remz/pdf_ru/atr_dil.pdf (accessed 04.04.2023)

use and preservation of the Kyrgyz language while acknowledging the importance of Russian as an official language due to its historical and contemporary significance in Kyrgyzstan.

Thus, for the past 30 years, Turkey and Kyrgyzstan have steadily improved their cultural cooperation through Turkic cultural organizations and direct bilateral efforts. Turkey has also taken note of the Kyrgyz population's reluctance to learn Turkish and has responded by teaching subjects in Kyrgyz in its educational institutions in Kyrgyzstan. This move helps to fill the gap in the Kyrgyz-Turkic language component in the education system of Kyrgyzstan and avoids any accusations of pan-Turkism aspirations from Russia (Kudayarov, 2015, pp.82-91). Overall, this strategy has been very effective for Turkey. Therefore, the Russian language is starting to diminish its distribution area, leading to modifications in the structure of higher education that promote the continuous growth of Kyrgyz language education (Zhu & Ediger, 2020, pp.166-176).

In parallel with TURKSOY's initiatives and educational institutions, Turkey has actively promoted student exchange programs with Central Asian countries since the 1990s. The Turkish Ministry of Education launched the 'Great Student Exchange Project' to simplify the application and admission process for Central Asian students who wish to study in Turkish universities. This initiative has been successful, as over 14,000 scholarships were granted to students from Central Asia and the Caucasus from 1992 to 2002. As of 2020, 793 out of 3,680 scholarships awarded were given to students from Central Asia and the Caucasus, accounting for 21% of the total. In addition, Turkey has increased the government quotas for Kyrgyzstan students from 40 to 256 (table 14) from 2000 to 2021. Manas University allocated 468 scholarships, and Anadolu schools granted 100 places to Kyrgyz students in their educational institutions in 2020. Every year, students from Kyrgyzstan are accepted based on their performance in the University Student Selection and Placement Examination (Manas University Entrance).

Table 14: Turkish scholarships to Kyrgyz student

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Manas University	180	200	210	225	250	255	284	297	302	341	350

Anadolu Schools	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Turkish state scholarship	40	40	40	48	45	50	50	54	51	50	54
Total	320	340	350	373	395	405	434	451	453	491	504
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Manas University	343	361	387	411	408	420	412	421	457	472	468
Anadolu Schools	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Türkiye Burslari	56	78	80	94	105	134	138	210	233	245	256
Total	499	539	567	616	613	654	650	731	790	817	824

In addition, The Turkish Directorate of Religious Affairs and the Foundation for Religious Affairs have allocated more than 200 quotas annually to Kyrgyz students, allowing them to pursue their studies at theological faculties of Turkish universities and theological lyceums (MFA Kyrgyzstan, 2021).

Therefore, Turkey has made significant political, educational, and cultural efforts to connect with Turkic-speaking republics in Central Asia. As a result, Ankara has emerged as a prominent player in a region where Turkish influence was previously lacking. Thus, in Kyrgyzstan, Turkish higher education institutions have received high praise and, to some extent, replaced the high-quality Soviet education system. According to a sociological research project by the F. Ebert Foundation, a notable percentage of students surveyed believed that learning the Turkish language could broaden their understanding of the world. In contrast, others regarded Turkey as a model for Kyrgyzstan. Additionally, a vast majority (83.6%) of students at Manas University expressed satisfaction with their university, citing reasons such as the quality and affordability of education, good facilities and equipment, and a lack of corruption (Turdabaeva, 2012, p.50).

5.3 TİKA's aid and economic communication.

TİKA, established in 1992, aims to strengthen bilateral relations with the Turkic Republics of the former USSR. It was created through Statutory Decree No. 480¹³⁷ as

¹³⁷ Law No. 4668 "The Law on the Organization and Duties of the Turkish Cooperation and Cooperation Agency," *Resmî Gazete*. Available at: <http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/kanunlar/k4668.html> (accessed:15.06.2023)

an international technical assistance agency under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. TİKA's primary responsibility is to provide assistance to Turkic-speaking republics and related peoples in neighbouring states of Turkey. Its projects and programs aim to promote economic, trade, technical, social, cultural, and educational cooperation. The establishment of TİKA in January 1992 was a significant step towards the vision of Turgut Özal during Umut Arık's presidency (Ozkan& Demirtepe, 2012, pp.647-664).

The Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA) underwent two distinct phases: 1992-2002 and 2002-2011. Initially, TİKA focused on providing technical support to the newly independent countries in the Caucasus and Central Asia, completing over 2,200 projects during this period (Akilli & Celenk, 2018). However, between 2003 and 2011, the number of projects undertaken by TİKA increased nearly four-fold. In 2011, TİKA underwent a restructuring to enhance its technical cooperation and coordination efficiency. Consequently, it was renamed "the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency Directorate".¹³⁸ Currently, TİKA has a more extensive network of Program Coordination Offices, increasing from 12 in 2002 to 25 in 2011 and scaling to 60 in 2018.¹³⁹ Thus, in the past 21 years, the AKP leadership has collaborated with TİKA to provide humanitarian aid and development assistance in more than 140 countries worldwide. As a result, TİKA has become an important organization in promoting Turkey's national branding value and enhancing Turkey's reputation and prestige (Celenk& Akilli, 2018, pp. 135-151). The AK Party leaders significantly increased TİKA's budget during their tenure. Thus, from 2003-2013, TİKA's budget grew almost five times larger than the previous decade (1992-2002). As of 2011, TİKA had provided more than \$1.2 billion in foreign aid to over a hundred countries (TİKA's Development Aid Report 2011) In recent years, the numbers have continued to rise, with TİKA receiving over \$6.4 billion in funding for aid projects in

¹³⁸ "TİKA'nın Adı Değişti!" *Anadolu Ajansı*. Available at: <http://www.aa.com.tr/tr/turkiye/16430--tika-nin-adi-degisti> (accessed:15.06.2023)

¹³⁹ "TİKA Faaliyet Coğrafyasını Genişletiyor!" *TİKA*, (2015). Available at: http://www.tika.gov.tr/tr/haber/tika_faaliyet_cografyasini_genisletiyor-15396 (accessed:16.06.2023)

more than 140 countries in 2017.¹⁴⁰ Thus, the new discourse of the AK Party has brought about a new approach to Turkish foreign policy, which has led to TİKA participating in various projects to aid in the reconstruction of Afghanistan, South Asia, the Balkans, and the Middle East (Öktem, 2012, pp.86-87). TİKA has also expanded its reach to Africa, focusing on drilling wells and constructing water pipes to provide clean water (TİKA's report, 2015). These initiatives help recipient countries establish institutions and foster friendly bilateral relations. Turkey's objective with its technical assistance and foreign aid is to build strong connections, particularly with Turkish-speaking nations, based on shared history and cultural heritage.

Currently, TİKA operates in 58 countries, each with a dedicated Program Coordination Office. In 2016, Turkey generously provided \$7,943.3 million in foreign aid, which included bilateral development, development assistance, and humanitarian aid. Syria received the highest amount of official development aid from Turkey, with an allocation of \$5,851.23 million, followed by Somalia with \$59.63 million, Palestine with \$43.12 million, Afghanistan with \$32.69 million, Bosnia-Herzegovina with \$30.29 million, Kyrgyzstan with \$25.39 million, Macedonia with \$18.96 million, Kazakhstan with \$18.96 million, Azerbaijan with \$14.24 million, and Niger with \$11.91 million.¹⁴¹

Particularly in Kyrgyzstan, the second phase of the Kyrgyzstan-Turkey relationship witnessed a notable shift towards neo-Ottomanist and Islamist justifications while still building upon the foundations established during the Özal era. Nonetheless, it also sustained and furthered the policy of cultural outreach that had initially emerged in the 1990s, rooted in the principles of Turkic unity and dialogue. This dedication to cultural outreach has been revitalized and strengthened under the leadership of the AKP through the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA), as mentioned earlier.

¹⁴⁰ "Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan'dan Müslüman Ülkelere Zekât Çağrısı," *TRT Haber*, (April 10, 2018). Available at: <http://www.trthaber.com/haber/gundem/cumhurbaskani-erdogandan-musluman-ulkelere-zekat-cagrisi-359928.html> (accessed 16.06.2023)

¹⁴¹ Development Turkish Development Assistance Report 2016. Available at: <http://www.tika.gov.tr/upload/2018/Turkish%20Development%20Assistance%20Report%202016/Turkish%20Development%20Assistance%20Report%202016.pdf>, p. 11th (accessed:16.06.2023)

In its two decades of operation in Kyrgyzstan, TİKA has demonstrated its commitment to the country's sustainable development. In 1993, TİKA established its first international office in Kyrgyzstan through a "Protocol of Cooperation" signed on April 8, 1993, between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kyrgyz Republic. The Agency has supported the Republic's infrastructure with over 1000 projects, resulting in a significant increase in funding for Kyrgyzstan – thus, from \$16 million between 1991 and 2005, to \$285.8 million from 2015 to 2020. According to the TİKA Kyrgyzstan Office, the projects have reached over 3 million people and positively impacted over 8 million people in the country. Over the years, TİKA has invested in various sectors such as education, energy, health, agriculture, etc. The majority of this funding was allocated to administrative and civil infrastructure 44.47% (see *Table 12 in Appendices*) – as the renovation of over 80 schools and construction of more than 100 kindergartens as Osh Religious High School, establishing an electronic library for Osh State University, time distribution system in four locations in Bishkek, Bishkek Public Bread factory, landscaping and renovation of Kyrgyz Historical Museum, renovation of courtroom and the library of the Constitutional Chamber, renovation the auto repair shop at Vocational Technical high school No.3 in Bishkek.¹⁴² To economic infrastructure and services (36.30%) – training programme for tourism employees, customs guard training for customs personnel, a training programme for Kyrgyz Ministry of Finance specialist, improving human resources capacity of Kyrgyz National bank, assistance to Kyrgyz sportsmen, assistance to children from Togolok Moldo homeless and orphan children school N 71, a commercial program for Rahmankul Khan, diplomats service. To health (7.84%) – Bishkek State Hospital of the Kyrgyz-Turkish Friendship, construction of the Osh Kyrgyz- Turkish Friendship Clinic, construction of Health Centres in the Birdik and Emgek- Talaa Villages of Naryn Region, medical equipment and material assistance to National Oncology Centre, equipment to National Osh Hospital, three First Aid Ambulances. To education (5.57%) – the secondary school of Kyrgyz-Turkish friendship, seven educational centres in Bishkek, Osh, Talas, Jalal- Abad, Batken, Karakol and Naryn, the project of the greenhouse on the campus of Kyrgyz-Turkish Manas University, Vocational High School for girls. To social infrastructure and services (4.08%) -time distribution system in four locations in Bishkek, eight radar

¹⁴² Kyrgyzstan: TİKA continues to support the development of Kyrgyzstan. TİKA's report

systems with video recording for traffic police directorate, production sector (0.87%) – food aid to 3000 families as a part of Ramadan programs annually, and water and sanitation (0.68%) – Rehabilitation of Kenesh Village Drinking water system.

Therefore, since 2002, the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA) has been working under the AKP party's leadership to support infrastructure, education, and humanitarian aid projects in Kyrgyzstan. This partnership is crucial due to Kyrgyzstan's strategic location in Central Asia. The country is a vital partner for Turkey in terms of regional stability, security, and economic growth. The large Turkic population in Kyrgyzstan further strengthens the cultural and political ties between Turkey and the Central Asian states. Considering the COVID-19 pandemic, TIKA has also provided significant support to Kyrgyzstan. In 2020, the agency contributed \$1 million worth of medical supplies and equipment to help the country combat the virus.

This connection allows for collaboration and cooperation in various fields, including trade, tourism, and cultural exchange. Additionally, Turkey sees the diversification of Kyrgyzstan's economy away from its reliance on Russia as an opportunity for Turkish companies to invest in the country.

Media promotion activities

Since 1993, the Turkish Radio and Television Corporation (TRT) has played a crucial role in Turkey's activities in Kyrgyzstan. They started broadcasting from the Kyrgyz-Turkish Manas University in the northern part of the country. In the same year, the university, with the support of the Turkish government, launched the Manas TV channel and Manas FM radio, further strengthening Turkey's presence in Kyrgyzstan.

Since the AKP came to power, the Turkish media market has experienced impressive global growth, with a market value of \$11.6 billion and an annual growth rate of 11.4% (Yesil, 2016). In 2002, TRT Avrasya renamed TRT Turk and began targeting Turkish-speaking audiences worldwide through TRT Kurdi and TRT Arabi. In 2015, TRT Corporation launched TRT World, an English-language channel based in Istanbul that aims to provide unbiased coverage of global news. The channel's experienced journalists have helped to promote Turkey's image abroad, and TRT World has expanded to include international bureaus in various countries. Thus, according to

figures from the Kyrgyz Ministry of Communications, the number of Turkish TV viewers in Kyrgyzstan rose from 200,000 in 2000 to 1.3 million in 2021, while the number of Turkish radio listeners increased from 100,000 to 800,000 during the same period¹⁴³.

In 2006, TRT Turk extended its outreach to Kyrgyzstan through bilateral cooperation between the Ministry of Culture and Information of Kyrgyzstan and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Turkey and Turkish Radio. As part of this cooperation, TRT provided KTRK (Public Broadcasting Corporation of the Kyrgyz Republic) with technical assistance in the form of lighting equipment valued at \$750,000 for television studios, as well as training and internship opportunities for Kyrgyz television creative workers. In 2022, a series of media training workshops were held in Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan, in collaboration with the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA), the Turkish Radio and Television Corporation (TRT), and the GZT Digital broadcasting platform.¹⁴⁴ These workshops attracted over 90 students who were provided guidance by experienced professionals from TRT and GZT platforms¹⁴⁵. Expressing his gratitude, Prof. Dr. Alparslan Ceylan, the Rector of Turkey Manas University, stated, "This workshop has undoubtedly provided our youth with valuable knowledge. I sincerely appreciate all the institutions and trainers who played a part in making this possible."¹⁴⁶

Furthermore, the Kyrgyzstan Maarif Schools, the sole Maarif School in Central Asia, successfully opened after the prolonged issue of shutting down Gülen's school in 2021 and subsequently hosted the second phase of its training program. Fifty-five high school students participated in this program, receiving comprehensive training in telephone journalism and social media literacy. As a result, the students who demonstrated their creativity through content creation had their videos showcased on TRT and GZT's social media platforms.

¹⁴³ Kyrgyz Ministry of Communications (2021). Turkey Media Promotion Activities in Kyrgyzstan. Available at: <https://www.kyrgyzstan.gov.kg/turkey-media-promotion-activities-in-kyrgyzstan-2000-2021> (accessed 05.04.2023)

¹⁴⁴ Media training workshop in collaboration with TRT World, GZT, TİKA held in Kyrgyzstan. Available at: <https://www.yenisafak.com/en/world/media-training-workshops-in-collaboration-with-trt-world-gzt-tika-held-in-kyrgyzstan-3655982> (accessed 12.07.2023)

¹⁴⁵ *ibid*

¹⁴⁶ *ibid*

Notably, in recent years, the Turkish film industry has gained popularity in Kyrgyzstan, with most Turkish series being dubbed in the Russian language for television. However, in 2021, graduates from Turkish-Kyrgyz Manas University established a team to dub the Turkish drama 'Awakening: Great Seljuk' (*Uyanış: Büyük Selçuklu*)¹⁴⁷ into Kyrgyz due to high demand and popularity in the Republic. The series features traditional Kyrgyz household and musical instruments, which has generated enthusiasm among the graduates. Moreover, a citizen of Kyrgyzstan was cast in the Turkish historical series 'Establishment of Osman' (*Kuruluş: Osman*)¹⁴⁸, which has attracted more attention in the Republic. Thus, television broadcasts and operas from Turkey have become a natural way to showcase Turkish culture and values. Though they were not originally intended to be used as a tool for soft power, they are now recognized as tangible expressions of the country's way of life. As a result, their commercial value has increased significantly. For example, an episode of a popular Turkish show can now be sold for up to \$150,000 overseas, compared to only \$4,000 five to seven years ago (Yörük & Vatikiotis, 2013). The authorities have taken notice of this cultural influence and are using it as an effective tool for diplomacy.

5.4 The religious influence of Turkey in Kyrgyzstan.

After the Soviet Union dissolved, Kyrgyzstan faced a crisis of atheism and saw a decline in Soviet-style secularism as Islamic ideology gained popularity. This shift has led to the government trying to balance Islamic ideology and secular norms. Although this trend has led to a decrease in demand for secular public services, no significant changes have transferred secular powers to Islamic civil institutions. To address this, the Kyrgyz government is looking to the 'Turkish style Islamization', where the AKP government has made strides in establishing Islamic ideology in the Republic since 1990 (Yavuz, 2020). Since 1990, for over three decades, the Directorate for Religious Affairs (Diyanet) has played an integral and proactive role in fostering religious collaboration and establishing Turkey's religious authority in the Caucasus, Central

¹⁴⁷ Residents of Kyrgyzstan show great interest in Turkish TV series, Anadolu Agency, 2021. Available at: <https://www.aa.com.tr/ru/искусство-и-культура/жители-кыргыстана-проявляют-большой-интерес-к-турецким-сериалам/2200954> (accessed 05.04.2023)

¹⁴⁸ Kyrgyzstani starred in popular Turkish TV series with Burak Ozcivit. Sputnik, 2020. Available at: <https://ru.sputnik.kg/amp/20200317/turciya-serial-kyrgyzstanec-semki-1047425464.html> (accessed: 05.04.2023)

Asia, and the Balkans. Since 1990, Diyanet has been actively engaged in these regions, working diligently to build bridges of understanding and cooperation.

In its pursuit of religious harmony and enhanced collaboration, Diyanet took a significant step in 1995 by establishing the Eurasian Islamic Council (Avrasya İslam Şurası). This council serves as a platform for promoting mutual understanding, dialogue, and cooperation among countries in the region. Diyanet aims to strengthen bonds through the Eurasian Islamic Council and highlight Turkey's religious authority, influencing and inspiring other nations to share common goals and values. By actively engaging in these regions through Diyanet and establishing the Eurasian Islamic Council, Turkey demonstrates its commitment to fostering religious collaboration and acting as a resource for religious guidance and knowledge. This active involvement has progressively solidified Turkey's reputation as a respected voice in the religious landscape of the Caucasus, Central Asia, and the Balkans, enabling meaningful partnerships and exchanges that contribute to peace, understanding, and religious harmony throughout the region.

In 2016, the Council denounced extremist groups such as al Qaeda and ISIS, as well as the Gülen movement in its platforms of host countries¹⁴⁹. With almost 1,000 staff members, Diyanet oversees 83,000 mosques and 11,000 schools dedicated to the study of the Koran, with an annual budget of \$1.7 billion (Shlykov, 2014, pp.362-402). Diyanet currently operates in Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Romania, Bulgaria, Somalia, Malaysia, Haiti, and Pakistan to spread the values of moderate Islam (Aras, 2000, pp.36-58). The total number of students enrolled in these schools is 2,954, and the number of graduates from their educational programs is 4,289.¹⁵⁰

Diyanet, an organization representing Islam, has a strong presence in Kyrgyzstan, with fifty imams currently studying at Osh State University. The teaching staff comprises citizens of both Kyrgyzstan and Turkey, with Turkey providing all funds for educational and maintenance purposes. Since 2008, twelve Diyanet imams have visited Kyrgyzstan annually to deliver lectures and help the local population become

¹⁴⁹ Avrasya İslam Şurası, "Sonuç Bildirgesi, IX. Avrasya İslâm Şûrasi Toplantisi. İstanbul, 11-14 October, 2016, Available at: <https://avrasyaislamsurasi.diyaret.gov.tr/tr-TR/Meeting/Detail/9/> (accessed:06.04.2023)

¹⁵⁰ Presidency of Religious Affairs, Diyanet. Available at: <https://www.diyaret.gov.tr/en-US/Home/Index/> (accessed 06.04.2023)

more involved in religious policy by learning the basics of the local language and culture. By 2011, three theological faculties were established, funded by Diyanet, at Osh State University and Kyrgyz-Turkish Manas University in Bishkek. Thus, In 1993, the Theological Faculty of Osh State University was established following the signing of the "Protocol of Academic and Cultural Cooperation" between Osh State University and the Faculty of Theology of Ankara University, with funding from the Religious Foundations of Turkey. Starting from the 2012-2013 academic year, the faculty at this institution has trained specialists in theology. Through a contract with Ankara University, the faculty covers all subjects included in the state standard of education for the Kyrgyz Republic, as well as religious subjects that consider the unique features and specifics of the history of religion. The faculty includes scholars from Turkish universities who were invited through the cooperation contract, as well as skilled lecturers from OshSU. Additionally, the Department of Religious Studies and Humanities has 15 lecturers, including one professor, six associate professors, two senior lecturers, and six regular lecturers. Among them are eight Doctors of Science and one candidate of science.

The Faculty of Religious Studies is part of the Arashan Humanitarian Institute at Osh State University, and it has been providing comprehensive theological education to students since 2000-2001. In 2017-2018, the College of Theological Vocational Secondary Education was established within the Faculty of Religious Studies. Both the faculty and the college offer education in Kyrgyz and Turkish languages, following the guidelines and curriculum approved by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic. The program lasts four years, allowing for a comprehensive study of religious studies. Students who have completed the 9th grade can study at the college for two years and ten months, while those who have completed the 11th grade can study for one year and ten months. The college has facilities designed to accommodate 200 students and provide a supportive environment for their academic and spiritual growth.

The Faculty of Theology at Kyrgyz-Turkish Manas University is dedicated to nurturing the next generation of Muslim intellectuals through a comprehensive curriculum encompassing various disciplines, including Islamic theology, history, law, language, and economics. This program ensures that students develop a well-rounded

understanding of the principles and intricacies of the Islamic faith. The faculty currently boasts over 250 students from countries such as Kyrgyzstan, Turkey, and China, which enriches the academic environment and encourages cultural exchange, fostering a global perspective among students. The Faculty of Theology is recognized as a prominent institution for higher and vocational Islamic education in Kyrgyzstan, upholding a meticulous and systematic approach to learning that ensures students receive a rigorous and comprehensive education. Established in 2011, the Faculty of Theology and its two departments, Theology and Religious Studies, hold a pivotal position within Kyrgyz-Turkish Manas University. The faculty and staff prioritize a methodical and methodological teaching methodology, ensuring students receive an education that contributes to their intellectual and spiritual development. The faculty's commitment to academic excellence and cultural diversity prepares students to become knowledgeable and engaged Muslim intellectuals in their respective fields.

However, Kyrgyzstan's educational institutions have taken proactive measures to prevent religious extremism by organizing events that promote awareness about Islam. One such event is the "Lesson of Faith," which was previously voluntary but has become mandatory for secondary schools and lyceums since the 2003-2004 academic year. This weekly lesson provides students with a deeper understanding of the principles and teachings of Islam, cultivating a well-informed and nuanced understanding of the religion. By incorporating this mandatory lesson into the curriculum, Kyrgyzstan's educational institutions aim to instil in students a strong foundation of religious knowledge alongside an emphasis on religious harmony and coexistence. The "Lesson of Faith" serves as a platform for fostering dialogue, encouraging open-mindedness, and promoting mutual respect among students of different backgrounds and religious beliefs (Ikramova, 2006, p.1).

Apart from educational Diyanet's policy, the Directorate is funding the construction of religious sites, such as the cathedral mosque in Bishkek, which is being built with the help of the Muftiyat of the Kyrgyz Republic and Turkish religious organizations. Thus, in September 2018, Turkish President Erdoğan, accompanied by high-ranking government officials such as ministers of religious affairs and defence, opened the Central Imam Sarakhsi Mosque in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan (Handan, 2018). The Turkish government funded the mosque's construction, and its design and name were chosen

to pay homage to the Ottoman Empire and its ties to Central Asia. The mosque was named after Imam Sarakhsi, an Islamic scholar who specialized in the Hanafi school of Islam, which is predominant in the Eurasian territories of the previous Ottoman Empire, Pakistan, and Central Asia.¹⁵¹ In addition to the cathedral mosque, Diyanet funds the building of religious and educational institutions all over the country. These institutions aim to provide contemporary theological education, with the Iman Lyceum in the south of the country being a notable example.

Over the past two decades, Kyrgyzstan has experienced a notable rise in Islamization, with significant implications for its social and cultural landscape. Recognizing this trend, the Turkish government has sought to integrate its ideology with the local culture, aiming to forge a harmonious union between Turkish and Kyrgyz values. As a result, a striking parallel can be observed between the approaches to Islamization taken by the Kyrgyz authorities and Turkey. Consequently, Turkey's influence in matters of religion is growing as the country endeavours to bolster the status of Islam within the Republic of Kyrgyzstan. Through collaboration and cooperation, Turkey aims to strengthen the cultural and religious ties between the two nations while respecting the unique characteristics and traditions of Kyrgyz society.

Conclusion

Over the past 30 years, Turkish foreign policy towards Kyrgyzstan has evolved significantly, shaped by various factors. In the 1990s, during the Özal era, Turkey adopted a Turkic-centric agenda driven by state institutions and non-state actors. State institutions like the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Diyanet, and TİKA were crucial in promoting this agenda, along with non-state actors such as Gülen-affiliated schools and businesses. This approach aimed to strengthen cultural and economic ties between Turkey and Kyrgyzstan.

¹⁵¹ Erdoğan inaugurates Central Asia's largest mosque in Kyrgyzstan. Available at: <https://www.dailysabah.com/religion/2018/09/02/erdogan-inaugurates-central-asias-largest-mosque-in-kyrgyzstan> (accessed: 06.04.2023)

Thus, the rise of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) in Turkey in 2002 marked a significant change in the country's foreign policy. With a focus on promoting Muslim democracy, the AKP government shifted Turkey's traditional Western-focused foreign policy to a more Neo-Ottomanist direction. This new approach emphasized Turkey's historical ties to the Ottoman Empire and its role as a leader in the Muslim world. Under this new foreign policy, the Turkish government established regional organizations such as TURKSOY, TURKPA, and OTS, aimed at fostering cultural, trade, and investment links with other countries in the region. One such country was Kyrgyzstan, which shares a Turkic and Islamic heritage with Turkey.

Therefore, Turkey's Islamic heritage and its religious policy in Kyrgyzstan has been a highly controversial topic, sparking strong debates and diverse opinions. While some view it as a strategic move to strengthen cultural and economic ties between the two countries, others see it as a form of cultural imperialism and a threat to the country's own traditions and values. However, despite the criticisms and concerns, it cannot be denied that Turkey's emphasis on shared cultural and religious ties has greatly impacted Kyrgyzstan's religious landscape. Turkey's Islamic-oriented discourse has been a driving force in promoting a specific brand of Islam that aligns with Turkish values and practices. By claiming a monopoly on 'the export of Islam', Turkey has positioned itself as a leader in Islamic affairs and has actively promoted the compatibility of Muslim democracy rooted in Islamic principles. This, in turn, has led to the increased presence of Turkish religious organizations and NGOs in Kyrgyzstan, such as the Diyanet, which have played a significant role in promoting their version of Islam. One of the most significant impacts of Turkey's religious policy in Kyrgyzstan has been the shift in religious practices and beliefs among the local population.

Turkish-inspired Islamic teachings have gained popularity, with more Kyrgyz citizens following Turkish practices and traditions. This has not only strengthened the bond between the two countries but has also cemented Turkey's influence in the region. However, this has also raised concerns about potential radicalization and the loss of Kyrgyz cultural and religious identity. Despite these criticisms, the Turkish government has continued to push its religious policy in Kyrgyzstan. This has led to a tug-of-war between those who support the Turkish influence and those who fear the potential consequences of such an influence. Nevertheless, there is no denying that Turkey's

religious policy has had a significant impact on Kyrgyzstan, shaping its religious landscape and fostering closer ties between the two nations.

Also, the people of Kyrgyzstan highly value Turkish higher education institutions, viewing them as an important source of knowledge and skills. They have partially replaced the high-quality Soviet education that was previously offered. As Turkish higher education institutions and aid projects continue to flourish in the country, the number of Kyrgyz students studying in Turkey has also increased, providing a valuable exchange of ideas and cultural understanding. This has not only enhanced the academic and professional skills of these students but has also created a sense of connection and camaraderie between the two nations.

One of the major factors contributing to this growing relationship is the role of the Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA). Through various projects, including those focused on education and medicine, TIKA has provided valuable economic aid to Kyrgyzstan. Over the past three decades, TIKA has completed more than 1000 projects, cementing Turkey's position as a major player in Kyrgyzstan.

Thus, under the rule of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) from 2000 to 2021, Turkey's influence in Kyrgyzstan has significantly grown. This has been achieved through the successful implementation of a soft power policy, focusing on education and cultural exchange. By becoming a donor in various sectors, Turkey has effectively solidified its influence in Kyrgyzstan. This has not only benefited Kyrgyzstan through economic aid, but it has also strengthened the ties between the two countries.

Chapter 6

Comparative analysis of Russian, Turkish and British soft power toward Kyrgyzstan. Discussion.

The empirical analysis of the three case studies has provided a platform to comparatively explore the implementation of the soft power of Russia, Turkey, and the UK in Kyrgyzstan. Specifically, this research aimed to understand how Russia, Turkey and the UK utilise their soft power in the Republic through their educational channels. Through a mixed-methods approach, the study used an analytical framework to measure both the quantity and quality of institutional and financial aid that was provided to the Republic.

The current analysis showed that Russia and Turkey generally use the same tools in their educational programs in Kyrgyzstan, while the UK interaction with Kyrgyzstan before 2015 was limited and focused more on security cooperation and border conflicts, where the Department for International Development (DFID) implemented the central role of all British power activities in Republic since its opening in 1997. However, since 2015, British policy has sharply turned to 'creative industry' projects, with an increase in the number of areas of cooperation that contributed to strengthening the UK's influence through soft power tools in the Republic.

Although Turkey and Russia have different approaches, they share common goals in utilizing soft power. They aim to create a more inclusive image that is less Western-centric, not only in terms of values but also in global governance implementation. Russia achieves this by contrasting the West's moral decadence with conservative values, while Turkey emphasizes its Muslim democracy. Another common motive is the desire to strengthen their political influence in their neighbourhood. Thus, Turkey and Russia have a "Big Brother" policy approach in Kyrgyzstan. Drawing upon a shared Islamic faith and heritage, the image of brotherhood is frequently used by the AKP both domestically and in the context of the peace process with the Kurds. Regarding Russian 'Big Brother' concept is especially relevant to ethnic Russians and Russian-speaking people living outside of Russia (Zevelev, 2014). The concept of the Russian world can be seen as an ideological identity. Its key legal element is the

concept of compatriots, who are both subjects and objects of Russia's foreign policies. The term 'compatriot' refers to individuals living outside of Russia but still feeling connected to the country by means of history, culture, language, and other ties. Mostly, it is ethnic Russians who are targeted by organisations like Rossotrudnichestvo, which 'aim to strengthen the connection between them and Motherland Russia'. (Rossotrudnichestvo, 2020). In Kyrgyzstan, Rossotrudnichestvo opened an organization to compatriots - "International Cossack cultural and economic centre" in 1993, which, after re-registration in 2003, became known as the "Cossack Cultural and Economic Centre – 'Vozrozhdeniye'". Annually, Rossotrudnichestvo organized many events to commemorate and celebrate political and patriotic holidays, such as Victory Day, the Day of Russia, the Day of National Unity, and the Day of the complete lifting of the blockade of Leningrad. These included a gala dinner for veterans of the Great Patriotic War, home front workers, and siege survivors of Leningrad; a meeting-requiem to commemorate the breaking of the blockade; several peace lessons dedicated to the tragedy of the Great Patriotic War; a Victory dictation; several motor rallies; a celebration of Victory Day; an action called "Candle of Memory"; the "Summer with Russia" project for children of Russian compatriots in Kyrgyzstan; the Issyk-Kul International Youth Forum; and solemn rallies in Bishkek and the village of Panfilovsky in honour of the 78th anniversary of the Panfilov Rifle Division. However, it should be noticed that Rossotrudnichestvo's efforts primarily benefit Russian compatriots, with less attention given to the Kyrgyz titular nation. Also, as Kosmarskaya (2006) states, those who live in the former Soviet Republics are not unequivocally associated with Russia and may wish to remain separate from compatriots living in Russia, indicating that the concept of a "divided Russian nation" carries with it the inherent notion of uncertain loyalty to a nation whose citizens do not all identify as part of the Russian diaspora and may not feel that they should further Russian interests.

Thus, the 2013 Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation regards compatriots as partners in pursuing various objectives, such as expanding and strengthening the space of the Russian language and culture. However, in some cases, the Kremlin has used the defence of their interests and rights to justify interfering with the internal affairs of – or even to intervene militarily in – some post-Soviet countries. This has resulted in the image of Russia being seen as a 'Big Brother', willing and able to defend Compatriots. This element of soft power has served as a justification for using hard

power that may be masking other political interests. Thus, the concepts of the Russian world and compatriots give Russia ideational and legal strength when portraying itself as a powerful civilisation and leader in its 'Near Abroad'. This intertwines hard and soft power, making it difficult to differentiate between them. Furthermore, this 'compatriots' approach' demonstrates Russia's willingness to intervene militarily in defence of its compatriots. Thus, an example of this policy could be the solidarity shown by compatriots during the reunification of Crimea and Sevastopol with Russia.

Turkey's 'Big Brother approach in Kyrgyzstan is similar to Russia's. Since the AKP party took office in 2002, Turkey has been also actively engaging with its citizens living abroad. This engagement has been formalized and even politicized by the creation of the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities in 2010, which is part of the prime minister's office. AKP leaders were trying actively to promote a neo-Ottomanist discourse by celebrating the history, people, and geography of the Ottoman Empire (Icduygu, 2014, p.6). This increased activism towards the Turkish diaspora has caused it to gain international attention, especially during the 2016 constitutional referendum. The fact that President Erdogan wanted to reach out to Turkish communities and the campaign was seen as a threat by some European countries. Thus, Turkey, like Russia, is attempting to employ a new system of transnationalized nation-building to enhance their global influence and presence. It is noteworthy that although the Turkish diaspora in Kyrgyzstan is small in number, it is still highly influential. This influence is largely due to Turkish businessmen who are based in Kyrgyzstan and are seen as the "locomotive" of the country (Avatkov, 2015).

In addition, the conscious emphasis on working with compatriots prevents Russian actors of soft power from addressing their activities to broader categories of the population of Kyrgyzstan. The primary focus of Rossotrudnichestvo is to develop a network of Russian Centers for Science and Culture Abroad (RCSC). This network is intended to be a platform for people to be exposed to Russian culture and to provide an opportunity for Russian actors of soft power to reach out to various citizens of post-Soviet states. Thus, the Russian Centres for Science and Culture Abroad opened its 2 branches in the capital and the south of the country, where they offered regular language courses in Russian studies under the Federal target program 'Russian Language for 2011-2015 and Interstate program of innovative cooperation of the

member states of the Commonwealth of Independent States for the period up to 2020¹⁵². Meanwhile, the Russkiy Mir Foundation has a similar functionality to the RCSC, thus in the Republic operates 3 Russkiy Mir centres and 2 cabinets. The Russkiy Mir Foundation frequently supervises the Pedagogical Forum and the Assemblies of the Russian World. Despite this, there is also an apparent lack of direction in these projects in terms of providing Kyrgyz students with work opportunities and engaging with local society, as outlined in Chapter 3. These projects seem only to benefit the children of compatriots. While the British soft power policy aimed specifically at target auditorium, thus, the British Council has been focusing on gender entrepreneurship while considering different age groups and balancing access in rural and urban areas through their 'Creative Spark' initiative. This work has included three major collaborations between public and private entities such as Enactus Kyrgyzstan and City University of London, Coventry University and Central Asian Craft Support Association Centre, and Middlesex University and Kyrgyz National University, where the British Council involved training programmes for seven university mentors from the American University of Central Asia, Ala-Too International University, Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University, Kyrgyz Technical University, Osh State Technical University, Kyrgyz Economic University, and International University of Innovative Technologies. They have also created a platform for 'creative events' - *kultur-multur* that delivered training workshops to creative entrepreneurs with experts from the UK and other European countries and even opened a cooking skills hub for women from rural areas from lower socio-economic backgrounds. In this way, Russia's approach to international humanitarian efforts lacks innovation, as illustrated by Rossotrudnichestvo's adherence to the traditional Soviet model. This can be seen in their 2015 report, which lists accomplishments such as the expansion of Russian humanitarian presence abroad, including the establishment of the RCSC in Kyrgyzstan. However, unlike the British Council, which evaluates partnerships through feedback surveys from respondents (as discussed in Chapter 4), the report does not provide any performance criteria for the Centre.

Consequently, Rossotrudnichestvo's efforts in the region are lacking compared to those of the UK and Turkey. For example, the Yunus Emre Foundation, a notable institution that promotes Turkish language and culture, has yet to establish a presence

¹⁵² The Russian government. Available at: <http://government.ru/en/news/2189/> (accessed:06.04.2023)

in Kyrgyzstan. However, there are two other organizations - the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Centre (TIKA) and the International Organization of Turkic Culture (TURKSOY) - which are actively engaged in soft power activities in the Republic. In fact, TIKA built seven educational centers in discreet regions (oblasti) of Kyrgyzstan, including Bishkek, Osh, Talas, Jalal-Abad, Batken, Karakol, and Naryn, during the 1990s. Nevertheless, the majority of the TIKA's projects were aimed at funding and reconstruction of the old Soviet infrastructure in the Republic – the funding (over 1000 projects - \$16 million between 1991 and 2005 to \$285.8 million from 2015 to 2020) was allocated to administrative and civil infrastructure 44.47% (see table 12), To economic infrastructure and services 36.30%, to health 7.84%, to education 5.57%, to social infrastructure and services 4.08%, production sector 0.87% and water and sanitation (0.68%). Besides TIKA's activities, Turkish Universities and educational institutions became a flagship in the educational system of modern Kyrgyzstan. Thus, there are a total of 27 educational institutions operating, 21 of which are former Gulen's lyceums. Additionally, there is one Ala-Too Ataturk University, one Silk Road International School, one Kyrgyz-Turkish University Manas, and one Maarif Foundation, which opened in 2021 after lengthy negotiations with the Turkish side to shut down Gulen's schools. It needs to be noted, Kyrgyzstan was the only Central Asian state that, following the military coup in Turkey in 2016, did not transfer Gülen educational institutions to the Maarif Foundation. Instead, the Republic re-registered them under a new name - from Sebat to Sapat. This served as a significant cooling period of bilateral relations between the countries, and tension around the closing of schools reached a peak in May 2021 when the head of the Sapat network, Orhan Inandi, was allegedly kidnapped and taken to the Turkish embassy. However, the Turkish side denied this and on July 5, Erdogan announced that Inandi had been taken to Turkey, with the Turkish Ambassador to the Kyrgyz Republic, A. Dogan stressing that Inandi was 'recognized solely as a citizen of the Republic of Turkey'. As a result of this situation, the Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Türkiye Maarif Vakfı (Maarif Foundation) Fund signed a memorandum in 2020¹⁵³. In 2021, the first all-encompassing school of the Maarif Foundation was opened in Bishkek, offering kindergartens, universities, and various programs, research, and

¹⁵³ Turkey's Maarif Foundation to open education institutions in Kyrgyzstan. Available at: <https://m.akiipress.com/news:610556:Turkey's Maarif Foundation to open educational institutions in Kyrgyzstan/> (accessed:07.05.2023)

cultural centres. Notably, the attempted coup and subsequent reaction by the AKP caused a full-blown conflict, with effects that are still reverberating. This has had an impact on Turkey's soft power, with numerous Gulen-backed institutions worldwide being shut down by the government.

Nevertheless, in the cultural and educational sphere, Turkey's higher educational institutions have been highly evaluated by the people of Kyrgyzstan and partly replaced high-quality Soviet education. Thus, according to a sociological research project conducted by the F. Ebert Foundation, 36.4% of students surveyed agreed that the Turkish language could help better understand the world, and 21% agreed that Turkey serves as a model for Kyrgyzstan. Moreover, 83.6% of Manas University students are content with their university for various reasons, such as the availability of quality and affordable education, good facilities and equipment, and the lack of corruption (Turdabaeva, 2012, p.50). Therefore, gradually, the process of creating by Kyrgyzstan its own Kyrgyz-speaking education system, which Turkey actively funded. Thus, the Kyrgyz-Turkish University Manas played a significant role due to its participation in the National Strategy for Sustainable Development of the Kyrgyz Republic for the period 2013-2017 and the Concept for Strengthening the Unity of the People and Interethnic Relations in the Kyrgyz Republic¹⁵⁴, while there was raised a question about the status of the Russian language in Kyrgyzstan (see the Chapter 2). As a result, the implementation was launched under the President of Kyrgyzstan A. Atambaev's decree dated July 1, 2013, to reform the gradual transition of higher education from Russian to the Kyrgyz language, as about 80% of the country's universities provide education in the Russian language and only 20% of students study in the Kyrgyz language. However, in 2019, President S. Zheenbekov acknowledged, "As the analysis shows, many measures outlined in this document have not been implemented. Currently, only 40% of office work carried out by ministries and departments is conducted in the Kyrgyz language, which has a negative impact on the authority of the state". To resolve it, the Kyrgyz government has adopted a National Development Strategy for 2018-2040, which strives to ensure the Kyrgyz language is used in all regions of the country, modernised to meet the needs of society, and used for full communication and to increase the competitiveness of citizens in the market.

¹⁵⁴ The Kyrgyz Republic Sustainable Development Program 2013-2017. Available at: <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2014/cr14247.pdf> (accessed: 07.05.2023)

Notably, Russia sees the expansion of the influence of the Kyrgyz language with the help of Turkey as a threat to the Russian language in the Republic. Thus, according to the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, by mid-2020¹⁵⁵, with 6 523 529 population, about 400,000 Russians remained in the Republic, including 344,950 Russians (5.3% of the population), 26,732 Tatars (0.4%) and about 20 thousand (0.35%) other Russian nationalities (Bashkirs, Chechens, Karachays, Balkars, Ingush, peoples of Dagestan, Kalmyks, Yakuts, etc.), 41,6 thousands of Turkish (0,7%). Thus, from the Russian perspective, the Kyrgyz language will expand as the Russian language is gradually removed from the higher education system and, by extension, the realm of science. This shift has also impacted the language of office work, which has been partially converted to Kyrgyz. However, the fact that 80% of universities in Kyrgyzstan demonstrate the demand for the Russian language in the Republic, but the number of Russian schools in the Republic's regions has dropped by nearly 90% due to the decrease in Russian speakers. In addition, many existing schools need more qualified teachers and Russian educational literature. Rossotrudnichestvo is making efforts to address this issue, but the scale of their activities is surprisingly small; only 160 people from the post-Soviet space have participated in their teacher training program (The report of Rossotrudnichestvo, 2015). This situation has been aggravated by the political discourse of the titular nation and the official status of the Russian language, which has become a contested issue between 2010 and 2012. High-level discussions, press coverage, and academic conferences have been held to consider the abolition of the Russian language. The Kyrgyz-speaking Journalists' Association has published an Appeal to promote the dissemination of information in Kyrgyz (as noted in Chapter 3).

However, to counterbalance the Turkish educational institutions there are 11 Russian educational centres as - the Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University (KRSU) by Boris Yeltsin, the Bishkek branch of the Russian University of Economics by Plekhanov, the Baltic States Technical University 'VOENMEH', Moscow Institute of Entrepreneurship in Bishkek, Moscow Institute of Entrepreneurship in Karakol, International Slavic Institute, the Russian State Social University, branch of Moscow State University in Osh and Gazprom School operate in the Republic. The educational process in all institutions is carried out in the Russian language. The Slavic University also plays a

¹⁵⁵ National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic. Available at: <http://www.stat.kg/en/opendata/category/312/> (07.05.2023)

vital role in activating the educational, scientific, and cultural cooperation of the CIS member states, developing integration processes in education and science, and meeting the educational and cultural needs of Russian compatriots in Kyrgyzstan. Furthermore, the Cultural and Business Centre - "House of Moscow", was established in January 2008, aiming to foster international relations between Russia and Kyrgyzstan and assist state and non-governmental organisations in the areas of culture, education, science, and health. In particular, the Centre has organised and conducted a variety of cultural, social, information, and economic programs. These educational institutions carry out their projects in conjunction with the Russian Center for Science and Culture in Kyrgyzstan (Rossotrudnichestvo). Under this cooperation, Rossotrudnichestvo is engaging in humanitarian projects and initiatives to make the Kyrgyz public aware of the history and culture of the Russian people, their policies, and their connection to compatriots.

In addition, Turkey and Russia have made notable progress in the student exchange programme, which stretches back to the 1990s- the Turkish Ministry of Education initiated the 'Great Student Exchange Project'. While the Russian Ministry of Education, with the assistance of Rossotrudnichestvo, has provided Kyrgyz students with free education opportunities only since 2009. As per the Agreement between the government of the Kyrgyz Republic and the government of the Russian Federation on cooperation in the field of higher education (Moscow, 29 March 1996), approximately 370-400 budget places (quotas) are allocated to citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic in Russian universities on an annual basis¹⁵⁶. Between 1992 and 2002, Turkey's program granted 14,000 scholarships to students from Central Asia (and the Caucasus). As of 2020, out of the 3,680 scholarships awarded, 793 were given to those from Central Asia (and the Caucasus). In response to Kyrgyzstan in particular, Turkey increased its government quotas from 40 to 256 from 2000 to 2021 (see Table 6). Furthermore, inside the country, Manas University allocated 468 scholarships to Kyrgyz students in 2020, and Anadolu schools provide 100 places annually in their educational institutions. Kyrgyz students are accepted each year according to the University Student Selection and Placement Examination (Manas University Entrance exam) and the Kyrgyzstan General State exam (ORT). In contrast, British universities

¹⁵⁶ Please refer to the appendix for the official response from the Kyrgyzstan Ministry of Foreign Affairs

do not provide quotas for education for undergraduate and graduate programs. Interaction with Central Asian countries is limited to the implementation of the scholarship programs.¹⁵⁷ They are only available through competitive selection in implementing scholarship programs. One of them is the official website 'Education in the UK' (www.education.uk.org). Furthermore, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office is directly involved in implementing scholarship programs to attract international students to receive higher education in the UK through the scholarship program - Chevening. Within the program, there are 6-7 master's scholarships annually taken by Kyrgyz students through the program "Aga Khan Development Network-Chevening Scholarships". Thus, on December 6th, 2001, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the United Kingdom and the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) signed an agreement to jointly fund scholarships for students from Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan¹⁵⁸. Also, it needs to note the work of John Smith Trust (JST), where the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) funds Wider Europe and Central Asia programmes and seeks to promote British values such as good governance, the rule of law and social justice by helping a new generation of leaders from former Soviet Union countries. Thus, the JST Fellowship has already aided over 500 fellows from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. The Trust is registered as a charity and is actively supported by all the major UK political parties and a broad range of organizations and individuals across the public, private and third sectors in the UK¹⁵⁹.

As I noted above, before 2015, British soft power activities in Kyrgyzstan were limited due to the region not being a priority for the British Council in Central Asia. Thus, the total funding for projects in this region for the 2012-2013 financial year was only £28.7 million, where Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan receiving £2.12 million together due to the British Council's Kyrgyzstan representative office being located in Kazakhstan. Most of these funds were directed towards the promotion of English language teaching. However, due to the low development of the foreign language learning system in

¹⁵⁷ Meet Top UK Universities in Baku on October 26 // UK Government. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/world-location-news/meet-top-uk-universities-in-baku-on-october-26> (accessed 27.02.2023)

¹⁵⁸ UK and Aga Khan development network jointly sponsor new scholarship. Available at: <https://the.akdn/en/resources-media/whats-new/press-release/uk-and-aga-khan-development-network-jointly-sponsor-new-scholarships-press> (accessed 27.02.2023)

¹⁵⁹ John Smith Trust. Available at: <https://johnsmithtrust.org/about/support/> (accessed:27.02.2023)

Kyrgyzstan, the British Council provided limited teacher training courses through the cooperation DFID office and the Ministry of Defence of Kyrgyzstan by sending junior officers to attend a two-week English language seminar at York St. John's University. As a result, the UK has primarily focused on activities involving interaction with local education ministries and general introductory programs for students.

However, the intensifying geopolitical tensions in the international arena, driven primarily by the Ukraine Crisis of 2014 and Britain's altered relations with Russia, were a reminder of the need for effective geopolitical involvement in the region. In response, the Government of Britain activated its soft power policy in the region in 2015, resulting in the foundation of the Oxford International School (OIS) opened its first school in the capital city Bishkek, on a private business basis. Since then, the school has been an integral part of the cultural and educational development of the region, promoting values such as democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and freedom of expression¹⁶⁰.

Since 2017, OIS has been a member of the Council of British International Schools and provides a British-style education for children aged 2 to 19, as well as an 'American-style college-preparatory programme for foreign expatriates and residents'. In the same year, OIS became an accredited Cambridge International School and Cambridge Professional Development Centre. Furthermore, in 2018, the British Council accredited British Study Centres (BSC) opened in Bishkek as the country's first UK English language teaching school. The BSC provided the Cambridge CELTA course to a cohort of Kyrgyz students. In addition, it worked in tandem with the Kyrgyz Ministry of Education on teacher training programmes and International Foundation Year and Young Learner summer camps. In response, Kyrgyz side acting Minister of Education and Science Kanybek Imanaliev even announced plans to introduce "a three-part education system to Kyrgyzstan, combining Soviet, British, and National teaching methods" (Imanaliev, 2023).

Also, it needs to be noted, that the British Government has been actively developing business relations in the Republic since the early 2000s, where the Turkish office of the Department of Trade and Investment was established to protect the interests of British exporters and promote the economies of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. This effort

¹⁶⁰ Oxford International School in Bishkek. Available at: <https://www.oxford.kg/> (accessed:27.02.2023)

was bolstered in 2020 when the Department for International Development (DFID) allocated £20 million to create the Peak Bishkek Centre. This Centre recently launched its first 12-week acceleration programme tailored for early-stage tech start-ups, providing business training and support for micro, small, and medium enterprises in various economic sectors.¹⁶¹ The Peak is a platform for British-Kyrgyz cooperation, connecting the nation to UK markets and providing world-class business training, helping Kyrgyz businesses to grow and reach global markets. Also, the PEAK has responded to the pandemic by shifting to a hybrid model, providing training, mentoring and online and offline webinars. This resulted in the launch of its first hybrid centre, the PEAK Osh Centre, in 2021, which provided a business development program for entrepreneurs in the Osh, Jalal-Abad and Batken regions. As of 2021, the PEAK had completed six business development programs with two still in progress and had reached almost 3 thousand entrepreneurs in Kyrgyzstan, with around 200 supported through business development programs and businesses. The 158 start-ups included almost all sectors of the economy, excluding agriculture, the military industry, and areas restricted by the organisation's policy and Kyrgyzstan's legislation. Additionally, the PEAK has organised the national final of the World Entrepreneurship Championship for the first time in Kyrgyzstan and supported the 'Entrepreneur forum', which allowed seven millionaires to share their experiences in launching an effective business. Moreover, the programme has reached out to women, youth and returning labour migrants, offering tailor-made programs.

If compared with Russian activities in this sphere, Rossotrudnichestvo strengthens the relationship between non-governmental organizations, foundations, and prosecutorial bodies through -The Alexander Gorchakov Public Diplomacy Fund, The Valdai Discussion Club, Russian International Affairs Council (RIAC), Centre for the Support and Development of Public Initiatives Creative Diplomacy (PICREADI), Eurasia-Volga Information and Analytical Center (EVIAC), Information and Analytical Centre for studying socio-political processes in the post-Soviet space. Thus, in the framework of these institutions Russia mainly distributes grants among non-profit organizations for holding round tables, seminars, conferences, and public lectures on foreign policy issues. Thus, the Valdai Club held a regional roundtable on security architecture in

¹⁶¹ PEAK. Public Foundation. Available at: <https://peak.kg/en/about-us/> (accessed:27.02.2023)

Central Asia in 2019. The roundtable took place in Kyrgyzstan and discussed the current security challenges facing Central Asia, including the role of the Shanghai Cooperation, and the development of military and security cooperation.¹⁶² RIAC launched the Kyrgyz-Russian Dialogue Forum in 2018. This forum serves as an inter-governmental platform for dialogue and exchange of experience between the two countries. RIAC has also conducted various seminars and roundtables on regional security, Russia-Kyrgyzstan cooperation, and the role of Central Asian countries in international politics. In 2020, PICREDI organized a regional conference on the role of public diplomacy in Central Asia¹⁶³, a roundtable on the media and public diplomacy in Central Asia, and a series of training for civil society organizations and media personnel on public diplomacy and cross-cultural dialogue. Additionally, PICREDI has researched public diplomacy and cross-cultural dialogue in Central Asia. The Eurasia-Volga Information and Analytical Centre (EVIAC) has organized a number of conferences and workshops on the issues of regional security, cross-cultural dialogue, media, and public diplomacy. However, all these events have the same problem as Rossotrudnichestvo's activities and its RCSC centres due to these events are often limited in their audience and thus as a result have a limited impact on successfully promote and fostering a positive image of Russia in Kyrgyzstan.

However, in the media and information landscape of the Republic, Russian-language sources have a clear advantage over sources in Turkish and English languages. This is supported by the presence of 12 Russian media outlets such as the Federal State Unitary Enterprise Information Agency (FGUP MIA) "Russia Today", "Zvezda" TV channel, the Russian Agency for International Information "RIA Novosti", the Central Asian regional office of "Rossiyskaya Gazeta" in Bishkek, International information group "Interfax", "Argumenti I fakty -Kyrgyzstan", "Komsomolskaya Pravda", "Moskovskiy Komsomolec", Informational agency and radio "Sputnik Kyrgyzstan", "Dipkuryer" Vestnik, International information group "Interfax", Telegraph agency of Russia "ITAR-TASS". Additionally, 27 newspapers and journals as –"Akipress", "Vecherniy Bishkek", "Vesti", "Delo nomer", "Delovoy sobesednik", "Komsomolskaya

¹⁶² Valdai Discussion Club (2019, April 19). Valdai Discussion Club Holds Regional Roundtable on Regional Security Architecture in Central Asia. Retrieved from <http://valdaiclub.com/a/highlights/valdai-discussion-club-holds-regional-roundtable-on-regional-security-architecture-in-central-asia/> (accessed 11.04.2023)

¹⁶³ Strengthening Public Diplomacy in Central Asia, October 20,2020. Available at: <https://www.picreadi.com/> (accessed 11.04.2023)

Pravda", "Baromert", "Liberri", "Limon", "Megapolis", "MK-Asia", "MSN", "Moy gorod", "Poziciya profsoyuz", "Portret nedeli", "Pravo dlya vseh", "Pravovoy vestnik", "Rossiyskaya gazeta", "Slovo Kyrgyzstana", "Chuyskie izvestiya"; 8 radio and tv channels, as – "Azzatyk radio", "Mir", "NTC. TV company", "ELTR.TV company", "OTKR.TV company", "Piramida- Media holding", "Almaz. Radio", "5 Kanal.TV company" and 16 internet sources in the Russian language as – "Diesel forum", "Kaktus media", "Kloop kg", "CSA.kg", "Novosti kg", "AsiaInfo", "News-asia", "Pravda.kg", "Rossiya v Kyrgyzstane", "Svodka-Akipress", "STAN", "Akipress", "Tazar", "Forum.kg", "312.kg", "Tazabek" (See table 3), all of which contribute to the preservation of the Russian language and culture in Kyrgyzstan. These media sources operate in the country based on the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic "On Mass Media" and two agreements between the Russian Federation and the Kyrgyz Republic. The first agreement, from 1995, "On the status of correspondents of the mass media of the Russian Federation in the Kyrgyz Republic and correspondents of the mass media of the Kyrgyz Republic in the Russian Federation",¹⁶⁴ ensures that foreign correspondents report objectively on the political, socio-economic, and cultural life of the country. The second agreement, from 1996, "On the procedure and conditions distribution of programs of Russian TV and radio broadcasting organizations on the territory of the Kyrgyz Republic. Furthermore, in 2015, Rossotrudnichestvo and the RTVi TV channel created a series of programs for foreign audiences dedicated to the Russian language, culture, and other aspects of cultural and humanitarian cooperation between Russia and other countries. To commemorate the 70th anniversary of Victory in the Great Patriotic War, the "St. George's Ribbon" information campaign was held in 70 countries, including Kyrgyzstan¹⁶⁵. The Russian information coverage of the Republic is immense, so "Rossiyskaya Gazeta" (The Russian Newspaper) circulates 160,000 copies of their daily newspaper. Furthermore, they print a bi-monthly edition of "Nedelya", a "Rodina" magazine, and a website visited by 17-18 million users monthly.¹⁶⁶ Therefore, Turkish or British media cannot compete with Russian media in the Republic. However, despite being part of the Russian Federation's foreign policy,

¹⁶⁴ Soglashenie mejdu Pravielstvom RF I KR o statuse korrespondentoc sredsv massovoy infoemacii (Moskva, 21 sentabrya,1995). Available at: <http://base.garant.ru/1118765/>

¹⁶⁵ Report «On the Results of Activity of Rossotrudnichestvo for 2015» // http://rs.gov.ru/uploads/document/file/199/doklad_2015.pdf

¹⁶⁶ The website of "Russian Gazette". Available at: <https://rg.ru/> (28.03.2023)

focusing on “quick results” in this region (Lebedeva,2014, pp.47-55) takes precedence over long-term objectives. This is particularly apparent with the emphasis on media rather than investment in higher education in the Russian language. Without due attention to the latter, lasting results from these projects may prove challenging to achieve, given the power of media in contemporary society. Furthermore, higher education in the Russian language can significantly influence regional and global cultural and diplomatic relations between the Russian Federation and Kyrgyzstan. Failure to consider this may limit the potential of such foreign policy, especially over the longer term.

The mass media in the Republic of Turkey predominantly comprises TV channels such as TRT AVAZ and TRT Turk, which broadcast in various Turkic languages, including Turkish, Kyrgyz, Kazakh, Uzbek, Azerbaijani and Turkmen. TV presenters host these programs from each of the respective countries, and viewers are exposed to music programs, feature films, documentaries, and programs about the history of the Turkic nations. In 2006, TRT Turk extended its outreach to Kyrgyzstan based on two protocols in the media field as part of bilateral cooperation between Kyrgyzstan and Turkey: one between the Ministry of Culture and Information of Kyrgyzstan and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Turkey, and the other between Turkish Radio and Television Corporation (TRT) and KTRK (Public Broadcasting Corporation of the Kyrgyz Republic)¹⁶⁷. As part of this cooperation, TRT provided KTRK (Public Broadcasting Corporation of the Kyrgyz Republic) with technical assistance in the form of lighting equipment valued at \$750,000 for television studios, as well as training and internship opportunities for Kyrgyz television creative workers. There is also a radio station broadcasting to the northern part of the Republic, which aims to promote Turkish, Kyrgyz, and other Turkic languages, inform people about the activities of Manas University and much more. Additionally, the Manas-TV channel, created based on the Kyrgyz-Turkish University, distributes its television products to local TV channels and channels in Turkey, such as TRT-Turk and TRT-Avaz.

Notably, since the early 2000s, the Turkish film industry has been gaining traction in Kyrgyzstan. However, most Turkish series are voiced in Russian on television studios.

¹⁶⁷ Culture Ministries of Kyrgyzstan, Turkey to ink cooperation protocol. Available at: https://akipress.com/news:11436:Culture_Ministries_of_Kyrgyzstan_Turkey_to_ink_cooperation_protocol/ (accessed:28.03.2023)

Due to high demand and popularity in the Republic, in 2021, graduates from the Turkish-Kyrgyz Manas University established a team to dub the Turkish drama 'Awakening. Great Seljuk' (Uyanış: Büyük Selçuklu) into the Kyrgyz language (Anadolu agency, 2021). The graduates expressed enthusiasm for the series, which uses traditional Kyrgyz household (yurta) and musical instruments¹⁶⁸. Additionally, a citizen of Kyrgyzstan was cast in the Turkish historical series 'Establishment of Osman' (Kuruluş: Osman), a continuation of the "Resurrection: Ertugrul" (Diriliş: Ertuğrul) series, which caused more popularity and discussion in the Republic¹⁶⁹.

Due to the presence of British mass media, there was one of BBC's local radio services – Radio Liberty. In 2008, the Kyrgyz State Television and Radio Company (KNTR) discontinued the service, as they were unable to install the necessary radio equipment. However, the UK Government has funded programmes to assist with training on investigative reporting and support for Kyrgyz language and local journalists, as well as how best to use social media and online dissemination channels. The project “Mapping Open Data in Kyrgyzstan”¹⁷⁰, supported by the UK Government, allows journalists to work with open government data without any requests from national, regional, and local agencies. Furthermore, in 2019 Kyrgyzstan began executing the agreed-upon user engagement activities stated in the national implementation plan for the UNSD-DFID Project. This includes producing promotional materials regarding the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) such as brochures, commercials, calendars, and other special publications, hosting an Open House where the public can connect with users and evaluate their needs, holding press conferences with media/journalists to heighten understanding of the SDGs, and meeting with parliamentarians to increase awareness of SDG monitoring and the usage of SDG indicators in decision-making.

Therefore, for twenty-one years, Kyrgyzstan's educational system has transformed from having the Soviet centralized curricula and state-mandated educational model to

¹⁶⁸ Residents of Kyrgyzstan show great interest in Turkish TV series, Anadolu Agency, 2021. Available at: <https://www.aa.com.tr/ru/искусство-и-культура/жители-кыргыстана-проявляют-большой-интерес-к-турецким-сериалам/2200954> (accessed 05.04.2023)

¹⁶⁹ Kyrgyzstani starred in popular Turkish TV series with Burak Ozcivit. Sputnik, 2020. Available at: <https://ru.sputnik.kg/amp/20200317/turciya-serial-kyrgyzstanec-semki-1047425464.html> (accessed:05.04.2023)

¹⁷⁰ Report Mapping Open Data in Kyrgyzstan, UKaid. Available at: https://internews.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/KG_Report_OpenDataMapping_ENG.pdf (accessed 13.04.2023)

"a three-part education system, combining Soviet, British, and National teaching methods" (Acting Minister of Education and Science Kanybek Imanaliev, 2013) where the Soviet, Islamic and Liberal identity clashes out. First, the outflow of Russian speakers with the economic and unemployment situation in the country and limited work of Russian expansion in the educational sphere led to Turkish and Western models penetrating deeply into education in the Republic. Moreover, the cultural differences between the Russian-speaking and the Turkic-speaking part of the population, where Turkey's policy leads to the Islamization of Kyrgyzstan, create a Russian -speaking feeling of discomfort and alienation in the country. At the beginning of Kyrgyzstan's independence in the 1990s, a more liberal approach to religion was taken. However, in the years since, the government has taken a more active role in regulating religious matters, granting preferential treatment to Hanafi Islam and the Russian Orthodox Church due to their importance in Kyrgyz history and nation-building. The Department of Education and Catechesis of the Bishkek and Kyrgyzstan Diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate) was founded to preserve the Russian language, Orthodox culture, and Russian compatriots' historical memory. On April 19, 2013, this religious association was officially registered with the State Commission for Religious Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic and entered into the Unified Register of Religious Organizations. Thus, Orthodox scholars in the early 2000s approximated that there were around 25,000 Kyrgyz people who had converted to Christianity (Central Eurasian Studies review, pp.13-14). Russian compatriots in the Kyrgyz Republic mainly profess Orthodoxy, represented by the Bishkek and Kyrgyz diocese of the Central Asian metropolitan district of the Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate), which includes six deaneries, consisting of 46 parishes (Table 4) convent in Balykchy, the school of St. Vladimir Equal-to-the-Apostles in Bishkek, an Orthodox school in Kant, an Orthodox school in Karakol and Sunday Orthodox schools in the cities of Bishkek, Jalal-Abad, Karakol, Kant, Manas, villages Leninskoe, Kok-Zhangak, Novo-Pokrovka, Tyup, Sokuluk and Voyenno-Antonovka. Bishop Daniel of Bishkek and Kyrgyzstan highlighted the peaceful role of Orthodoxy in the region and the lack of religious conflict between Islam and the Russian population. He noted that this was since the primary goal of Orthodoxy was to nourish the Russian settlers spiritually and not interfere in Islamic affairs. This point of view is further supported by the registration of the Bishkek and Kyrgyzstan Diocese by the State Commission for Religious Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic, which has allowed the two religions to coexist

peacefully for over 150 years¹⁷¹. In 2022, Orthodoxy celebrated the 150th anniversary of its presence in the land of Kyrgyzstan. However, since the 2000s, Christian missionaries have been portrayed in Kyrgyz media in a negative light, which lead to instability in Kyrgyz society (Pelkmans, 2007). Thus, the role of the Russian Orthodox Church decreased, mainly focusing on the Soviet generation and compatriots in the Republic and since the turn of the millennium, Kyrgyzstan has seen a resurgence of Islamic values, mainly supporting the Hanafism movement to help promote a sense of national identity and to counter the radical Islamism as Hizb-ut-Tahrir movement (Engvall, 2020). Thus, at the start of the 2000s, Kyrgyzstan faced a severe threat when the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan launched armed incursions into its southern regions. As a result, there was an increased focus from the government on how to foster the growth of the Hanafi school of Islam and 'secure the religious' from the radical movement. That led to the current situation in which the Turkish government attempts to intertwine its ideology with the local culture, making it clear that the Kyrgyz authorities have opted for a 'Turkish-style Islamization' (Kudayarov, 2021). Turkish authorities have been a driving force in this process, introducing religious values while attempting to reconcile them with Kyrgyz customs and traditions. Turkey aimed to form the national and religious identity of the Kyrgyz ethnic group, which historically has not been subjected to such a close and long-term cultural and religious influence from outside as other peoples of Central Asia. At the same time, Turkey restructured the current religious system by providing monetary funding and religious and educational resources. Thus, all of Turkey's religious activities in Kyrgyzstan were managed through the Directorate for Religious Affairs – Diyanet (Turkiye Diyanet Foundation). By 2017, there were 41,269 pupils registered in the Kyrgyz madrasas¹⁷² and 2,6999 mosques to cover almost six million Kyrgyz people¹⁷³. The growth of mosques posed a severe issue with staff, as they must be stuffed with a corresponding number of certified Imams. Thus, Diyanet has been involved in furnishing spiritual instruction and financing the building of schools, mosques, and madrasas throughout Kyrgyzstan. In 1993, the Foundation established a faculty of theology at Osh State University, and 8

¹⁷¹ Episkop Daniil Bishkekskiy. Za 150 let v Kirgizii ne bylo ni odnogo konflikta pravoalavniy s musulmanami. Available at: www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/4919578.html (accessed 17.04.2023)

¹⁷² Kyrgyzstan Education Statistics. National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2017. Available at: www.stat.kg/en/catalog/education (accessed 17.04.2023)

¹⁷³ Muftiyat of Kyrgyzstan. Available at: <https://muftiyat.kg/ru/page/mechitter-zhana-kurulush-bolumu> (accessed 17.04.2023)

years later, in 2011, it opened another faculty of theology at Kyrgyz-Turkish Manas University (KTMU). KTMU's Faculty of Theology has two departments – theology and religious, that enrolls over 250 students.¹⁷⁴ The purpose of these two universities is to provide a comprehensive religious education that includes Islamic history, Islamic law, ethics, and Quran studies to prepare professionals of Muslim intellectuals in Kyrgyzstan.

Despite the Kyrgyz government enacting a law in 2008 that prohibited the dissemination of religious materials and gave the state greater authority to censor such material, the success of Diyanet's activities and its adherence to the 'Turkish model' has not diminished. For example, although the theological faculties created by Diyanet were shut down in Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan in the 2000s, they are still operational in Kyrgyzstan. Furthermore, Diyanet has sent out 700,000 free Islamic publications to the Republic (Yurtbilir, 2021), and more than 2000 Kyrgyz students have gone to Turkey on a Diyanet scholarship. This demonstrates the extensive presence of Diyanet's activities in Kyrgyzstan, thus making Turkey the 'exclusive exporter' of Islam. However, the transition period from 2007-2011 saw the AKP party firmly entrench itself in power, resulting in a shift of focus for Turkish foreign policy from the Middle East to the Islamic world. As a result of this shift, Central Asia has seen a decrease in the prominence of Diyanet's activities, however, in September 2018, Turkish President Erdoğan, accompanied by high-ranking government officials such as ministers of religious affairs and defence, opened the Central Imam Sarakhsi Mosque in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan (Handan, 2018). The Turkish government funded the mosque's construction, and its design and name were chosen to pay homage to the Ottoman Empire and its ties to Central Asia. The mosque was named after Imam Sarakhsi, an Islamic scholar who specialized in the Hanafi school of Islam, which is predominant in the Eurasian territories of the previous Ottoman Empire, Pakistan, and Central Asia¹⁷⁵. This 'great gift of the Turkish people to the Kyrgyz people' (Erdogan, 2018) was accompanied by the request to close Gulen's lyceums in the country as

¹⁷⁴ Kyrgyz-Turkish Manas University (KTMU) website. Available at: <https://manas.edu.kg/en/theology> (accessed 17.04.2023)

¹⁷⁵ Erdoğan inaugurates Central Asia's largest mosque in Kyrgyzstan. Available at: <https://www.dailysabah.com/religion/2018/09/02/erdogan-inaugurates-central-asias-largest-mosque-in-kyrgyzstan> (accessed: 06.04.2023)

well as Süleymancilar and Turkish Nurcu movements, both of which are offshoots of the Naqshbandi movement and have educational institutions in the country.

In addition, Diyanet funds the building of religious and educational institutions all over the country. These institutions provide a contemporary theological education. Among the noteworthy constructions in the south of the nation is the Social Complex in the city of Uzgen and Iman Lyceums. Thus, in the past two decades, the Turkish organization have been successful in this sphere by cultivating a reputation as a progressive modern interpretation of Hanafi Islam, taking into consideration the 'Soviet heritage' and 'modern secular ideology' of the Republic, not focusing on wearing traditional Islamic dress and appearances. Meanwhile, in spite of the fact that religious organizations in the country are not allowed to meddle in the governing of the state, Islam became a more influential factor in Kyrgyz politics. Thus, all six Presidents of the Republic need for a state that stands as the guarantor for harmony and stability in the religious sphere and the need for a social partnership between political and religious leaders. However, Kyrgyz leaders always step forward to Russia's presence in the Republic, thus, at the 2019 conference 'Orthodoxy and Islam – Religions of the World, Kyrgyz President Jeenbekov reiterated that the state and the two religions have a shared aim of cultivating devoted moral citizens to peace and stability (Jeenbekov, 2019). Thus, the political project of secularism in Kyrgyzstan has had to adapt to a more diverse religious landscape.

Therefore, in modern Kyrgyz society, three distinct views can be seen. The first is the mainly secular political and economic 'Soviet elite' in the capital of Bishkek, which is gradually losing its influence in a society that is becoming less secular. The second group is made up of Kyrgyz citizens who are growing more nationalist and embracing moderate Hanafi Islam as part of their identity. The third is the last generation of Kyrgyz society which is trying to follow more Western values and liberal views.

Since the decree dated July 1, 2013, to reform the gradual transition of higher education from Russian to the Kyrgyz language, the findings of the three case studies showed that since 2013, the funding of the Turkish government has affected the functioning of Kyrgyz educational system as the first gradual transition of higher

education from Russian to the Kyrgyz language, and then in all secondary and primary schools.

At the same time, the lack of teaching staff teaching various subjects in the Russian language forced Kyrgyz students to choose alternative high-quality Turkish education, which partly replaced Soviet education in the Republic. Rossotrudnichestvo is trying to address this issue, but the scale of their activities is surprisingly small. At the same time, in recent years, the Kyrgyz government has come to the need to promote approaches that allow the introduction of a more flexible policy in choosing the languages of education, which significantly expands pupils' opportunities in the spheres of life and announced plans to introduce "a three-part education system to Kyrgyzstan, combining Soviet, British, and National teaching methods." Currently, various models of multilingual education in the republic are used in Turkish lyceums. That means one more time 'reverence' to the Turkish educational system. Meanwhile, the British approach to the creative economy, which aimed at different target groups, created a favourable environment for business development, where young entrepreneurs or returning migrants could develop their companies and strengthen the economy. The UK soft policy in Kyrgyzstan differs from Russian and Turkey's approaches. However, Russia has a particular advantage over other countries when it comes to using soft power. The Republic is included in the integration processes in the post-Soviet space, making interactions between Russia and Kyrgyzstan closer than with other states outside the region. Additionally, the Russian language is still widespread in the Republic -65% of students in schools offering classes with Russian as the language of instruction located in all regions, particularly in the capital city of Bishkek (Duishebaeva, 2013). Since 2005, the number of students choosing classes with Russian as the language of instruction has increased by 5,000-6,000 annually, likely due to economic motives such as labour migration. Thus, from 2010 to 2020, Kyrgyzstan received \$20,1 billion in money transfers from Russia, which is several times higher than the total official assistance of regional donors. At the same time, Russia than the UK and Turkey is less focused on the attractiveness of its example based on Nye's soft power values. Second, Russia does not have a coherent strategy for the use of soft power, instead, the country uses separate activities in particular areas. This is particularly evident in their strong focus on the media and their lack of

focus on education that the Turkish model of education occupied a niche offering multilingual education in the Republic. For comparison, Kyrgyz people who can communicate freely in the English language do not exceed 1,2% (Dubnov, 2013) but the UK is not pursuing this aim, instead they are “trying to strengthen the Kyrgyz economy in order to reduce dependence on Russia, China and other states that are key trading partners” (the ex-British Ambassador to Kyrgyzstan Charles Garet, 2022) working with civil society and targeting various groups, in particular with the creative platform PEAK. In addition, the UK soft power works with the Kyrgyz government directly based on the project ‘Good Governance for Economic Development’.

To sum up, the thesis has confirmed my hypothesis that despite the growing Turkish and British presence in Kyrgyzstan through the opening of educational institutes, popularization of the Turkish and English languages, and an increasing level of student and academic mobility, Russian language and presence is still dominant in the Republic. Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony applies to this situation, as cultural, public, religious, charitable organizations and political parties, in addition to the media, have been utilized by 'the dominant class' to instil its ideological attitudes and worldview into the Kyrgyz population. Thus, three Major powers are currently vying for hegemony in Kyrgyzstan. However, it is uncertain what form the new government of Kyrgyzstan will take. Post-Soviet generations have the challenge of balancing the need for a solid nationalist identity with the need to preserve the boundary between politics and religion, which actively promotes the Turkish government on the wave of 'Kyrgyz growing nationalism'.

Therefore, it takes considerable time to observe the effects of soft power as it is a consequence rather than a purpose. In line with the ancient oriental belief, "To defeat your enemy, bring up their children". This is an important reminder of the influential role the younger generation plays in determining the country's future.

Conclusion

This thesis analyzed the Russian, Turkish and British soft power activities toward Kyrgyzstan from a Gramscian concept of cultural hegemony. Specifically, it focused on exploring how their educational programmes served as a soft power tool in the Republic from 2000 to 2021. Particularly, it aimed to fill the gap in empirical research

by comparatively analyzing the soft power activities of three major powers in Kyrgyzstan - the state located in the heart of the Central Asian region. Since the new millennium, the Central Asian region become a geopolitical hotspot due to its immense resources and strategic location. This has resulted in a shift in approach towards diplomacy and international relations, wherein the 'New Great Game' of major foreign powers called for a different model of influence and employed the recourses of soft power.

Kyrgyzstan's unique geopolitical positioning, fragile state, presence of corrupt elites, and dynamic multi-vector approach make it particularly vulnerable, thus making it an ideal focal point for studying the implications of soft power strategies. Thus, in the thirty years since the country's independence from the Soviet Union, Kyrgyzstan has experienced three national revolutions and changed six Presidents. This period of transformation has allowed for a shift away from the centralized curricula and state-mandated educational models of the Soviet Union towards localized teaching methods. This shift has been supported by the funding of Russia, Turkey, and the UK, which transformed Kyrgyzstan's educational system. My personal educational background which includes a Turkish lyceum, a bachelor's degree from Moscow and current PhD studies in the UK, has inspired me to delve deeper into the concept of soft power and to know how different countries implement their educational policies and activities in Kyrgyzstan. This acknowledgement drove my research, which is structured around a few core research questions – I wanted to find out how financially and institutionally the three major powers invested in the education sector of Kyrgyzstan from 2000-2021. What kind of educational program do the three major powers use in the Republic? How many government quotas do the three major powers allocate to Kyrgyzstan? Furthermore, to what extent do the three major powers invest in Kyrgyzstan? What is the strategic and geopolitical significance of the Central Asia region for the Major powers?

I began by examining Nye's (1990, 2004, 2011) definition of soft power, which is based on universal and liberal democratic values, putting his formulation through different concepts of power from its 'genesis'. However, this approach has raised concerns about the validity and applicability of the concept on a global scale. It implies a more 'Western' viewpoint and disregards the cultural values of non-Western countries such as Russia and Turkey (Zahran & Ramos, 2010; Sherr, 2013; Zakaria, 1997). By

undertaking an appraisal of the literature, exploring the notions of soft power and education and language, as well as soft power and religion, as articulated by constructivist and critical scholars (Nussbaum, 2000; Bacchilega, 2010; Frost 2017), I was drawing upon Antonio Gramsci's conceptualization of 'hegemony' and 'common sense'. I propose that *soft power* can be defined as 'the ability of state or ruling elite to shape the international discourse in ways that make certain policies and worldviews, while cultural and social institutions such as educational programs, language, creative industries, and religion (Keane,1990; Hobsbawm,1990) are tools of domination and control used by the dominant powers to maintain their interest and power through their educational channels. This conceptual understanding of soft power is grounded in the notion of 'consensus-building', whereby 'consensus' is not necessarily linked to the 'universal democratic' values of Nye's soft power. As the illiberal policy shifts, such as the Gezi protests in 2013 in Turkey, the Georgian war in 2008 and the Ukrainian events by Russia, have severely impacted the development of soft power and its academic study. As a result, Nye's traditional definition of soft power, which emphasizes universal democratic values (Beaulac 2016; Slaughter,2003; Chan, 2004; Mellinger, 2006; Luttwak, 2007; Zartman, 2006), is no longer applicable and adequate to either nation. To better understand the soft power of Russia and Turkey, the focus should instead be shifted to the theories of Gramsci, which focus on the process of gaining consensus around a particular set of values without regard to their democratic nature. This approach allowed me to define the Gramscian notion as a suitable framework to pave the way forward to analysing empirical data of the three Major powers' educational activities in Kyrgyzstan.

My second puzzle was operationalizing the concept of soft power. Defining and assessing soft power, an abstract concept is a considerable challenge. How do I operationalize such a concept? What tangible measures can be taken to assess the impact of soft power? A common approach to understanding the concept of soft power is to examine opinion polls regarding the recognition of a country among foreign people, analyse institutions and policies related to language, and assess the success of their cultural products. While touching upon these indicators, I chose three main organizations of three major powers that are operating in Kyrgyzstan - Rossotrudnichestvo (previously known as the Russian Centre for CIS Affairs), the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Centre (TIKA) and the British Council. Thus, Rossotrudnichestvo has been operating in Kyrgyzstan since 2007, and from 2011 to

2015 implemented the Federal Target Program 'Russian Language', under the support of the Russkiy Mir Foundation. Meanwhile, TIKa, established in 1992 by the Office of the Prime Minister of Turkey, is responsible for most of Turkey's soft power activities in Kyrgyzstan, which range from technical assistance to education, replacing the absence of the Yunus Emre Foundation - Turkey's leading language and culture promotion institute. The British Council, comparatively, does not possess an office within Kyrgyzstan, yet implements its educational programs via its Kazakhstan office as part of its 'Wider Europe' initiatives. To gain a more comprehensive understanding, I carried out a mixed-method case study analysis. Using this method approach was a viable research strategy to examine Russian, Turkish and the UK concepts of soft power and how they fit into their foreign policy philosophy. The combination of quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis techniques allowed me to enable a more in-depth analysis, providing greater insight into the dynamics underlying soft power. Also, I considered Nye's approach, where Nye himself (2004) proposed two methods to measure a nation's soft power – a direct and an indirect method. The direct method is quantitative, accounting for activities and resources that contribute to a country's soft power, such as foreign aid programs, international treaties, or cultural exports. The indirect method is qualitative, examining how other countries or international organisations perceive a nation's policies and activities, incorporating the awards a country has received and the level of approval of its policies by the international community. I focused on the direct method, which allowed me to understand better how the foreign policy of the three major powers fits their soft power philosophy. In comparison, the quantitative part of my study looked at the number of quotas that are given to Kyrgyz students and the amount the three Major Powers invest financially and institutionally in educational projects.

Utilizing official documents, I evaluated and classified them into five distinct groups. Firstly, they encompass official statements and documents from the relevant Central Asian states, the United Kingdom, Russia, and Turkey. Secondly, purposeful reports and key publications by expert and analytical centres, providing regular soft power ratings of countries, country brand indices, and other pertinent material. Thirdly, speeches and interviews given by prominent leaders, foreign ministers, and government officials are available on various websites, including those operated by political parties, public organizations, the media, and the press. Fourthly, a wealth of

statistical data and related information from the UK and the European Union, Russia, and Turkey. Finally, international journals and magazines, academic websites, scientific articles, blogs, and social networks feature prominently in the analysis. Then I proceeded to apply political discourse analysis (van Dijk, 1997) to the five divided groups of sources that helped me to uncover hidden narratives and ideologies that exist within the political discourse of the three major powers and gave me an understanding of their motivations and allowed me to gain an in-depth understanding of how power is used in different contexts.

The results of the case studies provided an understanding of how the British Council, Rossotrudnichestvo and TIKA are functioning in Kyrgyzstan, as well as the three major power's formation of soft power policy and how their concepts fit into their foreign policy philosophy. It needs to be noted that during the chosen period of 21 years, Russia and Turkey underwent a process of institutionalizing their soft power concept. Thus, the term 'soft power' first appeared in 2007-2008 when then-Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu discussed 'unseen soft power' linked to the country's mediatory activities in the region and officially declared that NGOs should be considered an integral part of Turkey's foreign policy (Davutoğlu, 2008, p.84). Later, in 2010, the Office of Public Diplomacy was established under the Prime Minister's Office to improve the coordination of soft power institutions in Turkey. The Turkish Office of Public Diplomacy was established in collaboration between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in 2011 (Kalin, 2011, pp. 7–8). Thus, since coming into power in 2002, the AKP has employed a soft power strategy, resulting in the creation of new organizations and the revitalization of existing ones. These include the Prime Minister's Office's Office of Public Diplomacy, the Turkish Red Crescent (Kizilay), the Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA), the Yunus Emre Foundations, TRT, and the Department for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (Yurtdışı Türkler ve Akraba Topluluklar Başkanlığı).

At the same time, in 2008, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov made a statement (Lavrov, 2008) which emphasized the importance of using soft power. This led to the concept's official inclusion in the 2013 Russian Federation Foreign Policy Concept (Russian Federation, 2013). Consequently, the Kremlin established its position in the Russian language with the support of nationals of CIS countries (Concept of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation 2013). Rossotrudnichestvo was established in 2008

in a period of "a movement from Greater Europe to Greater Eurasia". Furthermore, several funds, such as the Gorchakov Fund and Russkiy Mir, have been created to provide grants for the development of public diplomacy and the establishment of Russian Centers and Cabinets of the Russian World (RCSC).

Notably, the UK's interaction with Kyrgyzstan before 2015 was primarily limited to security cooperation and border conflicts. The Department for International Development (DFID) has carried out most British activities in the Republic since its opening in 1997, as the activities of British embassies in cultural cooperation are considered a priority for those countries already covered by British Council projects. However, the UK's policy shifted to a 'creative economy' approach in 2015, allowing for a noticeable rise in the amount of collaboration and the advancement of British influence through soft power tactics, such as the implementation of Oxford and Cambridge affiliated schools and the British Study Centre. Thus, the period between 2000 and 2021 can be considered a crucial juncture in using soft power in Kyrgyzstan, with Turkey and Russia instituting their strategies and the UK vigorously implementing theirs since 2015.

Thus, since 2015, the British policy vis-à-vis Kyrgyzstan has sharply changed, turning to 'creative industry' projects, and increasing the number of areas of cooperation to strengthen its influence through soft power tools. Unlike the UK, however, Russia and Turkey generally rely on the same tools in their educational programmes in Kyrgyzstan. Looking closer at the evolution of the usage of soft power, the shared motives behind the implementation of such activities in Turkey and Russia become evident. Both countries have similar goals in using soft power. They aim to establish a more comprehensive image that is not solely based on Western values but also on global governance implementation. Russia achieves this by contrasting the West's moral decay with conservative values, while Turkey emphasizes its Muslim democracy. Additionally, the concept of 'big brotherhood' is regularly invoked by both countries in Kyrgyzstan, leveraging their common Islamic faith and Soviet cultural heritage. However, due to the educational sphere for these twenty-one-year Turkey's higher educational institutions have been highly evaluated by the Kyrgyz students and partly replaced high- quality Soviet education.

Meanwhile, the British approach to the creative economy, which aimed at different target groups, created a favourable environment for business development, where young entrepreneurs or returning migrants could develop their companies and strengthen the economy. The UK soft policy in Kyrgyzstan differs from Russian and Turkey's approaches. However, Russia has a particular advantage over other countries when it comes to using soft power. The Republic is included in the integration processes in the post-Soviet space, making interactions between Russia and Kyrgyzstan closer than with other states outside the region. At the same time, Russia than the UK and Turkey is less focused on the attractiveness of its example based on Nye's values. Second, Russia does not have a coherent strategy for the use of soft power, instead, the country uses separate activities in particular areas. This is particularly evident in their strong focus on the media and their lack of focus on education that the Turkish model of education occupied a niche offering of multilingual education in the Republic.

Thus, during Kyrgyzstan's transition period from the turn of the new millennium to 2021, Russia strategically sought to retain its presence through various tactics, primarily targeting its Russian-speaking constituency and capitalizing on the shared Soviet heritage. This approach entailed a concerted effort towards the 'Russification' of the region, demonstrating the significance of language as a soft power tool. In contrast, the UK adopted a distinct approach, one that cantered around establishing connections with Kyrgyzstan's noteworthy youthful population. By implementing innovative and creative programs, the UK endeavoured to forge an understanding and cultivate relationships with the younger generation. Turkey, however, charted a different course in its pursuit of soft power in Kyrgyzstan. Recognizing the socio-political transformations that ensued after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Turkey strategically emphasized the significance of education with the aim of fostering a sense of Turkic brotherhood rooted in Muslim traditions. Thus, in examining the role of language, education, and religion as key tools of soft power within the context of the case studies explored, it became crucial to determine which tool was the most effective in each specific case – thus, the Russian language wielded considerable influence through the efforts of Rossotrudnichestvo. The British Council, on the other hand, effectively utilized 'creative industries' as a means of projecting soft power. Lastly, Turkish engagement primarily employed religion as a tool to exert influence.

To summarise, my thesis has validated my hypothesis that, despite the growing number of Turkish and British educational institutions, the promotion of Turkish and English languages, and the influx of students and academics in Kyrgyzstan, the Russian language has remained prevalent in the Republic from 2000 to 2021. However, according to Nye (2022), values and culture can become prominent only in the long term; thus, we can see those changes most evidently in the Kyrgyz government's implementation of 'a three-part education system, combining Soviet, British, and National teaching methods' (Acting Minister of Education and Science Kanybek Imanaliev, 2013). This suggests that, through the shift from a Soviet education system to one with more British influences, there has been an increase in Turkish and English language development within the Republic over the long term. Even right now, by 2023, the Kyrgyz society of the present day can be divided into three distinct groups. The first is the largely secular 'Soviet Elite' based in the capital city of Bishkek, whose authority is gradually waning in a society which is becoming increasingly less secular. The second is a more nationalist faction that is embracing Hanafi Islam as part of its identity. The third is composed of more recent generations of Kyrgyz citizens who are adopting more liberal values and a greater orientation towards Western ideals.

My thesis aimed to contribute to unexplored empirical research on the soft power of Russian, Turkish and UK activities in Kyrgyzstan. As for the first aspect, I have pointed out some challenges that scholars may encounter while using soft power, especially when dealing with states that do not prioritize the same liberal universal values emphasized in Nye's concept, as revealed by the application of Gramscian insight. The second and main contribution is the empirical assessment of soft power based on applying three major power activities. My analysis unpacked and explained three empirical databases with cross-country relevance for the UK, Turkey, and Russia. In the third aspect, I compared and contrasted the role of identity – Soviet, Islamic and Liberal educational and exchange programs of the three major powers and their implication in the Republic from 2000 to 2021. The fourth aspect answered why, despite the Turkish and British having systematically employed advantages, they were not superseding Russian influence in the Republic. By examining this question, I analysed the Soviet and Tsarist heritage and how they influenced Kyrgyzstan's

educational institutions and culture. Thus, the Soviet heritage made the integration process between Kyrgyzstan and Russia closer than with other states outside of the region, and one of the primary sources is labour migrants, where the Republic received more than the total official assistance of the regional donors.

However, the thesis has several limitations. The most significant limitation of the research was the availability of official government data. Limitations also affected qualitative data, as case study analysis primarily depends on subjective evaluation. Even when documents are available, they can be short on details. Besides access to official documents, government agreements are also restricted access. Moreover, three case studies are bounded by time and will investigate educational projects only from 2000 to 2021 onwards. Also, the research did not deal with the effectiveness of the three Major soft powers in the Kyrgyz Republic – it only involved comparative analyses.

Based on this empirical analysis, the use of soft power in Central Asia is highly complex and multifaceted, as different countries involved in regional politics often have opposite interests raising important questions about political trend of non-Western alliance in the region and the implications of a clash of interests in promoting Russian and Turkish languages and culture. Further research is needed to fully understand the potential impact of it and the clash of interests in the relationship between Turkey and Russia, as well as their influence on global governance implementation.

Other case studies for Kyrgyzstan can be analysed to increase the strength of the comparative approach used in my thesis. For instance, adding the USA and China. Additionally, further research can be conducted to identify how local communities have responded to the application of soft power in Central Asia. By carrying out research into these topics, a deeper understanding of the complexities and nuances of Central Asian soft power can be developed.

During the work on the thesis, significant changes have taken place in the international arena. The turning point was in 2020 for Britain to leave the European Union. At the same time, relations between Russia and Western countries have recently worsened due to the Ukrainian crisis and subsequent Russia's special operation in February 2022. However, not only the potential of hard power is determined in the modern world. The author of the concept of soft power, Joseph Nye (2022), underlines that "some avowed realist might say- "so much for soft power today" after the Ukrainian war, but

"such response betrays a shallow analysis"¹⁷⁶. Nye (2022) still underlines that the attractiveness of values and culture becomes noticeable only in the long term.

I believe the New Great Game in Kyrgyzstan promises to offer a unique opportunity for the three countries involved. With Russia and Turkey possessing long-standing ties to the region and the UK's relatively recent entry, the competition among these three countries will be intense. Moreover, an in-depth analysis of the internal structures, governance, and formal institutions of Kyrgyzstan is vital to understanding the country's current state. This assessment should encompass a study of legal structures, democratic processes, public opinion, and the role of civil society within the region. The key to success, then, lies in the ability of the three nations to work together to ensure a secure and stable environment within the region. To do so, there needs to be an understanding of the local political, economic, and social structure. As such, it is necessary to assess the structural dynamics of the region, for instance, the regional tendencies towards conflict and cooperation, the effects of foreign influence, and economic disparities. As the new great game unfolds, it is driven by a combination of strategic, historical, economic, and security factors. As these countries compete for influence, control, and economic benefits in the region, the Great Game in Central Asia remains a significant aspect of their geopolitical considerations, including the utilization of soft power, regional cooperation, and the influence of external actors. Thus, a delicate balancing act is necessary for these countries to safeguard their sovereignty and protect their national interests. While external actors will continue to shape the region's soft power landscape, it is crucial for Central Asian countries to actively work towards maintaining their autonomy. In order to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes, effective negotiation strategies should be implemented to promote shared economic and political opportunities, as well as to ensure market access.

¹⁷⁶ Nye, J. (2022). Soft Power Revisited. *Foreign Affairs*, 52(1), pp. 539-549.

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Newspapers

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Akipress

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TASS

Tazabek

Tazar

The Guardian

The Independent

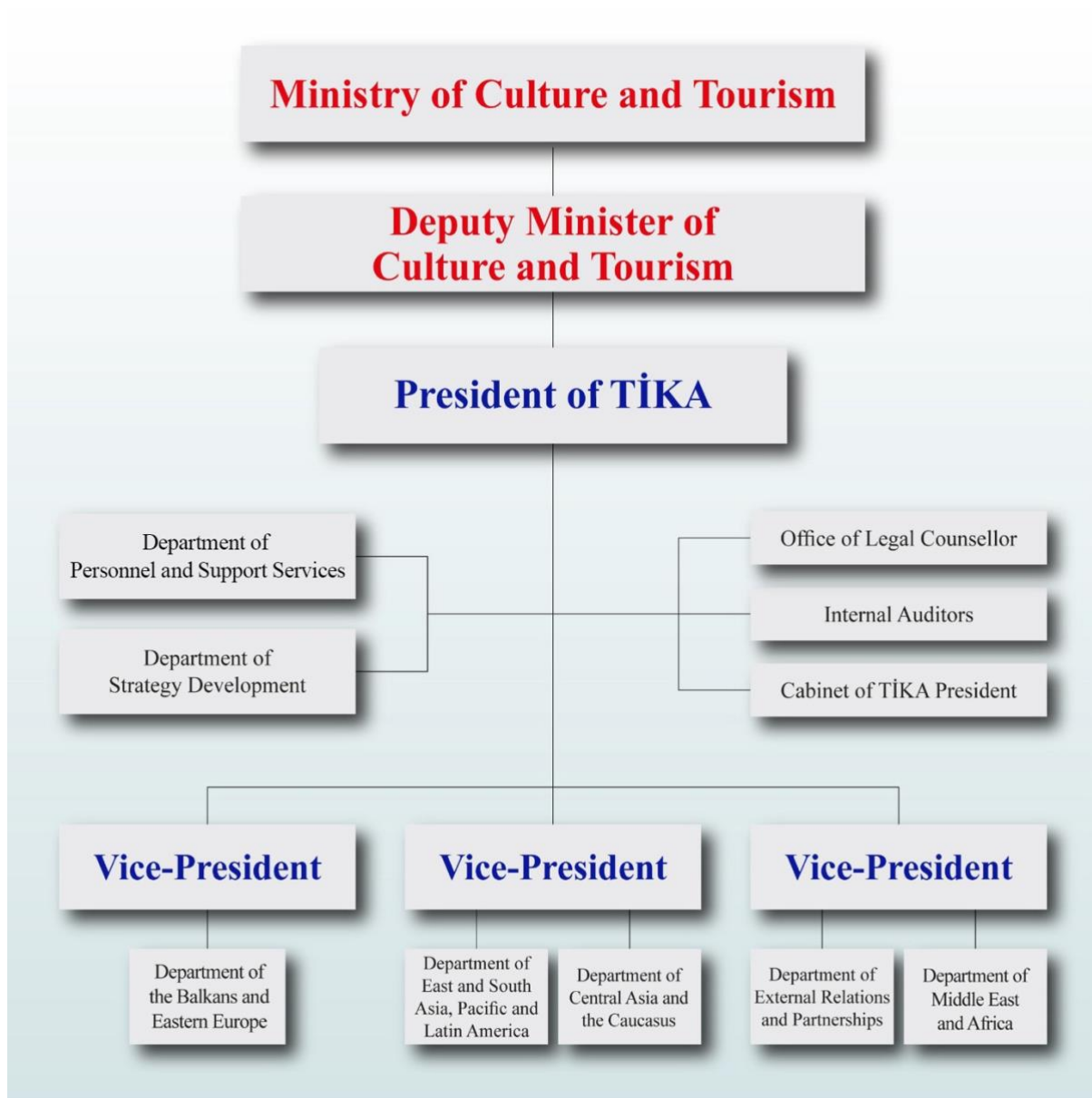
The Moscow time

TRT World

Appendices

Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA)

Organizational Chart of TIKA



CERTIFICATE



Turkish Cooperation And Coordination Agency

GMK BULVARI NO: 140 ANADOLU MEYDANI ÇANKAYA - ANKARA - TURKEY

WITH A SCOPE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY BUSINESS PROCESSES, INFORMATION ASSETS AND THE PROCESSES REGARDING INFORMATION SECURITY UTILIZED TO PROTECT AFOREMENTIONED ASSETS OF TURKISH COOPERATION AND COORDINATION AGENCY

with a scope of

ISO/IEC 27001:2013

has established Information Security Management System in accordance with international standard.

Declaration of applicability: 05 March 2018

Certificate No	: M 11147
Initial Certification Date	: 16 January 2019
Certification Date	: 16 January 2019
Expiration Date	: 15 January 2022

General Manager

Kiwa Certification Services Inc.
ITOSB 9. Cadde No. 15 Tepeören Tuzla - Istanbul - Turkey
Tel: + 90 216 593 25 75 Faks : + 90 216 593 25 74
Web: www.kiwa.com.tr E-mail: info@kiwa.com.tr

*Certificate is valid till expiration date, subject to successful completion of periodical surveillance audits.
Please contact above numbers for detailed information.*

Last Modified: 16 January 2019 - R 00

Source: TİKA's official website. Available at:
https://www.tika.gov.tr/en/page/organization_chart-14648

Table 15: TIKA's main projects in Kyrgyzstan from 2000 to 2021

TIKA projects in Kyrgyzstan	Institutionally contribution
Renovation of Osh Religious High School	Upon the request of Osh Religious High School, its walls were painted, linoleum flooring was laid, heating and electricity installations were made, and lighting and water installations were changed. Forty tables, 40 chairs, 20 bunks, 20 quilts, 20 pillows, 20 blankets and 20 double wardrobes were also granted.
Establishing an Electronic Library for Osh State University	Regarding digitalizing the works in Kyrgyzstan's Osh State University Library, TIKa granted one scanner to the University allowing 860 copies of written works to be presented to readers in a digital medium.
Assistance to Exiled Meskheti Turks Higher Education Students Workshop	TIKA and the World Meskheti Turks Union (DATÜB) conducted an Exiled Meskheti Turks Higher Education Students' Workshop from 15-18 August 2014. Sixty-nine Meskhetian university students from Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Ukraine, Turkey, Russia, the United States of America, England, and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus attended this workshop, which lasted for four days and was held at Kyrgyzstan-Turkey Manas University's Cengiz Aytmatov Campus.
Assistance to Internship Program of Students of the Kyrgyz-Turkish Anatolian Vocational High School for Girls	Zeynep-Salih Alp Technical and Vocational High School for Girls and TIKa assisted about forty students from the Kyrgyz-Turkish Anatolian Vocational High School for Girls with 2 supervisors. They undertook internships in Istanbul and Ankara from 25 June to 25 July 2014.
Assistance to Traditional Sports Games Symposium	Kyrgyzstan-Turkey Manas University organized an international symposium entitled "Traditional Sports Games of Turkish Folks" in Kyrgyzstan from 20-22 November 2014 as a re- minder of nomadic traditions which have played an important role in Tur- kish culture. TIKa provided for nine guests to attend the symposium.
Turkish World Citizenship Works- hop	With the collaboration of Gaziantep University and the Kyrgyzstan-Turkey Manas University, the Turkish World Citizenship Workshop was held in Bishkek from 22-26 October 2014. TIKa assisted 20 people in at- tending the program.
Assistance to Commemoration Program for Rahmankul Khan	With the collaboration of the Tur- kish World Union of Municipalities and Istanbul Consulate-General of Kyrgyzstan, the "Commemoration Program for Rahmankul Khan at his 100th Birthday" was held in Istanbul on 26 October 2014. Twenty people were assisted to attend the prog- ram.
Various Equipment and Material to Osh Hospital	Osh Hospital was built by TIKa in 2012 and provided with furniture and goods of common use in 2013. In 2014, TIKa provided additional necessary materials needed including: study desks, manager work

	sets, chairs, examination tables, wardrobes, lockers, ventilated cabinets, curtains, linens, towels, blankets, telephone switchboards, refrigerators, computers, telephones, coat-hangers, sitting sets for the hallway, desk lamps, air conditioners, writing desks, document / filing cabinet, LCD tele- visions, dividers, patient stretchers, wheel chairs, ENT chairs, counters, linens/blanket board and secure file cabinets.
Medical Equipment and Material Assistance to National Oncology Centre	TIKA granted a modern colour Doppler ultrasound device, a digital mammography device used for breast cancer screening and pharmaceutical materials to the Cancer Early Detection Centre. Two rooms where devices are kept were also renovated and office supplies replenished.
Various Equipment and Material to Osh Hospital	Osh Hospital was built by TIKA in 2012 and provided with furniture and goods of common use in 2013. In 2014, TIKA provided additional necessary materials needed including: study desks, manager work sets, chairs, examination tables, wardrobes, lockers, ventilated cabinets, curtains, linens, towels, blankets, telephone switchboards, refrigerators, computers, telephones, coat-hangers, sitting sets for the hallway, desk lamps, air conditioners, writing desks, document / filing cabinet, LCD tele- visions, dividers, patient stretchers, wheel chairs, ENT chairs, counters, linens/blanket board and secure file cabinets.
Three First Aid Ambulances for the Kyrgyzstan Health Ministry	In order to meet technical vehicle needs in the health sector in Kyrgyzstan, TIKA provided three fully equipped first aid ambulances for the Kyrgyzstan Health Ministry.
Rehabilitation of Kenesh Village Drinking Water System	The Issyk-Ata district Koçkorbay Village Authority requested assistance from TIKA regarding the drinking water system in their village. Thus, the Drinking Water Rehabilitation Project was developed. The main 1.5 km long water pipe in Kenesh village was replaced and water control wells were established. All villages under Koçkorbaev Village Authority are now able to benefit from this water system.
Training for 36 Kyrgyz Judicial Members	With the collaboration of the Kyrgyzstan Ministry of Justice Turkey Justice Academy and the Chief Public Prosecutor's Office of the Court of Cassation, a training program for 36 Kyrgyz judicial members was organized. During the training held from 8-15 June 2014 in Ankara and Istanbul, the Turkish judicial system and practices subject was detailly introduced.
Training for Kyrgyzstan National Security State Committee Specialists	TIKA assisted a training program for 15 Kyrgyzstan National Security State Committee Specialists. A Commando Course was conducted with seven participants from 4 August to 24 October 2014; a Combat Engineering Course was conducted with one participant from 15 September 2014 to 4 April 2014; a Commando HQ Officer Training was conducted with two participants from 29 September 2014 to 14

	February 2014 and a Turkish Language Course with five participants ran from 8 October 2014 to 20 June 2014.
8 Radar Systems with Video Recording for Traffic Police Directorate	The Kyrgyzstan Ministry of Interior Traffic Police Directorate requested radar procurement from TIKa. TIKa granted eight radar systems with video recording capability for the Traffic Police Directorate. The granted set involved one rechargeable battery, one adaptor, one carrying case, one 16 GB memory card, one mounting bracket and one remote control.
Training on Prevention of Social Unrest	Upon the request of the Kyrgyzstan State Committee for National Security, with assistance from TIKa, a training program regarding the prevention of social unrest was organized from 9-13 June 2014 in Bishkek. It was given by five specialists from the Turkish National Police to 40 Kyrgyz specialists in Bishkek.
Turkey Visit of Delegation of Kyrgyzstan State Enforcement Service	The Kyrgyzstan State Enforcement Service wished to benefit from the experiences of Turkey in reform operations which they initiated to bring prison conditions of those sentenced to life imprisonment in line with national norms and international standards. Thus, with TIKa's assistance, a delegation from the Kyrgyz State Enforcement Service Presidency visited Turkey from 8-12 December 2014.
Kyrgyz Diplomats Training Program	Upon a request from the Kyrgyzstan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a training program was organized from 2-8 March 2014 for a delegation of 10 Kyrgyz diplomats from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Academy with assistance from TIKa. Under the program, the guest delegation was provided with training on subjects ranging from bilateral and regional relations and Turkish foreign policy, general protocol rules, receptions, invitations, menus, table arrangements, formal ceremonies, visits, flag protocols, methods to convene international meetings and the structure of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
Municipal Subsidiaries and Urban Regeneration Training	The Turkish World Union of Municipalities held a training program entitled, "Municipal Subsidiaries and Urban Regeneration" in Istanbul and Gaziantep from 9-15 November 2014. Twenty specialists from Kyrgyzstan were assisted by TIKa to attend the program.
18th International Service to Turkish World Awarding Ceremony	The Turkish World Writers and the Artists Foundation organized an event entitled, "The 18th International Service to Turkish World Awarding Ceremony in Kyrgyzstan". TIKa assisted 23 people to attend the event.
Assistance for the Commemoration Program for Rahmankul Khan	With the collaboration of the Turkish World Union of Municipalities and the Istanbul Consulate-General of Kyrgyzstan, the "Commemoration Program for Rahmankul Khan at his 100th Birthday" was held in Istanbul on 26 October 2014. TIKa assisted 19 experts to attend the program.

State Administration Tradition in Turks Congress	Kyrgyzstan-Turkey Manas University hosted the State Administration Tradition in Turks Congress in 03-04 April 2014. Overall, 15 scientists from Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Russian Federation and Turkey were assisted by TIKa to attend the congress.
Assistance to Traditional Sports Games Symposium	Kyrgyzstan-Turkey Manas University organized an international symposium named "Traditional Sports Games of Turkish Folks" in Kyrgyzstan in 20-22 November 2014 as a reminder of nomadic traditions which have an important role in Turkish culture. TIKa provided 9 guests to attend the symposium.
Turkish World Citizenship Workshop	With the collaboration of Gaziantep University and Kyrgyzstan-Turkey Manas University, the Turkish World Citizenship Workshop was held in Bishkek from 22-26 October 2014. TIKa assisted 12 people to attend the program.
Assistance to Turkey visit of children from Togolok Moldo Homeless and Orphan Children School of No 71.	Children from Togolok Moldo Homeless and Orphan Children School No 71 visit Turkey with the collaboration of Turkish Airlines. TIKa assisted with arrangements for 19 children and 2 attendants from the Togolok Moldo Homeless and Orphan Children School of No 71, which operates under the Kyrgyzstan Administrative Affairs Department, to visit Turkey.
Assistance to Kyrgyz Sportsmen to Attend Wrestling Tournament	TIKa assisted 11 sportsmen from Kyrgyzstan to attend the 30th International Republic Tournament of Greco-Roman Wrestling Championship held in Istanbul from 24-26 October 2014.
improving Human Resources Capacity of Kyrgyzstan National Bank	TIKa assisted in improving human resource capacity of the Kyrgyzstan National Bank. This was done with the collaboration of T.R. Central Bank (TCMB). Five managers from the Kyrgyzstan National Bank were trained in Studies on Emissions in Ankara from 24-27 August 2014. Under the program, the delegation had a chance to investigate the Banknote Printing Facility on the premises. They also attended a training on supervision and auditing conducted in Istanbul from 21-27 September 2014, with the collaboration of TIKa and BRSA. One official was also provided the opportunity to attend the Joint Economic Research Program organized by TCMB and held in Istanbul from 10-14 November 2014.
Training Programme for Kyrgyzstan Ministry of Finance Specialists	With the cooperation of TIKa and Undersecretariat of Treasury, training was conducted in Ankara from 6-12 July 2014 for a delegation of eight people from the Kyrgyzstan Ministry of Finance to introduce them to the Turkish public financial system and its information systems.
Time Distribution System in 4 Locations in Bishkek	In 2013, Kyrgyzstan was granted with a Time Distribution System for measurement and synchronization purposes in the industries of telecommunications, technology, and related fields. In 2014, the time

	distribution device was granted to the Kyrgyzstan Ministry of Economy Standardization and Metrology Centre. These devices, which would tell the time in electronic tables, were placed in four different locations in Bishkek.
Bishkek Public Bread Factory Construction	TIKA began construction on a bread factory in Oktaybr, a district of the Kyrgyzstan capital of Bishkek.
Customs Guard Training for Customs Personnel	With the collaboration of TIKA and Turkish Ministry of Customs and Trade, Customs Guard training was carried out in Edirne from 14-18 April 2014. TIKA assisted five customs personnel from Kyrgyzstan to attend the program.
Training Programme for Tourism Sector Employees	With the collaboration of TIKA and the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism, a training program was undertaken in Turkey for a delegation of five personnel working at the Kyrgyzstan Ministry of Culture, Information and Tourism as well as five private sector representatives operating in Kyrgyzstan's tourism industry. During the program held in Ankara from 4-9 May 2014, theoretical and practical training was given.
Bishkek Turkish-Kyrgyz Friendship Hospital Medical Device Support	modern and technological standards cardio equipment and new technological standards of internal medicine.

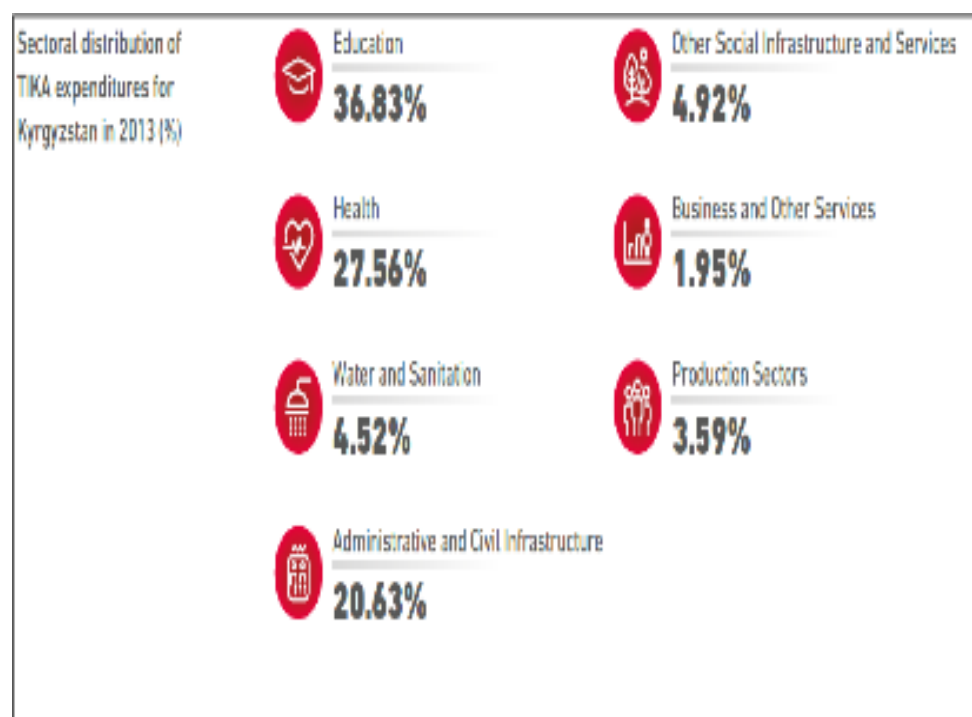
Source: TIKA's Annual reports. Available at:
https://www.tika.gov.tr/en/publication/list/tika_annual_reports-22

Expenses of TIKА in Kyrgyzstan

ГОДЫ	ОБЪЕМ РАСХОДОВ (доллары США)
1992	755.324,-
1993	432.515,-
1994	1.351.246,-
1995	1.379.359,-
1996	776.358,-
1997	540.768,-
1998	4.162.040,-
1999	650.308,-
2000	477.489,-
2001	632.666,-
2002	459.852,-
2003	431.245,-
2004	555.283,-
2005	758.183,-
2006	1.415.929,-
2007	1.351.534
ВСЕГО	16.130.099

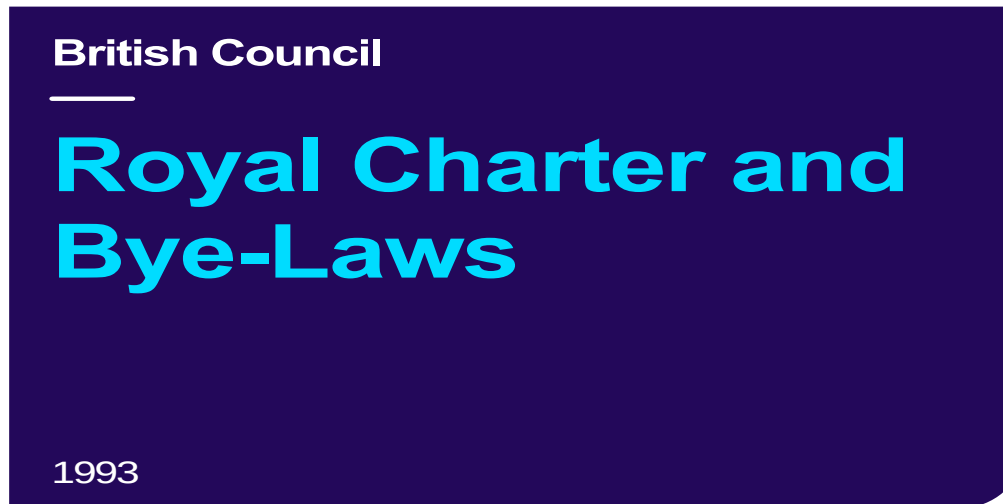
Source: Development Partners' Coordinational Council. Available at:
<http://www.donors.kg/en/agencies/104-tika>

TIKA funds allocated to Kyrgyzstan in 2005-2013



Source: TIKA's Annual reports. Available at:
https://www.tika.gov.tr/en/publication/list/tika_annual_reports-2

British Council Royal Charter and Byelaws



The British Council was incorporated by Royal Charter in 1940 and the Supplemental Charter was granted on 26 November 1993. The British Council's Charter and the Bye-Laws contained in its Schedule are here printed with the incorporation of amendments approved by Orders in Council dated 22 July 1976, 5 October 1983, 4 December 1984, 27 October 1993, 16 July 2002, 8 June 2011 and 15 December 2021.

Source: British Council. About us. Available at: <https://www.britishcouncil.org/about-us>

ELIZABETH THE SECOND by the Grace of God of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and of Our other Realms and Territories Queen, Head of the Commonwealth, Defender of the Faith:

**TO ALL WHOM THESE PRESENTS SHALL COME,
GREETING!**

WHEREAS His Majesty King George the Sixth in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and forty by Royal Charter (hereinafter called "the Original Charter") dated the seventh day of October in the fourth year of His Reign constituted a Body Corporate by the name of the British Council with perpetual succession and with power to sue and be sued by the said name and to use a Common Seal:

AND WHEREAS it has been represented unto Us by Our Principal Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs that it is expedient to revise the objects and powers of the British Council and that the provisions of the Original Charter, except in so far as they incorporate the British Council, should be replaced:

NOW THEREFORE KNOW YE that We, by virtue of Our Prerogative Royal and all other powers enabling Us so to do, have, of Our especial grace, certain knowledge and mere motion, granted and declared and do by these Presents for Us, Our Heirs and Successors, grant and declare as follows:

1. **The provisions of the Original Charter, except insofar as they incorporate the British Council and confer upon it perpetual succession and a Common Seal, are hereby revoked, but nothing in this revocation shall affect the legality or validity of any act, deed or thing lawfully done or executed under the provisions of the Original Charter.**
2. **The British Council may sue and be sued in all courts and in all manner of actions and suits and generally shall have power to do all matters and things incidental or appertaining to a Body Corporate.**

Objects

3. The objects for which the British Council is established and incorporated are to advance,

for the public benefit, any purpose which is exclusively charitable and which shall:

1. (a) promote cultural relationships between the people of the United Kingdom and other countries;
2. (b) develop a wider knowledge of the English language; and
3. (c) encourage educational co-operation between the United Kingdom and other countries, support the advancement of United Kingdom education and education standards overseas, and otherwise promote education.

5.7 subject to compliance with the provisions of clauses 13 to 17 (conflicts of interest), reasonable and proper remuneration to the Chair in return for his or her services as a Trustee and as Chair (at a rate to be agreed in writing with the Charity Commission for England and Wales and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office).

Members

- 6. The Trustees from time to time shall be the only Members of the British Council, and a**

Trustee shall become a Member on becoming a Trustee.

- 7. A Member shall cease to be a Member if he or she ceases to be a Trustee.**

Honorary Members

8. The Trustees may establish such classes of honorary membership with such description and with such rights and obligations (including without limitation the obligation to pay a subscription) as they think fit and may admit and remove such honorary members in accordance with such regulations as the Trustees shall make, provided that no such honorary members shall be Members of the British Council for the purposes of this Our Charter.

Board

- 9. All the powers of the British Council shall be vested in the Board.**
10. The Board shall consist of not less than ten and not more than fifteen Trustees.
11. In execution of their powers under this Our Charter, no Trustee shall be liable for any loss to the property of the British Council arising by reason of any improper investment made in good faith (so long as where appropriate advice shall have been sought before making such investment) or for the negligence or fraud of any other Trustee or by reason of any mistake or omission made in good faith by any Trustee or by reason of any other matter or thing whatsoever except wilful and individual fraud, wrong-doing or wrongful omission on the part of the Trustee.
12. The Board may pay out of the funds of the British Council the cost of any premium in respect of insurance or indemnities to cover any liability of the Board (or any Trustee) which by virtue of any rule of law would otherwise attach to them in respect of any negligence, default, breach of duty or breach of trust of which they may be guilty in relation to the British Council; provided that any such insurance or indemnity shall not extend to any claim arising from criminal or wilful or deliberate neglect or default on the part of the Board (or any Trustee).

Conflicts of interest

13. Whenever a Trustee finds himself or herself in a situation that is reasonably likely to give rise to a conflict of interest, he or she must declare his or her interest to the Trustees.

- 14. If any question arises as to whether a Trustee has a conflict of interest, the question shall be decided by a majority decision of the other Trustees.**
15. Whenever a Trustee has a conflict of interest either in relation to a matter to be discussed at a meeting or a decision taken by other means the Trustee must comply with clause 16.
16. If a Trustee with a conflict of interest is required to comply with clause 16 he or she must:

16.1 in respect of a decision taken at a meeting:

1. 16.1.1 remain only for such part of the meeting as in the view of the other Trustees is necessary to inform the debate;
2. 16.1.2 not be counted in the quorum for that part of the meeting; and
3. 16.1.3 withdraw during the vote and have no vote on the matter.

16.2 in respect of a decision taken outside of a meeting:

1. 16.2.1 only participate in the discussions leading up to the decision to the extent as in the view of the other Trustees is necessary to inform the debate; and
2. 16.2.2 not participate in the decision itself.

17. The Trustees must cause a register of Trustees' interests to be kept. A Trustee must declare the nature and extent of any interest, direct or indirect, which he or she has in a proposed transaction or arrangement with the British Council or in any transaction or arrangement entered into by the British Council which has not previously been declared.

Powers

4. In pursuance of the foregoing objects, the British Council may, in any part of the world:

1. (a) accept, hold and dispose of money or other personal property including sums voted by Our Parliament;
2. (b) enter into contracts;
3. (c) purchase, take on lease or hire, or otherwise acquire and hold any land, buildings, easements, or hereditaments of any tenure and any other real or personal property and to construct, provide, maintain, repair and alter any buildings, works, or plant and things that may from time to time be deemed requisite in any part of the world for the objects of the British Council and to accumulate, improve, manage, develop or sell, exchange, lease, mortgage or otherwise dispose of or deal with or turn into account all or any property or rights of the British Council provided that no disposition of any real or leasehold property situated within the United Kingdom shall be made without such consent or approval (if any) as may be by law required therefore;
4. (d) accept donations of property of any kind whatsoever, including endowments, gifts of money, lands, hereditaments, stocks, funds, shares, securities and other assets and subject or not subject to any special trust or conditions and in particular, to accept on reasonable terms the undertaking and assets of any society or body, whether incorporated or not, carrying on work which is within the objects of the British Council;
5. (e) borrow or raise money with or without security for the objects of the British Council or for the purpose of investment, provided that no money shall be raised by mortgage or charge of any real or leasehold property of the British Council situated in the United Kingdom without such consent or approval (if any) as may be by law required therefore;
6. (f) make and give effect to any arrangement for the joint working or co-operation with any other society or body, whether incorporated or not, carrying on work which is within the objects of the British Council;
7. (g) undertake, execute and perform any trusts or conditions affecting any real or personal property of any description acquired by the British Council;
8. (h) undertake trust business (which for the purpose of this sub-clause means the business of acting as trustee under wills and settlements and as executor and administrator) in the United Kingdom;
9. (i) set aside funds for special purposes or as reserves against future expenditure;
10. (j) invest the British Council's money not immediately required for its objects in or upon any investments, securities, or property;

11. (k) arrange for investments or other property of the British Council to be held in the name of a nominee or nominees (being a corporate body registered or having an established place of business in England and Wales) under the control of the Board or of a Financial Expert or Experts acting under their instructions and pay any reasonable fee required;
12. (l) lend money and give credit to, take security for such loans or credit and guarantee or give security for the performance of contracts by any person or company;
13. (m) open and operate bank accounts and other facilities for banking and draw, accept, endorse, issue or execute promissory notes, bills of exchange, cheques and other instruments;
14. (n) raise funds by way of subscription, donation or otherwise;
15. (o) trade in the course of carrying out the objects of the British Council and carry on any other trade which is not expected to give rise to taxable profits;
16. (p) incorporate subsidiary entities to carry on any trade or other activities;
17. (q) generally to do all other lawful acts whatsoever that are conducive or incidental to the attainment of the objects of the British Council.

Limitation of Benefit

5. The income and property of the British Council wheresoever derived shall be applied solely towards the promotion of the objects of the British Council as set forth in this Our Charter, and no portion thereof shall be paid or transferred directly or indirectly by way of dividend, bonus or otherwise howsoever by way of profit to the Members or Trustees of the British Council: provided that nothing herein contained shall prevent the payment in good faith of:

1. 5.1 reasonable and proper remuneration and expenses to any employee of the British Council in return for services actually rendered, or
2. 5.2 reasonable expenses properly incurred by a Trustee when acting on behalf of the British Council, or
3. 5.3 reasonable and proper pensions to former employees of the British Council or their dependants, or
4. 5.4 reasonable and proper rent for premises demised or let by any Trustee to the British Council, or
5. 5.5 reasonable and proper interest on money borrowed by the British Council from a Trustee for the objects of the British Council, or
6. 5.6 all reasonable and proper premiums in respect of trustees' indemnity insurance effected in accordance with clause 12 of this Our Charter, or

Amendment of Charter

18. The Board may by Special Resolution in that behalf alter, amend or add to any of the provisions of this Our Charter and such alteration, amendment or addition shall, when approved by Us, Our Heirs or Successors in Council become effectual so that this Our Charter shall thenceforward continue and operate as though it had been originally granted and made accordingly. This provision shall apply to this Our Charter as altered, amended or added to in manner aforesaid.

Amendment of Bye-Laws

19. The Board may from time to time, by Special Resolution, adopt Bye-Laws which shall be the Bye-Laws of the British Council. The Board may by Special Resolution revoke, alter or add to the said Bye-Laws. No new Bye-Law and no such revocation, alteration or addition as aforesaid shall have any force or effect if it be repugnant to any of the provisions of this Our Charter or to the laws of Our Realm.

Delegation

20. The Board may delegate any of its powers or functions (other than its powers under clauses 18 and 19 of this Our Charter) to a sub-committee or sub-committees provided that the Chair of any such sub-committee shall be a member of the Board appointed by the Board. Any sub-committees so formed shall, in the exercise, of the powers so delegated, conform to any regulations or directions that may from time to time be imposed upon it by the Board and shall report back as soon as practicable to the Board.
21. The Board may delegate the implementation of their decisions or day to day management of the affairs of the British Council to any person or committee.
22. The Board may delegate the management of investments to a Financial Expert or Experts provided that:
 1. 22.1 the investment policy is set down in writing for the Financial Expert or Experts by the Board;
 2. 22.2 all transactions are reported regularly to the Board;
 3. 22.3 the performance of the investments is reviewed regularly with the Board;
 4. 22.4 the Board is entitled to cancel the delegation arrangement at any time;
 5. 22.5 the investment policy and the delegation arrangements are reviewed at least once a year;
 6. 22.6 all payments due to the Financial Expert or Experts are on a scale or at a level which is agreed in advance and are notified promptly to the Board on receipt; and
 7. 22.7 the Financial Expert or Experts must not do anything outside the powers of the Board.

Special Resolutions

23. A Resolution shall be a Special Resolution when it has been passed by a majority of not less than three-quarters of the Trustees present and voting at a meeting, of which not less than 21 clear days' notice specifying the Resolution and the intention to propose the Resolution as a Special Resolution has been given.

Surrender

24. The Board may by Special Resolution surrender this Our Charter subject to the sanction of Us, Our Heirs or Successors in Council and upon such terms as We or They may consider fit and wind up or otherwise deal with the affairs of the British Council in such manner as they shall be directed by the Special Resolution having due regard to the liabilities of the British Council for the time being and if on the winding up or dissolution of the British Council there remain after satisfaction of debts and liabilities any properties whatsoever, that property shall not be paid or distributed among the Members of the British

Council or any of them but shall subject to any special trust affecting the same be given and transferred to some other charitable association or associations having objects similar to the objects of the British Council to be determined by the Board at or before the time of dissolution.

Indemnity

25. Every Trustee and employee of the British Council or director of a wholly or partly owned subsidiary of the British Council, provided that such individual shall have been appointed to such position by the British Council may be indemnified by the British Council against all costs, losses and expenses which any such person may incur or become liable to by reason of any contract entered into, or act or thing done or omitted to be done by him or her in any part of the world as such Trustee, employee or director or in any other way in the proper discharge of his or her duties, including reasonable travelling expenses. For the avoidance of doubt any failure on the part of any Trustee or employee of the British Council or director of a wholly or partly owned subsidiary of the British Council to use the level of care that is reasonable in the circumstances, taking into account any special knowledge or experience he or she has or claims to have, shall be considered to be a failure to properly discharge his or her duties.

Definitions

26. In this Our Charter the following words shall have the following meanings:

"Board" "Bye-Laws" "Chair"

"Charter"

"Financial Expert or Experts"

"Member"

"Special Resolution" "Trustee"

means the Board of Trustees of the British Council;
means the bye-laws created in accordance with clause 19;

means a chair of the Board appointed in accordance with Bye-Law 4;

means the Charter of Incorporation of the British Council;

means an individual, company or firm who, or which, is authorised to give investment advice under the laws of Our Realm or the laws of the jurisdiction in which the individual, company or firm is resident;

means a Member of the British Council;
means a resolution passed in accordance with clause 23; means a Trustee of the British Council.

Validity

27. And We do by these Presents for Us, Our Heirs and Successors grant and declare that this Our Charter or the enrolment thereof shall in all things be valid and effectual in the law according to the true intent and meaning of the same and shall be recognised as valid and effectual by all Our Courts and Judges and by other officers, persons and bodies politic and corporate whom it may concern, and that the same shall be construed in the most favourable and beneficial sense and for the best advantage of the British Council as well in all Our Several Courts of Record as elsewhere, any non-recital, mis-recital, uncertainty or imperfection notwithstanding.

IN WITNESS whereof We have caused these Our Letters to be made Patent.

WITNESS Ourself at Westminster the 26th day of November in the 42nd Year of Our Reign. **BY WARRANT UNDER THE QUEEN'S SIGN MANUAL**

British Council report 'Creative spark' 2022 in Kyrgyzstan

Kyrgyzstan

Table 1. Partnerships in Kyrgyzstan

UK partner(s)	Kyrgyzstan partner(s)	Key outcomes
City, University of London	Enactus Kyrgyzstan	- Conducted a high-level roundtable to show achievements of the Creative Spark programme. - Delivered training for 7 mentors from 7 universities (American University of Central Asia, Al-Farabi International University, Kyrgyz-Russian University, Kyrgyz Technical University, Osh State Technical University, Kyrgyz Economic University, International University of Innovative Technologies). - Re-designed curriculum at the 7 universities (above) to include entrepreneurship skills. - Created a platform for creative entrepreneurs: https://kultur-multur.kg/
Coventry University	Resource Centre in Kyrgyzstan of Central Asian Crafts Support Association	- Delivered training workshops to mentors (craft entrepreneurs in Intangible Cultural Heritage), experts from the UK and other European countries. Mentors, under a 'train the trainers' model, deliver training to employees and other entrepreneurs. - Further developed the online resource hub of educational materials for heritage entrepreneurs. - Developed a toolkit for heritage entrepreneurs covering intellectual property, marketing, intangible cultural heritage.
Middlesex University Higher Education Corporation	Kyrgyz National University named after J. Balasagyn	- Opened a cooking skills hub for women from rural areas from lower social-economic background. - Delivered culinary and entrepreneurial masterclasses at the hub.

Source: The official response of British Council Kazakhstan to the researcher from 08.08.2022.



Discover the Creative Spark impact over the last two years.

Welcome to one of the British Council's most innovative programmes in *Wider Europe*.

Creative Spark: Higher Education Enterprise Programme is a five-year initiative to support university and institutional partnerships with the UK to develop entrepreneurship and enterprise skills for students and young entrepreneurs across seven countries in *Wider Europe*. We do this by enabling national policy forums, development of new curriculum and enterprise education materials, and establishing business incubation centres.

Institutional partnerships a community of:



Policy engagement



Armenia: Content for a new e-learning platform with the Ministry of Education.

Ukraine: Joint funding approach to the Regional Development Fund with the Ministry of Culture, contributing to the establishment of the National enterprise educators' association.

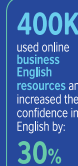
Georgia: Georgian Entrepreneurial Education Alliance with the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport; support to the enterprise programme of the Red Cross.

Kazakhstan: Contribution to the new Strategy development of the creative industries.

Azerbaijan: Creative Azerbaijan online portal and MOU with the Ministry of Culture on enterprise education.

Uzbekistan: Contribution to the Higher Education Development Strategy 2030; development of national creative enterprise education; and new policies to support youth entrepreneurship and girls' empowerment.

Young beneficiaries



The British Council's largest digital video pitch competition



of projects included specific social inclusion elements (for women, people with disabilities, those in receipt of financial support, or those 37% from outside the main cities).

Multilateral partnerships



Creative Spark is supporting the United Nations Year of Creative Economy and has won UNESCO funding in Uzbekistan. We are also working with the World Intellectual Property Organization.

Satisfaction



100%
of partners
were satisfied

Base: All partnerships (3)

Overall, **partners felt positive about their partnership in Creative Spark Year 3**, with 100% reporting that they were satisfied with their partnership. One (33%) reported a high degree of satisfaction (10 out of 10 on a scale from 1- not at all satisfied to 10-very satisfied).

When considering the British Council's role in supporting Creative Spark partnerships, local partners of Kyrgyzstan partnerships also felt that the British Council had provided value to their partnership in regard to insight and advice on cultural engagement with the UK, with two (67%) local partners reporting the British Council to be valuable in this area. This contributed to the overall perception of the British Council amongst local partners, with 67% reporting that their involvement in the Creative Spark programme had improved their perception of the British Council. The same

proportion also acknowledged that the British Council was valuable in providing advice on the UK and its higher education systems.

Figure 1. Local partner perceptions of British Council

**Providing insight and
advice on the UK and its
higher education system**



67%
Of local partners
felt the British
Council was
valuable

**Providing insight and
advice on cultural
engagement with the UK**



67%
Of local partners
felt British Council
was valuable

**Perceptions of the British
Council**



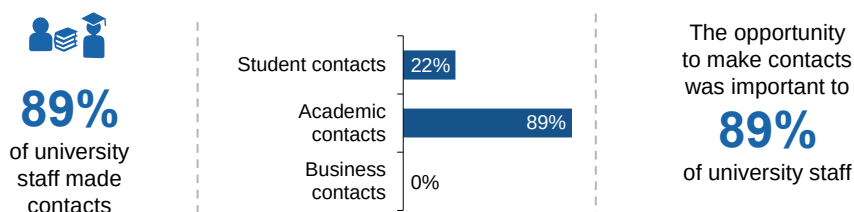
67%
Of local partners
felt participation in
CS improved their
perception of BC

Base: All partnerships (3)

Sustainability

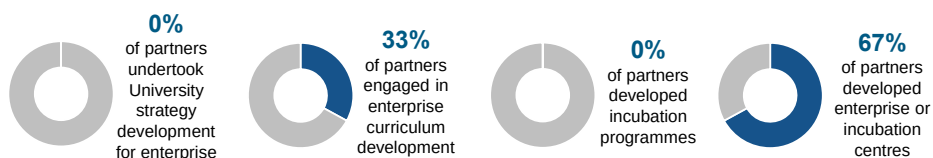
Partners were mixed on the prospect of sustainability for their partnership. Only one of three said their partnership was very likely to continue beyond the Creative Spark programme (without British Council funding). One partnership had already collaborated on other work or activities outside of the Creative Spark programme, with the other two planning on doing so. No partnerships said they had no intention of undertaking any further collaborative work outside of Creative Spark.

Figure 1 Staff experience of making contacts during Creative Spark



Base: University staff (9)

Figure 2 University strategy development, curriculum development, and incubation programmes



Base: All partnerships (3)

Table 2 Connections formed by Creative Spark partnerships

	Number of partnerships that made connections	Total number of connections made	Average number of connections per partnership
UK	0	0	0
Within Kyrgyzstan	2	3	1.5
Across other countries in Wider Europe	2	11	5.5
Rest of the world	2	14	7.0
Total	2	28	14.0

The researcher received official responses from the Ministries of Education and Foreign Affairs of Kyrgyzstan regarding the allocation of educational quotas to Kyrgyz students by Russia, Turkey, and the UK.

**КЫРГЫЗ РЕСПУБЛИКАСЫНЫН
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БИК 440001, ИНН 01204199110042



**МИНИСТЕРСТВО
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Получатель: МИД КР
р/с 4402011103014333, а/с 4402011101025126
БИК 440001, ИНН 01204199110042

23.11.2021 № 090/К-780

На № _____ от _____

Б.Кожомкуловой

b.kojomkulova@gmail.com

(направляется электронной почтой)

Министерство, рассмотрев Ваше обращение от 26.10.2021 г. по вопросу вашего исследования на тему мягкой силы Турции, России и Британии в Кыргызской Республике сообщает следующее.

Согласно базе данных международных договоров Кыргызской Республики за период с 2000 по 2021 годы между Кыргызской Республикой и Турецкой Республикой, а также между Кыргызской Республикой и Российской Федерацией подписаны следующие двусторонние договоры:

- Соглашение между Министерством образования и науки Кыргызской Республики и Турецким фондом «Маариф» от 01 сентября 2018 г.;
- Соглашение между Министерством образования и науки Кыргызской Республики и Турецким фондом по открытию и функционированию частных образовательных организаций в Кыргызской Республике от 10 ноября 2020 г.;
- Меморандум о сотрудничестве между Министерством образования и науки Кыргызской Республики и Министерством просвещения Российской Федерации от 28 марта 2019 г.

При этом, в сфере высшего образования сотрудничества Кыргызской Республики и Российской Федерации правовой основой является Соглашение между Правительством Кыргызской Республики и Правительством Российской Федерации о сотрудничестве в области высшего образования от 1996 года, в рамках которого ежегодно выделяются квотные места на обучение.

С 2014 года Россотрудничество и его представительства за рубежом действуют как единый оператор по подбору иностранных граждан для обучения в рамках выделяемых квот. Россия предоставляет места более чем

Translation

MINISTRY
FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

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website: www.mfa.gov.kg, e-mail: dded@mfa.gov.kg
To: Bermet Kojomkulova
b.kojomkulova@gmail.com
(sent by e-mail)

The Ministry, having considered your appeal dated 10/26/2021 on the issue of your study on the soft power of Turkey, Russia and Britain in Kyrgyzstan, reports the following. According to the database of international treaties of the Kyrgyz Republic, from 2000 to 2021 between the Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Turkey, as well as between the Kyrgyz Republic and the Russian Federation, the following bilateral agreements were signed: -an Agreement between the Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Turkish Maarif Fund dated September 1, 2018, Agreement between the Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation dated March 28, 2019.

At the same time, in the field of higher education cooperation between the Kyrgyz Republic and the Russian Federation, the legal basis is the Agreement between the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Government of the Russian Federation on cooperation in the field of higher education, under which annually allocated educational quotas. Since 2014, Rossotrudnichestvo and its representative offices abroad have been acting as a single operator for the selection of foreign citizens for training within the allocated quotas. Russia represents places in more than 20 specialties at the leading universities of the Russian Federation, including through the SCO University, the CIS Network University in the following main areas: engineering, economics, humanitarian and medical.

The Russian government, through Rossotrudnichestvo allocated 375 quotas for the Kyrgyz Republic for 2020-2021 at the expense of the federal budget. Currently, according to official statistics, 15,557 students study at 450 Russian universities, including 6,567 at the expense of the Russian budget and 8,990 on a commercial basis.

We also note that for the period from 2000 to 2021 there are no agreements in the field of education between the Kyrgyz Republic and the UK. However, according to the Embassy of the Kyrgyz Republic in the UK, the British Council Office covering Kyrgyzstan is located in Kazakhstan, in Almaty. According to available information, the British Council does not provide quotas for studying at British universities. Scholarships and grants are available on a competitive basis. The following programs are funded by the UK government in Central Asia: The "Chevening" program, funded by the British government, under which the Kyrgyz Republic annually provides 6-7 master's scholarships. In the past two years, due to the coronavirus pandemic, the "John Smith Trust program" has



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE OF THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

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20 21 жылдын « 19 » 10

№ К-2594

№



Бермет Кожомкуловой,
студентке, обучающейся
в Middlesex university в Лондоне
Эл. адрес b.kojomkulova@gmail.com

Министерство образования и науки Кыргызской Республики рассмотрев ваше письмо, сообщает следующее.

По линии Соглашения между Правительством Кыргызской Республики и Правительством Российской Федерации о сотрудничестве в области высшего образования (г. Москва, 29 марта 1996 года) для граждан КР выделяются **около 370-400 бюджетных мест** в вузах РФ.

С 2014 года, в соответствии с решением российской стороны, ежегодный прием документов, отбор кандидатов и отправку их документов осуществляет Представительство Россотрудничества в Кыргызской Республике. Министерство оказывает информационную поддержку путём размещения объявления на официальном сайте и страницах в социальных сетях. Министерством с российской стороной постоянно прорабатывается вопрос увеличения квотных мест.

2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	Всего
115	159	121	156	115	465	445	360	364	347	330	370	375	Общая количество

Заместитель министра

Н.К. Омуров

Исп., Белек у С., 620484

**MINISTER OF
EDUCATION AND SCIENCE
OF THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE OF THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC**

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K. Tynystanov St., Bishkek 720040

Tel: 66-24-42, fax (0312) 62-15-20

To: Bermet Kojomkulova
b.kojomkulora@gmail.com
No B-2759 dated 26.10.2021

The Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic, having considered your letter regarding the provision of information with the Republic of Turkey, the Russian Federation and the United Kingdom informs as follows:

On cooperation with Turkey regarding the allocation of quota places for Kyrgyz students TOMER and TIKa from 2000 to 2021 we inform you the following:

Since 2012, the Embassy of the Republic of Turkey in Kyrgyzstan has been selecting and admitting Kyrgyz citizens to universities of the Kyrgyz Republic without the intervention of the Ministry of Education of the Kyrgyz Republic. This enrollment is conducted through registration on the website www.Turkiyeburslari.gov.tr and submission of relevant documents to the Embassy of the Republic of Turkey in the Kyrgyz Republic.

According to the information of the Embassy of the Republic of Turkey in the Kyrgyz Republic, about 80-100 citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic are annually sent to study in the universities of the Republic of Turkey under bachelor's, master's, and doctoral programs.

Regarding the list of agreements within the framework of which cooperation between KR and TR in the field of education and science is carried out from 2000 to 2021, we would like to inform you that during this period there was concluded an Agreement between the Ministry of Education of KR and Turkish Maarif Foundation on opening and functioning of private educational institutions of KR dated November 12, 2020.

List of existing agreements between KR and TR:

1. Joint statement on cooperation between the Ministry of Education of KR and TR dated February 6, 1992, Bishkek.
2. Protocol on cooperation in the field of education and culture between the Ministry of Education of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Ministry of National Education of Turkey dated July 12, 1992, Ankara.
3. Resolution on cooperation between the Ministry of National Education of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Ministry of National Education of Turkey dated May 3, 1992, Bishkek.
4. Agreement on cooperation in the field of education, science and culture between the Kyrgyz Republic and Turkey dated March 3, 1992, Bishkek.
5. Agreement between the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic and TR on the establishment of the Türkology College dated April 29, 1992, Bishkek 5.

Regarding the issue of financial assistance, the Ministry does not have this information.

Translation

MINISTER OF
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Tel: 66-24-42, fax (0312) 62-15-20

To: Bermet Kojomkulova
b.kojomkulora@gmail.com
No B-2759 dated 26.10.2021

The Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic, after reviewing your letter requesting information on cooperation with Turkey, the Russian Federation, and the United Kingdom, would like to provide the following details:

Regarding cooperation with the Russian Federation, under the Agreement between the government of Kyrgyzstan and the Russian Federation on cooperation in the field of higher education (Moscow, March 29, 1996), 370-400 budget places are allocated annually in Russian universities for Kyrgyz students.

Concerning the list of agreements between the Kyrgyz Republic and the Russian Federation in the field of education and science from 2000 to 2021, we would like to inform you that no new agreements were concluded during this specified period.

In terms of cooperation with the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the current agreement between our countries is the Agreement between the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic and the World Bank on cooperation in the field of education, science, and culture (London, December 8, 1994).

КЫРГЫЗ РЕСПУБЛИКАСЫНЫН
БИЛИМ БЕРҮҮ ЖАНА ИЛИМ
МИНИСТРЛИГИ



МИНИСТЕРСТВО
ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ И НАУКИ
КЫРГЫЗСКОЙ РЕСПУБЛИКИ

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE OF THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

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18.11.21 № Б-2759

На № _____ от _____



Бермет Кожомкулова
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На № Б-2759 от 26.10.2021 г.

Министерство образования и науки Кыргызской Республики, рассмотрев Ваше письмо относительно предоставления информации о сотрудничестве с Турецкой Республикой, Российской Федерацией и Соединенным Королевством Великобритании и Северной Ирландии сообщает следующее.

По сотрудничеству с Турецкой Республикой

Относительно выделения квотных мест кыргызским студентам в рамках сотрудничества TOMER и TICA с 2000 по 2021 годы, сообщаем следующее.

С 2012 года Посольство Турецкой Республики в Кыргызской Республике осуществляет отбор и прием граждан КР в вузы ТР без вмешательства Министерства образования и науки КР. Данный отбор ведется посредством регистрации на сайте www.turkiyeburslari.gov.tr и предоставления соответствующих документов в Посольство ТР в КР.

По информации Посольства ТР в КР ежегодно на обучение в вузах ТР направляются около 80-100 граждан Кыргызской Республики по программам бакалавриата, магистратуры и докторантуры.

Относительно списка Соглашений, в рамках которых осуществляется сотрудничество между КР и ТР в области образования и науки с 2000 по 2021 год, сообщаем, что за указанный период было заключено Соглашение между Министерством образования и науки Кыргызской Республики и Турецким Фондом «Маариф» по открытию и функционированию частных образовательных учреждений в Кыргызской Республике от 12 ноября 2020 года

Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States Affairs, Compatriots, Compatriots Living Abroad, and International Humanitarian Cooperation (Rossotrudnichestvo)

The Official Chart of Rossotrudnichestvo

[The Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States, Compatriots Living Abroad, and International Humanitarian Cooperation (Rossotrudnichestvo) is a federal executive body responsible for rendering state services and managing state property to support and develop international relations between the Russian Federation and the member-states of the Commonwealth of Independent States and other foreign countries, as well as in the sphere of international humanitarian cooperation]

Source:

The Russian Government. Available at: <http://government.ru/en/department/93/>

The official website of Rossotrudnichestvo. Available at: <https://rs.gov.ru/>

УТВЕРЖДЕНО
Указом Президента
Российской Федерации
от 6 сентября 2008 г. № 1315

ПОЛОЖЕНИЕ
о Федеральном агентстве по делам Содружества Независимых
Государств, соотечественников, проживающих за рубежом, и по
международному гуманитарному сотрудничеству

(В редакции указов Президента Российской Федерации
от 13.11.2009 № 1285, от 27.12.2010 № 1622, от 04.01.2012 № 21,
от 08.05.2013 № 476, от 21.12.2013 № 940, от 20.01.2015 № 26,
от 05.08.2015 № 399, от 24.10.2018 № 602, от 01.11.2021 № 621)

I. Общие положения

1. Федеральное агентство по делам Содружества Независимых Государств, соотечественников, проживающих за рубежом, и по международному гуманитарному сотрудничеству (Россотрудничество) является федеральным органом исполнительной власти, осуществляющим функции по оказанию государственных услуг и управлению государственным имуществом в сфере обеспечения и развития международных отношений Российской Федерации с государствами - участниками Содружества Независимых Государств, другими государствами, а также в сфере международного гуманитарного сотрудничества и содействия международному развитию. (В редакции Указа Президента Российской Федерации от 08.05.2013 № 476)

2. Россотрудничество подведомственно Министерству иностранных дел Российской Федерации.

3. Россотрудничество в своей деятельности руководствуется Конституцией Российской Федерации, федеральными конституционными законами, федеральными законами, нормативными правовыми актами Президента

Translation

APPROVED

**By Decree of the President of the Russian Federation
of the President of the Russian Federation
No 1315 dated September 6, 2008**

REGULATION

**on the Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States,
Compatriots Living Abroad and the Federal Agency for the
Commonwealth of Independent States (Rossotrudnichestvo)**

(Edited by Decrees of the President of the Russian Federation
or 13.11.2009 No 1285, or 27.12.2010 No 1622, or 04.01.2012 No 21,
or 08.05.2013 No 476, or 21.12.2013 No 940, or 20.01.2015 No 26,
Or 05.08.2015 No 399, or 24.10.2018 No 602, or 01.11.2021 No 621)

I. General Provisions

1. The Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States, compatriots living abroad, and international humanitarian cooperation (Rossotrudnichestvo) is a federal executive body responsible for providing state services and managing state property in relation to the provision and development of international relations between the Russian Federation and member states of the Commonwealth of Independent States, as well as other countries. It also focuses on international humanitarian cooperation and the promotion of international development. This is outlined in the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation dated May 8, 2013 (No. 476 of May 8, 2013).

2. Rossotrudnichestvo operates as a subordinate body to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation.

3. In its activities, Rossotrudnichestvo is guided by various legal frameworks, including the Constitution of the Russian Federation, federal constitutional laws, federal laws, normative legal acts issued by the President and the Government of the Russian Federation, international treaties of the Russian Federation, and normative legal acts of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. These regulations provide the foundation for Rossotrudnichestvo's operations and ensure that its activities are in line with national and international laws.

other countries. Additionally, Rossotrudnichestvo monitors the progress and implementation of these programs. The actions of Rossotrudnichestvo are governed by the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation No. 476 dated 08.05.2013.

4*) Rossotrudnichestvo, in coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, the Ministry of Finance of the Russian Federation, and other federal executive bodies, develops and implements medium-term and long-term programs to promote international development at the bilateral level with member states of the Commonwealth of Independent States and other countries. Additionally, Rossotrudnichestvo is responsible for monitoring the implementation of these programs. This authority is outlined in the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation No. 476 of 08.05.2013.

4*) procure goods, works, services in the established sphere of activity in accordance with the legislation of the Russian Federation and other regulatory legal acts on the contractual system in the sphere of procurement of goods, works, services to meet state and municipal needs; (Amended - Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of 08.05.2013 No 476; as amended by Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of 20.01.2015 No 26)

4*) procures goods, works, and services within the designated scope of activities in accordance with the legislation of the Russian Federation and other regulatory legal acts pertaining to the contractual system for procurement of goods, works, and services to fulfill state and municipal needs. These procurement activities are carried out in compliance with the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation No. 476 of 08.05.2013, with amendments made by the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation No. 26 of 20.01.2015.

4*) carries out the responsibilities of being the state customer and oversees the capital construction, reconstruction, operation, current and major repairs, as well as the engineering and technical equipment of the central office and representative offices of Rossotrudnichestvo. This authority was amended in accordance with the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation No. 621 dated 01.11.2021.

5) collaborates with Russian non-profit non-governmental organizations, religious organizations, governmental and non-governmental entities of member states of the Commonwealth of Independent States, other countries, international and regional organizations, as well as Russian and foreign organizations, in various realms such as scientific, educational, cultural, economic, informational, and other humanitarian sectors. In the field of

6) cooperates with Russian non-profit non-governmental organizations, religious organizations, governmental and non-governmental structures of member states of the Commonwealth of Independent States, other countries, international and regional organizations, as well as commercial organizations. This collaboration spans various domains such as scientific, educational, cultural, economic, informational, and other humanitarian fields. Rossotrudnichestvo also engages with these entities in the sphere of international development assistance. The authority to engage in such cooperation is granted by the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation No. 476 of 08.05.2013.

7) act to foster the advancement of public, business, and scientific relations between the Russian Federation and member states of the Commonwealth of Independent States, as well as with other countries. This responsibility is outlined in the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation No. 476 of 08.05.2013.

8) provides informational support for its operations both within the Russian Federation and internationally. Additionally, it takes part in the development, implementation, and monitoring of information and analytical policies aimed at enhancing the positive perception and cultural and humanitarian influence of contemporary Russia worldwide. This role is specified in the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation No. 476 dated 08.05.2013.

9) participates in the planning, organization, and execution of humanitarian, scientific, and cultural events carried out by the Russian Federation. In accordance with its authority, Rossotrudnichestvo coordinates the activities of both Russian and foreign organizations involved in the preparation of such events.

10) promotes the advancement of international relations for the Russian Federation in the field of education. It supports the promotion of educational services offered by Russian educational organizations in the global market and works towards expanding cooperation between Russian and foreign educational institutions. This responsibility is governed by the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation No. 940 dated 21.12.2013.

11) assists in the process of selecting and sending compatriots living abroad and foreign citizens to study in the Russian Federation.

12) coordinates the efforts aimed at engaging and collaborating with graduates of Soviet and Russian educational institutions and organizations residing abroad, as

- 13) undertakes initiatives to promote the Russian language abroad and establishes courses and centers for the study of the Russian language, utilizing its representative offices and linguistic resources. Rossotrudnichestvo provides methodological support to foreign teachers of the Russian language, organizes scientific and practical conferences, seminars, creative meetings, and actively participates in the organization and management of national and international competitions and Olympiads focused on the Russian language.
- 14) establishes library collections in its representative offices and ensures the availability of reference materials, scientific and artistic literature, as well as educational and methodical resources to enhance the library collections.
- 15) facilitates the maintenance and development of international contacts between entities (subjects) of the Russian Federation in various fields such as scientific and technical, cultural, economic, and educational areas.
- 16) coordinates and facilitates collaboration between twin cities.
- 17) organizes efforts to preserve objects of historical and memorial significance that belong to the Russian Federation and are situated abroad.
- 18) receives citizens and ensures that oral and written appeals are promptly and comprehensively reviewed. It is responsible for making decisions on these appeals and sending timely responses to the applicants, in accordance with the timeframe specified by the legislation of the Russian Federation.
- 19) ensures, within its defined authority, the protection of information that is classified as a state secret.
- 20) conducts mobilization training for employees of Rossotrudnichestvo.
- 21) organizes training, professional retraining and advanced training of Rossotrudnichestvo employees; (Edited by Decree of the President of the Russian Federation No. 940 of 21.12.2013)
- 22) ensures compliance with the legislation of the Russian Federation regarding the acquisition, storage, accounting, and use of archival documents related to the activities of Rossotrudnichestvo.
- 23) The individual performs the duties of the chief administrator and is responsible for managing the budget allocated to Rossotrudnichestvo in the federal budget for the current year, ensuring that it is used for the organization's operations and maintenance.

24) organizes congresses, conferences, seminars, exhibitions, and other events in the established sphere of activity.

25) (Repealed - Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of 05.08.2015 No 399)

7. Rossotrudnichestvo, in order to carry out its responsibilities, has the following rights:

1) Provide explanations on matters related to its designated sphere of activity to legal entities and individuals.

2) Engage scientific and other organizations, as well as experts, in the appropriate manner to develop decisions on matters related to its designated sphere of activity.

3) Establish advisory bodies to discuss matters related to its designated sphere of activity.

However, Rossotrudnichestvo does not have the authority to enact normative regulations or engage in control and supervision activities in its designated sphere of activity, except in cases determined by presidential decrees or government resolutions.

The mentioned restrictions on Rossotrudnichestvo's powers do not apply to the head of the organization, who has the authority to resolve personnel matters and oversee the organization's activities and its structural subdivisions.

The restrictions on the powers of Rossotrudnichestvo established by the first paragraph of this clause shall not apply to the powers of its head to resolve personnel issues, issues of organization and control of the activities of Rossotrudnichestvo (its structural subdivisions)

II. Organization of activities

9. Rossotrudnichestvo is headed by the head appointed and dismissed by the President of the Russian Federation on the recommendation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. (Edited by Decree of the President of the Russian Federation No 621 dated 01.11.2021)

The Head of Rossotrudnichestvo shall be personally responsible for the fulfillment of the powers vested in Rossotrudnichestvo.

The Head of Rossotrudnichestvo has deputies appointed and dismissed by the President of the Russian Federation.

The number of deputies of the Head of Rossotrudnichestvo is established by the President of the Russian Federation.

10. The Head of Rossotrudnichestvo is responsible for:

1) approving the allocation of responsibilities among their deputies. (Edited by Decree of the President of the Russian Federation No. 476 of 08.05.2013)

2) submitting to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation:

- draft regulations for Rossotrudnichestvo;

- proposals regarding the maximum staffing level of Rossotrudnichestvo and the remuneration fund for its employees.

- proposals for the appointment of deputy heads of Rossotrudnichestvo (Edited by Decree of the President of the Russian Federation No. 621 of 01.11.2021).

- proposals for the dismissal of deputy heads of Rossotrudnichestvo (Added - Decree of the President of the Russian Federation No. 476 of 08.05.2013);

- an annual plan and performance indicators of Rossotrudnichestvo's activities, as well as a report on the execution of the plan.

- an annual report on the results of Rossotrudnichestvo's activities in fulfilling its entrusted responsibilities.

- proposals for the formation of the draft federal budget regarding the financing of Rossotrudnichestvo.

3) approving regulations on structural subdivisions of Rossotrudnichestvo;

4) in accordance with the established procedure appoints and dismisses employees of Rossotrudnichestvo;

5) resolves, in accordance with the legislation of the Russian Federation on state civil service, issues related to the federal state civil service in Rossotrudnichestvo;

6) approving the structure and staff schedule of the central office and foreign offices of Rossotrudnichestvo, based on the staff number and wage fund established by the President of the Russian Federation, as well as the cost estimates of Rossotrudnichestvo within the budget allocations provided in the federal budget for the corresponding year for its maintenance. (Edited by Decree of the President of the Russian Federation No. 476 of 08.05.2013)

7) representing employees of Rossotrudnichestvo, as well as individuals assisting in the fulfillment of Rossotrudnichestvo's assigned responsibilities, for the awarding of honorary titles and state awards of the Russian Federation.

7*) establishing departmental awards (insignia and certificates of honor) for presenting to employees of Rossotrudnichestvo, as well as individuals assisting in the fulfillment of tasks assigned to Rossotrudnichestvo, and approving regulations and descriptions for these awards. (Amended - Decree of the President of the Russian Federation No. 21 of 04.01.2012)

8) Issuing orders within their authority for the organization of Rossotrudnichestvo's activities.

11. The financial provision for fulfilling the expenditure obligations associated with the execution of Rossotrudnichestvo's powers in its established sphere of activity is carried out using budgetary allocations provided in the federal budget for the relevant year. The financial provision for expenditure commitments related to Rossotrudnichestvo's international activities is also covered by budgetary allocations provided in the federal budget for the relevant year, as well as funds received from authorized activities.

12. Rossotrudnichestvo is a legal entity and possesses a seal featuring the State Emblem of the Russian Federation and its name, along with other seals, stamps, and letterheads in the prescribed format. It also maintains accounts that are opened in accordance with the laws of the Russian Federation.

13. The headquarters of Rossotrudnichestvo is in Moscow.

Table 16. The main Russian and initiative programmes in Kyrgyzstan from 2008 to 2021

Programmes	Years	Aims of projects/auditorium
Federal target program "Russian language" for 2011-2015	2011	Since 2011, Rossotrudnichestvo has been a state customer of the federal target program "Russian Language" for 2011–2015, approved by Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation No. 492 dated June 20, 2011. The state customer-coordinator of the Program is the Ministry of Education and Science of Russia.
The program of short-term study tours to the Russian Federation of young representatives of political, social, scientific, and business circles of foreign countries "New Generation"	2011	The main content of the Program is the organization of short-term trips to the Russian Federation of young representatives of political, public, scientific and business circles of foreign states to get acquainted with the socio-political, socio-economic, scientific, educational and cultural life in the Russian Federation and prepare proposals for the development of cooperation between the Russian Federation with the states they represent.
Interstate program of innovative cooperation of the member states of the Commonwealth of Independent States for the period up to 2020	2011	The combination of mechanisms for the implementation of the Program and the idea of building a new innovative economy already today contributes not only to the restoration of a single scientific and industrial space of the CIS countries, but also to the rapid development of new ties between young scientists and innovative business circles of the Commonwealth.
Public Fund "Center for Support of the Russian Language and Cultural Heritage" was opened in Bishkek, 2014	2014	
The "Moscow Classics" project	2014	The "Moscow Classics" project is an intellectual and entertaining game based on the team principle of guessing original logic tasks. When choosing topics and constructing questions for the game, the achievements of science and historical facts, classical literature and the history of relations between

		Russia and Kyrgyzstan are used. The idea of creating the project "Moscow classics" was the desire to identify and involve the educated and intellectual youth of Kyrgyzstan in order to increase the development of knowledge in the field of culture, history, and literature, in order to strengthen friendship and mutual understanding between the youth of multinational Kyrgyzstan.
Project "Russian property"	2015	9 October 2015, Djalal- Abad city -the Public Fund "Russian Property" with the assistance of the "Gazprom International" Company and with the support of the Embassy of the Russian Federation in the Kyrgyz Republic, the Representative Offices of Rossotrudnichestvo and the Federal Migration Service of Russia in Kyrgyzstan held the grand opening of the "Center for the Study and Testing of Russian language".
Educational complex "Satoris"	2015	On August 27, 2015, the private Kyrgyz-Russian educational complex "Satoris", was opened with the support of the Embassy of the Russian Federation in the Kyrgyz Republic, the Representative Office of Rossotrudnichestvo in Kyrgyzstan, the assistance of Gazprom International and the Public Fund "Russian Property.
Centre for the Study and Testing of the Russian Language	2015	On September 22, 2015, in Osh city was the grand opening of the Centre for the Study and Testing of the Russian Language, created at the initiative of the Russian Heritage Foundation with the active support of the Russian Embassy in Kyrgyzstan and the representative office of Rossotrudnichestvo. The centre is located on the site of the Osh branch of the Russian State Social University.
School by A.P Chekhov	2016	On May 11, 2016, was opened a «School named after A.P. Chekhov" by the International Public Fund "Russian Peace Foundation" in conjunction with the Public Foundation "Russian Property".
Public Fund "Russian Peace Foundation"	2016	

Project "Fundamentals of high technologies and the development of digital literacy: replicating the best practices of using electronic educational resources developed within the framework of the Stemford project in Russian schools abroad",	2019	On September 26, 2019, in the capital of Kyrgyzstan, Bishkek, a seminar was held on the project "Fundamentals of high technologies and the development of digital literacy: replicating the best practices of using electronic educational resources developed within the framework of the Stemford project in Russian schools abroad", which is being implemented by ANO "eNano" within the framework of the Rossotrudnichestvo grant for conducting events to replicate the best practices for the development of digital literacy of schoolchildren on the basis of Russian schools abroad. The partners of the seminar were the Foundation for the Support of Educational Initiatives (FPOI, Bishkek), the representative office of Rossotrudnichestvo in Kyrgyzstan, the Kyrgyz State Technical University named after I. I. Razzakova and the Kyrgyz Academy of Education.
The media park "South Region-DSTU"	2021	The media park "South Region-DSTU" and the main university of the Rostov region, with the support of Rossotrudnichestvo, launched an international network project "Digital School" in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. In addition to the countries mentioned above, Russian educational institutions and Russian schools in China, Spain, Uzbekistan, and Georgia are participating in the project. It is expected that the project will cover more than 700 educational organizations of the participating countries.