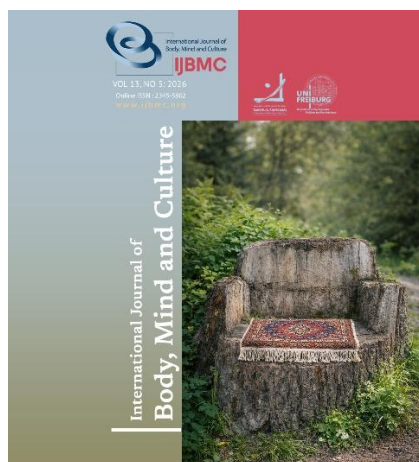


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# The Integrative Function of Culture in Psychocultural Context: The Case of Turkic Nations

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## ABSTRACT

**Objective:** This study examined the integrative function of culture in the psychocultural context of Turkic nations, focusing on shared traditions, values, language, cultural heritage, and institutional cooperation.

**Methods and Materials:** This theoretical study used an interdisciplinary cultural-historical approach. The analysis drew on anthropological, axiological, symbolic, diachronic, synchronic, and historical-comparative methods to examine the historical development of Turkic cultural identity; the ideological foundations of cultural integration; the role of TURKSOY; bilateral and multilateral cultural cooperation; and the relevance of European cultural policy experience for Turkic integration.

**Findings:** Turkic cultural integration is supported by a shared civilizational background, common linguistic roots, historical memory, traditions, and values. The institutionalization of TURKSOY in 1993 represented a major step in cultural cooperation among Turkic-speaking states. Key initiatives included Nauryz celebrations, designation of cultural capitals of the Turkic world, commemorative cultural years, festivals, musical and theatrical projects, publications, conferences, and cooperation with international organizations. Bilateral and multilateral projects, including cinema cooperation and Kazakhstan–Turkey cultural exchanges, further strengthened integration. However, differences in political, economic, and social development limit broader integration, making culture the most viable and sustainable domain for integration.

**Conclusion:** Culture functions as a central mechanism for strengthening Turkic identity, dialogue, and cooperation. Future cultural integration among Turkic-speaking states may benefit from adopting program-based models inspired by European cultural policy while preserving cultural diversity and national specificity.

**Keywords:** Culture, Ethnicity, Social Identification, International Cooperation.

## Introduction

Turkic culture is unique and has a rich history in Eurasia. Beginning in the 5th century, with the emergence of the first Turkic Khaganates, the formation and development of the region began, as did dialogue with other cultures and civilizations along the Great Silk Road. The Turkic world played a mediating role between East and West, serving as a bridge for establishing trade, economic, and diplomatic ties.

As the geographic range of Turkic-speaking tribes and peoples expanded and they established themselves in new territories, the preconditions for the formation of a civilizational community naturally developed. Language, traditions, religion, and values spread and were modified to reflect local specifics. This aspect of the issue has long been neglected in historical and cultural studies (S. Freud, M. Heidegger, M. Mauss, A.J. Toibny, O. Spengler, and others). According to assessments by many researchers, the study of Turkic culture has been dominated by a Eurocentric approach to understanding civilizational development.

Therefore, the time has come to revive it, which has been unclaimed for several reasons. On the other hand, the problem of people's self-identification in connection with globalization and the rethinking of their cultural identity arises (Frank, 1992). The point is that "the modern era of globalization standardizes human life, strengthens common foundations, and, thereby, neutralizes differences. Under these conditions, the very attempt at integration on socio-cultural grounds is tantamount to swimming against the tide of the modern era" (Adams, 2008).

In this regard, the potential of a common Turkic culture as an alternative to consumer culture is a factor in rapprochement and dialogue among different peoples. It is a core, unifying principle that plays an integrating role. According to various estimates, the population of the Turkic world is approximately 300 million, a figure that is significant on the international stage. Such significant demographic potential must be supported by cultural unity, a desire to preserve a shared cultural heritage, and the development of unified approaches to understanding history and tradition. These conditions should counteract the negative aspects of globalization.

In this regard, we agree with the scientific and expert community's position that joint efforts are needed among Turkic-speaking countries, experts, and cultural and artistic figures. Essentially, this is a whole host of issues that will need to be addressed in the medium- to long-term. To ensure its effectiveness and meaningfulness, it is necessary to ensure a comprehensive, systemic study based on an interdisciplinary approach, incorporating a wealth of theoretical scientific research (cultural studies, history, political science, international relations, etc.) and the applied results of all relevant institutions (TURKSOY).

Over 30 years of cooperation among Turkic-speaking states have laid a foundation across various sectors, including culture. However, there is public demand in Turkic-speaking states for further deepening and expansion of cultural cooperation. These questions define the purpose of our study and the corresponding objectives. First, to review the history of the issue, existing theoretical approaches, and paradigms. Second, to determine research methods taking into account the interdisciplinary nature of the research. Third, to identify areas of cultural integration within the framework of the international TURKISH organization, bilateral and multilateral formats, and to examine the European experience of a unified cultural policy, which is a promising direction for the development of cultural integration among Turkic-speaking states.

## Methods and Materials

### *Study Design*

The cultural integration of Turkic-speaking countries is shaped by a complex historical and cultural context, conditioned by the multifaceted nature of the issue. Approached from a cultural perspective, the study of the integrative properties of Turkic culture fits within the logic of established cultural approaches: anthropological, axiological, and symbolic. According to the anthropological approach, a search for "common patterns, universals, and structures of cultural-historical development" is necessary. The other two approaches, the axiological and symbolic, seek to identify the uniqueness of cultures (DeWeese, 2010).

Furthermore, when discussing cultural integration, two aspects should be considered. It is appropriate to cite the theoretical views of philosophers Johann Herder

and Herbert Spencer. According to Johann Herder, cultural integration is the process of uniting different cultures into a single culture through the proximity or similarity of fundamental values. This is its important characteristic, providing the basis for integration. On the other hand, according to H. Spencer, the development of cultures proceeds linearly toward integration, unification into a certain whole. The philosopher was the first to introduce such concepts as "structure" (of society, culture), "function," and "cultural institution" into scientific circulation. That is, integration strives for unification, the creation of a specific structure or institution (Kudaibergenova, 2016).

Taking into account these theoretical developments and approaches, the basis for further study of the integration process of Turkic-speaking countries, examining typological features and factors, is established. In a broad context, the term "Turkic civilization" appeared relatively recently. Several Russian researchers, such as Kudaibergenova (2016), believe that the hypothesis of a Turkic civilization was advanced by the Turkish scholar K. Marchand through a comparative analysis of proto-Turkic and "Glozel" texts. As noted above, there has long been a gap in the study of the Turkic world, and the works of the renowned scholar L.N. Gumilyov (Ancient Turks, Millennium Around the Caspian, Rhythms of Eurasia) have helped fill it.

Like any civilization, the Turkic civilization has its own distinctive features. Several authors have scientifically demonstrated its validity and the presence of characteristic traits. First and foremost, this refers to the unity of territory and common living conditions associated with the area of settlement in Central Asia and Middle Asia. The existence of statehood among the Turks, which alternated throughout different historical periods, plays an important role. A unifying factor is a common language, belonging to the Ural-Altai language group. Tengriism served as a common religion and a spiritual and moral foundation. They had their own written language and alphabet, which enabled communication between people and societies. Economic relations developed through the trade routes of the Great Silk Road. The cultural and mental foundation is based on a shared language, views on the significance of Heaven and the Cosmos, and a common calendar (Yilmaz, 2015).

As Kazakh Turkologists Bulekbaev S. and Ivashov A. rightly note, "Turkic culture and civilization were quite self-sufficient." Based on scientific argumentation, the authors speak of a unique and distinct culture and civilization that made a significant contribution to world history. This is its specificity and independence, which existed independently of Chinese, Persian, or other civilizations (Aydingün & Aydingün, 2004).

Thus, having defined Turkic civilization and culture from a cultural perspective, our study should now consider the historical context. At various times, prominent scholars, researchers, and intellectuals from Turkic-speaking states have addressed issues of Turkic culture and its integration: I. Gasparaly, S. Zhanturin, Yu. Akchura, A. Huseynzade, A. Agaoglu, G. Ibrahimov, A.-M. Topchubashev, M. Bigeev, Sh. Syrtlanov, S. Maksudi, M. Shokai, Kh.-S. Khodjaev, B. Choban-zade, and S. Asfendiyarov (Landau & Kellner-Heinkele, 2001).

The integrative interaction of Turkic-speaking states has an ideological basis that is connected with the ideas of pan-Turkism, "a doctrine declaring that all Turkic-speaking peoples are one nation and calling for their consolidation within the framework of a single state stretching from the Balkans to Siberia, called Turan" (Laruelle, 2021). The development of Pan-Turkism was initiated by the Crimean Tatar educator Ismail Gasparaly, who founded the newspaper "Tardzhuman" ("Translator") in Bakhchisaray in 1883 under the motto "Unity of Language, Thought, and Deed." The thinker perceived Pan-Turkism as a cultural movement aimed at achieving greater unity among the Turkic peoples. To this end, he developed a unified Turkic language and called on the Turkic intelligentsia to make every effort to preserve the cultural identity of the Turkic peoples (Kudaibergenova, 2017). In turn, another representative of pan-Turkism, Yu. Akchura understood the Turkic world as an indivisible organism, possessing clear signs of both cultural (language, history, customs) and material ties (blood and race). In his opinion, the term "Turk" refers to all peoples of Turkic origin, whom he calls a "nation" and whom he urges to act for the common good (Sulaymanova, 2024). In 1904, Yu. Akchura, in the newspaper "Turk," in the article "Three types of policy," considered three options for choosing a national ideological doctrine: pan-Turkism, pan-Islamism, and Ottomanism. In the article, the author argued for the priority of pan-Turkist ideology over pan-Islamism and

Ottomanism. Such an ideology would unite all the Turks living in Asia and in the eastern regions of Europe, united by a common language, ethnicity, and religion (Grigorova, 2026).

Furthermore, returning to the question of Turan, most authors view it as a staged process, within which one can distinguish the stages of Turkism or Anatolianism (the formation of a national Turkish state), Pan-Turkism or Oghuzianism (the unification of Turkic peoples), and Turanism or Pan-Turanism (the annexation of non-Turkic Turanian peoples). From the perspective of political organization, the stages of the creation of Great Turan imply the independence of the Turkic peoples, the formation of a cultural community among them, and the creation of a Turkic union based on the will of these peoples (Nabiyeva, 2025).

A new round of development of the ideology of Pan-Turkism occurred after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the emergence of new Turkic-speaking states. Countries have sought new opportunities for cooperation and integration in various fields. This process continues through institutions such as the Organization of Turkic States, the Council of Elders (aksakals) of Turkic-Speaking States, the Parliamentary Assembly, the International Turkic Academy, the International Organization of Turkic Culture, and others.

However, there is skepticism about general Turkic integration, as "the successes achieved in the economic and cultural spheres are hampered by numerous factors that hinder the creation of a unified economic and cultural space. Among these factors, according to K. Nuriyeva, are the different levels of development in the political, economic, social, and cultural spheres of each Turkic-speaking state" (Nabiyeva, 2025). The same opinion is shared by the Kazakh expert A. Burkhanov, who does not expect major changes from Turkic integration: "if we do not consider cultural and historical ties, then the potential for real economic and political integration of Turkic states is rather limited" (Druzhinin et al., 2014).

Based on this, it is precisely cultural and historical ties that are an important factor in advancing Turkic integration. Here, we should agree with the opinion of Russian researcher A. Grozin that "the ideology of cultural integration of Turkic-speaking peoples does not

pose a threat to the interests of other participants in the global political process". For this to occur smoothly and consistently, interested parties (states, experts, cultural figures) must not seek to homogenize cultures.

This does not mean that the ideas of Pan-Turkism, for example, become a defining or guiding element, but rather that there should be an opportunity to take into account the differences between the cultures of Turkic-speaking countries. In this regard, we support the position of researcher L. Kasymova that "integration is possible only based on diversity. Integration does not mean leveling out differences, reducing the cultures of Turkic peoples to a linear uniformity or homogeneity." Even people who are very close in tradition, language, and culture must preserve their identity, their differences" (Aslanova, 2016).

To more meaningfully explore the research's goals and objectives, methods from cultural studies and history were employed. Within the framework of cultural studies, the diachronic method was employed. The cited cultural phenomena and events were arranged in a specific chronological sequence. This enabled the construction of their logical foundation, which identified changes and corresponding transformations in cultural processes.

Meanwhile, this method is used alongside the synchronic method. This method aims to set the conditions for analyzing the typology of cultural facts and determining the chain of their interrelations. Furthermore, the method also identifies existing features of contradictions (cf. 3, 6-cf.). The diachronic and synchronic methods complement each other, enhancing the possibilities for a holistic understanding of cultural issues.

From a historical perspective, the historical-comparative method was used to identify differences through a comparative analysis of the characteristics of the objects under study. In doing so, comparison criteria were identified, i.e., the parameters and characteristics by which the comparative study would be conducted were determined (Mazur, 2020).

Thus, the use of cultural and historical methods enhances research capabilities to understand processes, phenomena, and events. This is the scientific benefit of using an interdisciplinary approach.

## Findings and Results

As noted above, cultural integration has a specific structure or institution. In the context of research into the cultural integration process of Turkic-speaking countries, the institutional foundation is the activities of the intergovernmental organization TURKSOY. Through these institutional capacities, work is carried out on the joint implementation of projects and initiatives.

Furthermore, the existing multilateral and bilateral cooperation of Turkic-speaking countries is an additional factor. This strengthens interstate interaction, facilitates contacts, and facilitates the exchange of experience among industry representatives.

At the same time, to improve the effectiveness of cultural integration, attention should be paid to the European experience of implementing a unified cultural policy. Over a long period, the EU has accumulated practical experience in developing mechanisms to synchronize interactions among states in the cultural sphere. Therefore, it is appropriate to study and apply this experience.

So, these aspects should be examined in more detail.

Turkic – a key factor in cultural integration between Turkic-speaking countries.

Several Kazakhstani researchers (A.S. Zhanbosinova, Yu.A. Lysenko) believe that the collapse of the USSR contributed to the emergence of cultural integration among Turkic-speaking countries. The newly independent states sought to develop relations, including along TURKSOY lines. In response to this demand, the Organization for the Joint Development of Turkic Culture and Art was established in 1993, pursuant to an agreement among the ministers of culture of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Turkey. It was subsequently renamed TURKSOY (Ametbek, 2015). Later that same year, observers were added to the member states: the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and the autonomous republics of the Russian Federation – Tatarstan and Bashkortostan. The membership of TURKSOY expanded each year, with observers such as the Republic of Khakassia and the Republic of Tyva (Russian Federation) joining in 1996. In 1999, Gagauzia and Moldova joined, and in 2003, the Altai Republic and the Sakha Republic (Russian Federation).

Experts viewed the formation of TURKSOY across various countries positively, as it broadened the horizons of spiritual and moral development. It was noted that raising the issue of establishing an intergovernmental organization was a timely and important step, creating broad opportunities to expand and strengthen ties among peoples with common roots, history, language, religion, and culture in the new environment (Köral et al., 2007). TURKSOY made a significant contribution to the formation of the concept of a unified "Turkic world." At the same time, attention is drawn to Turkey's role and its "soft power," which has significant integration potential among Turkic-speaking states (Kahveci & Bonnenfant, 2023).

Based on the analysis of the literature, several areas of TURKSOY's activity should be highlighted:

Cultural cooperation between countries and the development of comprehensive ties while minimizing the impact of various factors, such as differences in history, politics, or geography; Studying the rich Turkic culture, popularizing and promoting it on the global stage, including among Turkic-speaking countries. Identifying competitive projects that will showcase the full range of the shared culture and heritage of the Turkic peoples; Preserving and passing on to future generations the spiritual and moral wealth of Turkic-speaking countries, archival documents, national and cultural traditions, etc.; Implementing joint programs and projects aimed at strengthening cultural diplomacy and positioning the organization in the information space.

Promoting shared spiritual and moral values, historical and cultural heritage, famous works of Turkic-speaking countries, and national sports; Preparation and production of media products, TV and radio materials, documentaries, feature films, and videos aimed at popularizing the cultural achievements of Turkic-speaking countries in the media space; Conducting and organizing joint cultural events: festivals, competitions, operas, ballets, exhibitions, productions, etc., to strengthen cooperation; Production of printed materials: books, magazines, almanacs, booklets, and other materials dedicated to famous thinkers, scientists, and figures of the past and present; Organization of special cultural events dedicated to the perpetuation of the memory of famous thinkers, scientists, and figures, as well as anniversaries, etc.; Conducting thematic international conferences, round tables, and official

meetings within the framework of the organization's existing plans; international cooperation with intergovernmental organizations (UNESCO, UN, Alliance of Civilizations, etc.), national agencies, non-governmental organizations, expert groups, and industry experts on culture and art.

TURKSOY has two levels of governance. The organization's strategic development directions are determined by a standing council of sectoral cultural leaders, while the General Secretariat oversees the implementation of programs and work plans. The international organization annually hosts events of various formats, for different audiences, and of other types (artistic meetings, festivals for creative groups, literary congresses, various forums, etc.).

In particular, the organization has actively promoted the common spring equinox holiday, Nauryz, in various countries and international organizations. For example, in 2010 at UNESCO headquarters in Paris and in 2016 at the Warner Theater in Washington, D.C., a celebration was held with the participation of cultural figures, highlighting its significance for the Turkic world as a symbol of renewal.

Also, a prominent figure in Turkic culture has been announced each year. This contributes to the popularization of their historical, philosophical, and cultural heritage, as well as to its promotion among the younger generation. For example, in 2016, the 1000th anniversary of Yusuf Balasaguni was celebrated. In this context, the initiative to annually designate a cultural capital of the Turkic world is worth mentioning (for example, in 2017 it was Turkestan, and in 2012 it was Astana). This positioning drew public attention to the cultural events held under the auspices of this city, attracted tourists, and so on.

It is also important to note the implementation of special projects aimed at enhancing TURKSOY's image in the eyes of the international community and among its members. Productions such as "Koroğlu," "Birzhan-Sara," and the oratorio "Yunus Emre" have received success and recognition. The organization's creative groups, such as the youth chamber orchestra, youth chamber choir, and folk instrument orchestra [Sawyer \(2013\)](#), have also made a name for themselves. One of the indicators of TURKSOY's activities is the assessment by the heads of Turkic-speaking states. By analyzing summit declarations from various years, it is possible to

determine the trajectory of development and the priorities set at the political level. For example, the Istanbul Declaration of the Heads of Turkic-Speaking States (1994) emphasized the importance of providing necessary support to the international organization established in 1993. The Bishkek Declaration (1995) stated that TURKSOY should develop, support, and promote common cultural values. The following year, in the Tashkent Declaration of 1996, the heads of Turkic-speaking states called for increasing the effectiveness of this organization.

The Baku Declaration of 2000 emphasized the development and implementation of joint programs for celebrating memorable dates related to shared history and culture, as well as those of global significance. The following year, the Istanbul Declaration positively assessed TURKSOY's contribution to education and culture. Following the Antalya Summit (2006), the declaration acknowledged TURKSOY's continued positive contribution to culture and the provision of necessary support.

In accordance with the Nakhchivan Declaration, the importance of TURKSOY in identifying, developing, disseminating, and promoting the common values of the Turkic world at the international level was already recognized, and its contribution to deepening cultural relations among Turkic-speaking countries was also appreciated (2009). The President of Azerbaijan's initiative to establish the TURKSOY Foundation for the preservation and maintenance of Turkic cultural heritage, which has made a valuable contribution to the development of world civilization, was supported ([Safari et al., 2026](#)). The Declaration of the First Summit of the Cooperation Council of Turkic-Speaking States highly commended TURKSOY's efforts to identify, enrich, expand, and promote common values, and to deepen cultural ties throughout the Turkic world (2011).

The above assessments of TURKSOY's work demonstrate its level of development and highlight its priorities and areas of work. At the same time, with the formation of the Organization of Turkic States within the framework of the strategic document "Vision of the Turkic World - 2040," issues of strengthening coordination between TURKSOY, the Turkic Academy, the Turkic Culture and Heritage Foundation, and TURKSOY were identified to promote common values, facilitate dialogue and mutual understanding, and

expand contacts. In general, one can agree with the arguments of the American researcher James Sawyer that "TURKIC advocates for a linguistically grounded and culturally oriented concept of Turkic identity" (Sawyer, 2013) or that "cultural diplomacy is realized through TURKSOY" (Akilli, 2019).

#### *Multilateral and Bilateral Cultural Cooperation among Turkic-Speaking Countries*

In addition to the organization of TURKSOY, multilateral and bilateral cultural cooperation among Turkic-speaking countries plays an important role in developing and further deepening interactions. While the scientific and expert community has received little attention due to the limited information available on TURKSOY's activities, this area undoubtedly offers significant potential for implementing creative initiatives and projects to promote a common Turkic culture.

#### Discussion and Conclusion

In this study, we agree with the author, G.T. Valeh, that globalization processes occurring in the modern world offer broad opportunities for the development of people with similar ethnogenesis. The formation of a unified Turkic culture, as evidenced by bilateral cooperation between Turkey and Azerbaijan, is noteworthy. This can also be considered in a multilateral format between Turkic countries (Valeh, 2016).

In this context, it is worth citing the 2021 signing of a joint declaration on cinema by the heads of the cultural departments of Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkey. The declaration regulates the implementation of the Korkyt Ata Turkic World Film Festival project. Plans include organizing joint film production, encouraging and supporting creative talent. A special Turkic world fund is planned to promote history, customs, and traditions through film.

For example, at the level of bilateral Kazakh-Turkish cultural contacts, the dynamics of cooperation across several areas can be demonstrated. The Bozok Museum-Reserve is receiving assistance from the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA) in the reconstruction of historical complexes. Thematic tours were organized at the National Museum of the Republic for Turkish observers. A theatrical tour, "Living Exhibits," was shown on the Turkish television channel

TRT. Turkish industry specialists and creative groups are invited annually to international competitions and festivals held in Kazakhstan (Bazarbayev et al., 2025).

During the Head of State's last visit to Turkey in May 2022, a memorandum of understanding on cinematography was signed by the Ministry of Culture and Sports of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Turkey. This document lays the foundation for expanding cooperation in film production.

#### *European experience in implementing joint cultural policy: identifying promising areas for the cultural integration of Turkic-speaking countries*

Bilateral and multilateral cooperation and interaction within TURKSOY allow us to speak of the cultural integration process among Turkic-speaking countries. The examples cited demonstrate its positive dynamics, which requires both further deepening and expansion. To achieve this, in our opinion, it is necessary to adopt a "long-term approach," i.e., to identify new opportunities to increase efficiency. In this regard, the experience of European Union countries in cultural integration, the synchronization of cultural policies, and the development of common approaches to such activities is interesting. We share the view of Russian researchers that the factor of common culture played a significant role in the formation and development of European integration, "ensuring the formation in the public consciousness of the idea of a pan-European civilization with a common spiritual and cultural heritage, a common cultural identity" (İnaç, 2002). Using the EU as an example, we can observe the fusion of a cultural core with the development of institutions that have enabled the construction of the modern architecture of European integration.

The initial document establishing the foundation for European cultural integration was the European Cultural Convention (1954). It set forth the principles of cooperation within the framework of a common cultural policy. It defined joint consultation mechanisms and coordinated the work of states on cultural events of interest to all of Europe. **DES ATELIERS** Another important document, the Declaration on European Identity, was a step toward protecting and promoting a common cultural heritage and taking into account the diversity of national cultures (EU, 2012).

Subsequently, the pan-European framework for intercultural interaction expanded with the adoption of documents such as the Wroclaw Declaration (2004) and the Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (2005), dedicated to strengthening European identity, intercultural dialogue, and institutional cooperation.

Overall, 65 legal acts regulating cultural policy have been developed since the European Union's formation. The founding documents are the Maastricht Treaty on European Union (1992) and the Treaty of Lisbon amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community (1999). In particular, Article 3 of the Maastricht Treaty stipulates that the newly created union "respects the richness of its cultural and linguistic diversity and is committed to preserving and developing Europe's cultural heritage." Cultural policy is more clearly reflected in Sections XII-XIII, Articles 151 and 167 of the Lisbon Treaty. Article 167, for example, recognizes the need to expand knowledge and disseminate the culture of European nations, address the preservation and protection of European heritage, and promote cultural exchange (Treaty, 1992).

In addition to the treaty and regulatory framework, there are multi-level institutions designed to coordinate the cultural policies of EU countries in various areas and implement programs. The European Commission has a Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport, and Culture, which functionally integrates several humanitarian spheres. A similar approach is already being used at the Council of the European Union level, with the Council for Education, Youth, Culture, and Sport. However, within the European Parliament, the Committee on Culture and Education operates with a more limited sectoral focus. These institutions define the strategic vectors for the development of pan-European cultural policy, its directions, and emphases. At the same time, the Executive Agency for Education, Audiovisual Industries, and Culture, as well as the Association of Cultural Institutes of EU Member States, operate at the executive level to implement the programmatic goals and objectives of cultural policy.

Comparing the European experience with the integration of Turkic-speaking states reveals similarities in the development of common cultural institutions. However, within the EU, the level of integration is higher

due to gradual, evolutionary stages of joint cooperation, expansion and deepening of interaction, coordination, and harmonization of joint efforts to preserve cultural heritage, hold events, promote common cultural values, develop a regulatory framework, etc.

Furthermore, the so-called substantive component, or the projects and programs implemented by European institutions, draws attention. According to some researchers, first and second-generation programs were implemented within the framework of a common European cultural policy. The first generation included three special programs: "Kaleidoscope" (1996), "Ariane" (1997), and "Raphael" (1997). The "Kaleidoscope" program was designed to support artistic creativity and promote the dissemination of European cultures. Another program, "Ariane," addressed issues in the development of book publishing and translation to promote Europe's literary achievements, as well as the professionalization of specialists in this field. Moreover, the third program, "Raphael," promoted the protection of European cultural heritage (Holoborodko et al., 2024).

Thus, the first generation of cultural programs aimed to strengthen and develop international partnerships and to engage the European public with cultural events. At the same time, second-generation programs ("Culture 2000," "Culture 2007-2013," "Creative Europe," etc.), drawing on experience, were more structurally developed, taking into account various audience segments, and defining comprehensive approaches to implementing the planned activities.

In this regard, the European experience of implementing cultural programs offers promising opportunities for study. Given the transformation of the Turkic Council into the Organization of Turkic States, there is a need for new approaches to TURKSOY's activities. From this perspective, in the medium term, it would be appropriate to develop and implement joint, targeted cultural programs, identify end indicators and mechanisms to achieve them, and obtain final quantitative and qualitative results, using the European experience as an example. This programmatic approach should focus the integrative efforts of Turkic-speaking countries on expanding and deepening cooperation.

#### *Conclusion*

The integration of Turkic countries is a multifaceted concept encompassing various aspects. From a cultural perspective, integration is possible provided there are

shared values and traditions, which establish a systematic process of unification and the formation of structures or institutions. These conditions are interrelated, providing the foundation for a sustainable integration process among Turkic states.

Turkic states share a common culture, history, and national traditions. This common civilizational code has been in the making for a long time and cannot be forgotten or lost. Globalization not only contributes to the emergence of a so-called consumer society but also heightens public demand in Turkic-speaking countries for the exploration of their common cultural roots. Naturally, such a process will be collaborative, encompassing ideological, cultural, humanitarian, and institutional aspects.

The views and theoretical perspectives of intellectuals and thinkers in Turkic-speaking countries, within the framework of pan-Turkism, form the ideological framework for integrative cultural interaction. The ideological component substantiates and defines the vision for the principles and goals that should guide cultural integration. At the same time, it is important to consider not only common values but also the cultural differences of Turkic-speaking peoples. This is the so-called cultural-humanitarian aspect, which began to actively develop after the collapse of the USSR in Turkic-speaking post-Soviet countries, with the active support of the Republic of Turkey.

These joint efforts have resulted in the emergence of institutional structures such as TURKSOY, a joint mechanism for the development and preservation of cultural heritage, its popularization, and promotion. Over its nearly 30-year history, an institutional framework has been established to facilitate fruitful cooperation, the implementation of joint projects, and planned activities. This activity is highly valued by the heads of Turkic-speaking states, who have noted its role in cultural integration in summit declarations. Furthermore, multilateral and bilateral cooperation among Turkic-speaking states plays a significant role, contributing to the strengthening of integrative interaction dynamics.

Within the scientific and expert community, cultural integration is valued more highly than general Turkic integration for various reasons (including differing levels of political and socioeconomic development, long distances between countries, etc.). It is the cultural factor

that is becoming significant and decisive in the integration process between Turkic-speaking countries. Given the new stage in the institutionalization of Turkic integration with the emergence of the Organization of Turkic States, the question of transforming TURKSOY's activities may arise. For more successful and effective changes, it is advisable to study and apply European experience in the functioning of common cultural policy and in the implementation of projects and programs. Identifying promising areas will allow for the deepening and expansion of cultural integration among Turkic-speaking countries.

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### Declaration of Interest

The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.

### Ethical Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants. Ethical considerations in this study were that participation was entirely optional.

### Transparency of Data

In accordance with the principles of transparency and open research, we declare that all data and materials used in this study are available upon request.

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### Authors' Contributions

All authors equally contribute to this study.

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