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The Importance of Central Asian Energy Resources for the South Asian Region

03

Socio-Economic Reasons
and Solutions of Afgha-
nistan-Based Migration

09

Imamali Rahman's Vi-
sit to Uzbekistan: Trade
and Foreign Investment

CONTENTS

ANKASAM ANALYSIS

03 Socio-Economic Reasons and Solutions of Afghanistan-Based Migration
Ahmad Khan DAWLATYAR

06 The Importance of Central Asian Energy Resources for the South Asian Region
Dr. Cenk PALA

09 Imamali Rahman's Visit to Uzbekistan: Trade and Foreign Investment
Dr. Sabir ASKEROĞLU

ANKASAM IN PRESS

12 Media

JOURNALS

13 Journal of International Crisis and Political Studies

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ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Socio-Economic Reasons and Solutions of Afghanistan-Based Migration

Since the invasion of Afghanistan by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), war, insecurity and instability have been going on in the country. Although the internal and external actors of the war change cyclically, as the results of the war; death, hunger, unemployment, ignorance, migration and all the evils that come to mind remain in existence. Some sources state that the number of Afghan migrants abroad in 2020 is 6.5 million. It is known that the

distribution of Afghan immigrants by country is 2.4 million in Pakistan, 2.4 million in Iran, 688 thousand in Europe, 513 thousand in the United States (USA) and Australia, and 551 thousand in other states (mainly in Türkiye).[1]

As it is known, the Taliban again dominated Afghanistan on August 15, 2021. As soon as they gained control in the country, many Afghans tried to go abroad by going to Kabul Airport. In



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the meantime, it was seen that several Afghan citizens were holding onto the planes and then fell to the ground from the air and died. It is known that approximately 1 million Afghans immigrated to foreign countries legally and illegally in the 10 months after the Taliban took over the administration. As of now, the number of Afghan refugees abroad is estimated to be around 7 million.

There are many reasons for Afghanistan-based migration. However, it can be said that socio-economic problems come first among them. Because in the last 20 years, the Afghan government has spent the aid sent in the military field and has not been able to create opportunities to provide job opportunities to the people. Apart from this, 70% of the budget of the Afghan Government is provided by foreign support. With the re-dominance of the Taliban, foreign aid was cut on a large scale and Afghanistan's national reserves were blocked by the USA. This situation has left the Afghan people to face more unemployment and humanitarian crisis. The cutting of foreign aid, Covid-19 and the drought in Afghanistan are other factors that cause the Afghan people to become even more impoverished. Due to the drought, it is seen that the Afghan people have difficulty in feeding not only themselves, but even the animals they own.

In its latest report, the United Nations (UN) stated that one out of two people in Afghanistan is facing hunger. It has been stated that if Afghanistan is not helped, hundreds of people will lose their lives and that 5 billion dollars is needed in 2022 to prevent the humanitarian disaster in Afghanistan.[2] It is known that people in the cities of Afghanistan sell their kidneys due to unemployment and hunger. It was even seen that a person in Kabul tried to set himself/herself on fire due to hunger and unemployment.[3]

While the main reason for migration in most states is defined as "reaching a better future", the main factor that causes Afghans to go abroad is; economic and social problems. In other words, Afghans go to foreign countries to help their families by making money. Because of this, it can be said that many Afghans do not take their wives and children abroad. Another reason why Afghans do not emigrate with their families is the worry that the journey takes a long time and that women's dignity will be trampled on the roads. Because migrants go abroad en masse and have to pass through high mountains to reach another state. While Afghans have previously worked by going to Iran and Pakistan and returning to the country, when the economic

situation worsens in these two states, they are trying to go to European states via Türkiye.

Today, states are against immigration, describing it as "a factor that threatens borders and national security". In this context, it is seen that states have built a wall on their borders by increasing their security measures. However, leaving people who are not guilty of the developments in their country to hunger and their fate is incompatible with human and conscientious values. Since the international community does not recognize the Taliban government, it sends humanitarian aid through international organizations and civil society instead of helping Afghanistan directly. In this context, the UN, operating around the world, announced in a statement published in December 2021 that it had collected 1.5 billion dollars for Afghanistan as humanitarian aid and helped 7 million Afghans. Donations consist of food and cash. [4] With a decision taken by the UN, it has announced that it will send 20 million dollars to Afghanistan every week until April 2022. The money sent will first be transferred to the International Bank of Afghanistan (AIB) and then distributed to the Afghan people either in cash or as food aid.[5] In this process, it is known that many states other than the UN sent humanitarian aid to Afghanistan.

A Humanitarian aid and cash support are important to reduce hunger and save the country's economy from collapse in Afghanistan. However, it is not possible to say that these steps will solve the problems in the country and prevent migration. Therefore, the international community, especially the USA, UN, EU and neighboring states of Afghanistan, should take serious steps to combat the socio-economic problems that are the main cause of migration in Afghanistan. In this context, it would be an important approach for the West, like the regional states, to see the Taliban as "a fact of Afghanistan" and to take care to communicate with the Taliban in solving the problems. In this context, the establishment of an "Aid Distribution Commission" that includes the Taliban as a first step and the distribution of aid to those in need through it can be considered as a proposal.

With the Taliban dominating the country, the war stopped on a large scale. The cessation of the war created the basis for providing job opportunities to the public by implementing infrastructure and development projects. Therefore, the West, international organizations and regional states should not be content with humanitarian aid known as "dressing measures", but should take the path of supporting a more permanent and

sustainable development policy. In this context, just as the USA developed the Marshall Plan for the development of Europe after World War II, a "Development Fund" should be established for the reconstruction of Afghanistan. All aid to Afghanistan should be collected here, and funds should be spent for the reconstruction of Afghanistan by establishing international mechanisms. Because the development projects will provide employment to the Afghan people, making it easier for the citizens to find a job in their own country, and thus, people will be prevented from leaving their country at the risk of death.

Finally, global and regional actors should turn competition over Afghanistan's geopolitics into cooperation. They should also recognize each other's interests in regional projects covering Afghanistan, especially in making the conditions of the international community acceptable to the Taliban. Because economic-based policies create interdependence. Thus, states may abandon their policy of escalating the problem, considering that destabilization of Afghanistan will not be in their own interest.

As it is known, Afghanistan is located between Central Asia, South Asia and the Middle East, which are known as the three geopolitical centers in Asia. By making good use of the advantage of its geographical location and by developing an economic-oriented foreign policy, Afghanistan can contribute to the recovery and development of the prosperity of the region by connecting geopolitical centers together. In other words, the projects that include Afghanistan, especially TAPI and TAP, will provide employment opportunities to the Afghan people and will also bring billions of dollars to Afghanistan as a transit right.

According to the Pakistani poet Mohammed Iqbal, "Afghanistan is the 'Heart of Asia'. When it degenerates/destabilizes all of Asia degenerates/destabilizes. When it stands up/regains peace, all Asia stands up/regains peace". Therefore, Afghanistan-based migration cannot be prevented without solving the economic and social problems in Afghanistan. In this context, the probability of experiencing new waves of Afghanistan-based immigration is high.

In more concrete terms, the capacity of the crisis in Afghanistan to affect Pakistan, the Central Asian States and Iran should also be taken into account. It can be stated that this migration will not be limited to Afghanistan alone, it may lead to a regional migration that may be expressed in tens of millions. Although Afghanistan's neighbors were initially affected by the new waves of migration, it can be said that eventually the whole world, especially the EU states, will be affected by it.

Afghanistan is a state where the most drugs are produced, terrorist organizations are located and weapons are smuggled. Along with migration, there is a possibility that these problems will spread to other states.

To put it as a result, regional states, especially the USA, the UN and the EU, should try to dry up the source of the problem before the crisis deepens in Afghanistan. Otherwise, when Afghanistan fails, the regional states will no longer be able to protect their borders and will fail to stop migration.

[1] "ناهج رد یناتسنانغفا نایوجهانپ و نارجاهم دادعت", Afganistan Bilgi Ağı, <https://www.afghanpaper.com/nbody.php?id=163892>, (Date of Accession: 16.06.2022).

[2] "دش ناتسنانغفا رد یرشب هعجاف زا یریگولج یارب کمک رلاد درایلیم جنپ راتساوخ دحتم للم", DW, <https://l24.im/Y6Ey>, (Date of Accession: 16.06.2022).

[3] "دز شتآ لب اک رد ار دوخ رقف لی د هب یدرم", rfi, <https://l24.im/LaOc9SY>, (Date of Accession: 16.06.2022).

[4] "داد ربخ ناتسنانغفا هب کمک یارب رلاد درایلیم ۱.۵ یروآعمج زا للم نامزاس", Haşti Subh, <https://8am.af/the-United-nations-has-announced-that-it-has-raised-1-5-billion-to-help-afghanistan/>, (Date of Accession: 16.06.2022).

[5] "دیسر لب اک هب للم نامزاس هاتسودرشب یدقن کمک رلاد نویلیم ۳", Khaama, <https://www.khaama.com/persian/archives/96637>, (Date of Accession: 16.06.2022).



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

The Importance of Central Asian Energy Resources for the South Asian Region

The energy crisis between the European Union (EU) and Russia after the Ukraine War, which started in February 2022, first led to Europe's decision to impose an oil embargo until the end of this year, aiming to put Russia in a difficult situation. Secondly, Europe has attempted to find an alternative to Russia in terms of natural gas supply to the continent.

The Western world expected that the United States (USA) and the EU would act in unity at the point of the aforementioned efforts and that they would give a serious lesson to Russia as a result of the union and that the Russian economy would be shaken after the embargo. However, as the developments showed, the expectations of the EU did not come true.



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Russia directed the oil that it could not send to Europe after the Ukraine War and the Russian natural gas, which it cut off after the embargoes, mainly to the Chinese and Indian markets. Currently, India imports 800 thousand barrels and China 1 million barrels of Russian oil. Until this energy crisis, it has never been seen before that these two markets bought such high amounts of Russian oil. In the field of natural gas, China is currently trading around 30 billion cubic meters of gas, which is planned to reach 70 billion cubic meters in total through the pipeline known as "Power of Siberia", one of Russia's largest natural gas fields. This trade is expected to reach 70 billion cubic meters in the following periods.

It is thought that the largest buyers of the energy to be produced in Russia's facilities in Sakhalin Islands, which were established with international partnership, will again be China, India, South Korea and even North Korea. The picture that will emerge shows that Russia will find the oil and natural gas demand drawn by the EU in China and India, and that it will maintain its economic power in this context. However, in this context, it is clear that China and India should turn to alternative sources in order not to fall into a situation similar to the current crisis in Europe. Because the demands of large economies such as China and India carry the risk of creating major dependencies. In addition, in such a commercial situation, Russia will have the finance to develop its economy during the war.

In previous periods, India was known as a country that turned its face to the West and had serious trade relations with the USA, if not with the EU. The fact that it buys cheap oil from Russia despite EU embargoes may cause New Delhi to gain the image of giving up its US alliance.

The fact that China and India have made certain commitments due to the use of carbon dioxide under the Paris Climate Agreement reveals how important the transition to natural gas is for both countries. However, it should be taken into account that such a transition is not possible with only the export of Russian oil and Russian natural gas.

South Asian countries should be aware of the fact that Russia threatens even a large bloc like the European Union with natural gas supply and uses natural gas as a political weapon. There is no guarantee that Russian President Vladimir Putin will not use natural gas as a weapon against these countries in future

crises. In this context, it should be kept in mind that in a future trade war between the USA and China, Russia will not threaten China with natural gas or that India can use the natural gas trade as leverage to prevent India from gaining strength in international politics. The more these countries depend on the natural gas they buy from Russia, the more they will lose their right to speak against Russia in international politics. Therefore, it is necessary to take precautions before addiction occurs.

The Caucasus and Central Asia come to mind first about the precautions that can be taken to avoid dependency on Russian natural gas. Countries such as Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan are in a position to be directly connected to South Asian countries, primarily China and India, via the energy and transportation line known as the "Middle Corridor". India can easily receive natural gas via the "Middle Corridor" through Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. Moreover, it is possible for Pakistan to participate in this trade. In this context, the "Middle Corridor" can also serve as a means of improvement in the relations between Pakistan and India.

Turkmenistan has 40-50 billion cubic meters of natural gas, which was produced for Russia but not bought by the Russians, immediately available for export. At least 15-20 billion cubic meters of this natural gas are in the Southern Gas Corridor; that is, even if it is assumed that it will be delivered to Europe via Turkey, in the current situation, India is in a position to receive the remaining 30 billion cubic meters of gas within a year or two. Currently, China supplies 30 billion cubic meters of natural gas from Turkmenistan through the Turkmenistan-China Pipeline Project, which was initiated with the influence of Russia. However, the point to be noted here is that with the whole of Europe withdrawing its gas demand, the Russians may be uncomfortable with Turkmens selling natural gas to China. Because China's demand amount is around 200 billion cubic meters and Russia will only be able to make a profit by trading with China as an alternative to the EU. In this respect, especially gaining India is important here. Because Turkmenistan is also a good oil producer and has the capacity to increase its production up to 140-160 billion cubic meters. It is also known that there are natural gas reserves in Uzbekistan in the same amount as Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan are the largest energy producing countries in Central Asia and the Caucasus.

However, only Turkmenistan reserves are sufficient for the pipeline connecting to India. However, with the addition of Uzbekistan to this pipeline, with natural gas going to both Pakistan and India via Pakistan, these countries may not need another source for natural gas for at least 30 years. Therefore, it can be said that Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan gas is more reasonable than Russian gas for South Asian countries. Moreover, in this way, the Middle Corridor will also be activated. In other words, reaching Pakistan via Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan and then to India will become very, very important.

India can use the natural gas it can access through the Middle Corridor as an advantage in the negotiations with Russia. Because the Russians will start to sell natural gas expensively after a while, with a scenario based on India's purchase of the cheapest oil themselves. In this context, it is important for India to have alternative resources. Therefore, India should make an agreement for Kazakh, Turkmen and Azerbaijan oil as well as for Kazakh and Uzbek gas, especially for Turkmen gas. This situation will not only enable India to have a trump card against Russia, but will also improve the economies of both India and the countries in the region.

On the other hand, Turkmen natural gas is the biggest resource that will enable South Asian countries to fulfill their commitments to use less coal in the Paris Climate Agreement. When the same situation is evaluated for China, it is possible to increase the 30 billion cubic meters of Turkmen gas going to China to 70 billion cubic meters in the future. But Russia can prevent such a trade from taking place.

The fact that China receives all its natural gas needs from Russia, both as liquefied (LNG) and pipe gas, can be seen as a major threat to energy security. In this context, it is strategically important for China to buy Turkmen and Uzbek gas in order to increase its negotiation power against Russia. China should use Turkmen and Uzbek gas as a way of reducing prices, diversifying and not being dependent on the Russians only.

After China and India develop cooperation on energy with Central Asian countries, this situation will be followed by transportation corridors. When Beijing and New Delhi prefer energy cooperation over the "Middle Corridor" that has been mentioned for years, the foundations for the "Middle Corridor" to be not only a power line but also a transportation corridor will be laid. In this context, new transport corridors such as railways and highways can be created.

China and India, together with Central Asian countries, especially Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, can create a regulation that will encourage the use of natural gas in vehicles and turn these energy corridors into transportation corridors at the same time. Such a transport corridor would stretch from Turkey to Paris. This project is known as the corridor project in the United Nations. In addition, this could create an opportunity to increase the use of Compressed Natural Gas (CNG), that is, the use of natural gas in vehicles. With the main and small stations to be opened on the "Middle Corridor" route, it will be possible to carry CNG at 400-kilometer intervals. Especially, if CNG is used in truck transport that does the most work over great distances both air pollution will decrease and the requirements of the climate change agreement will be fulfilled with a serious project in the use of natural gas vehicles.

As a result, Central Asian energy resources and Central Asian countries are important for South Asian countries both in terms of ensuring energy security, increasing bargaining power against Russia and increasing the use of natural gas in vehicles by taking precautions against climate change. With the transition of widespread trucking in Central Asia, China and India to the use of natural gas, carbon dioxide emissions can be reduced by at least 50%. This situation will be important in creating a new opening through the "Middle Corridor." South Asian countries should not be considered without Central Asia.



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Imamali Rahman's Visit to Uzbekistan: Trade and Foreign Investment

President of Tajikistan Imamali Rahman visited neighboring Uzbekistan between 2-3 June 2022. During this visit, Rahman was accompanied by the First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Vice President for International Relations, Ministers of Energy and Water Resources, Economic Development and Trade, Education and Science, Finance, Agriculture and Culture. In addition, the Chairman of the State Investments and State Property Manage-

ment Committee and the Chairman of the National Bank also took part in the delegation.

Rahman met with his counterpart, Shevket Mirziyoyev, and the parties confirmed their commitment to further deepening the strategic partnership between the countries. In addition, it was emphasized that special attention should be paid to the promotion of joint cooperation projects in the fields of trade, industry,



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agriculture, transport and logistics, and energy. After the meeting, Rahman and Mirziyoyev signed the "Declaration on the strengthening of eternal friendship and unity between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan". In addition, agreements were signed between Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, mainly in 7 new cooperation areas, a total of 15. A significant part of these agreements have been related to the fields of trade, economy and industry. Later, Rahman and Mirziyoyev announced that they started the construction of the Yavan hydroelectric power plant with a capacity of 140 megawatts on the Zarafshan River.

One day before Rahman's visit to Tashkent, the "Tajik-Uzbek Entrepreneurs Business Forum" was held in Tashkent on June 1, 2022 with the participation of 400 representatives from Uzbekistan and approximately 150 representatives from Tajikistan. As a result of the forum, 75 commercial and economic agreements worth 1 billion dollars were signed. It has been stated that the main objective of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan in the economic and commercial field is to further develop and strengthen trade and economic relations, and to create suitable conditions for this.

As can be seen, the expansion of commercial and economic relations was on the agenda of Rahman's visit to Uzbekistan and the talks between Tajik-Uzbek high-level officials and delegations. Tajikistan needs foreign investments. Uzbekistan, on the other hand, needs the consumption market and transportation lines for the export of Uzbek goods.

The two-year period of Covid-19 had dealt a crushing blow to Tajik business and economy. Tajikistan, along with other countries, needs the investments of Uzbekistan. Dushanbe proposes Tashkent to Tajikistan, which is still a consumption market for Uzbek goods. In this context, although Tajikistan does not want to express the commercial-economic situation in the country clearly, the problems in the country are known. For example, the slow progress of reforms aimed at creating a favorable environment for entrepreneurship compared to regional economies, especially Uzbekistan, negatively affects the business/entrepreneurship environment in Tajikistan. Although Tajikistan has easily overcome the fight against Covid-19, the epidemic has seriously damaged the country's economy.

As a result of the government's lack of support for the private sector during the epidemic period, many businesses were closed. People have lost their income. In addition, due to the economic problems caused by the epidemic, the money transfers of Tajik workers abroad from Russia to their countries have decreased. However, according to official statistics, in 2021, the economy of Tajikistan, that is, its gross domestic product (GDP), grew by 9%.

In January 2022, Tajik authorities estimated that the country's GDP in 2021 was 98 billion 900 million somoni, or about 8 billion 730 million dollars at the exchange rate. However, there have been objections to the positive picture drawn by the Tajik government. It has been argued that the government only takes into account the newly opened businesses, and no data is disclosed on the businesses that were closed. It was also stated that inflation in Tajikistan in 2021 was around 8%, which greatly negatively affects its real GDP growth. Therefore, as in other countries of Central Asia, there has been a sharp increase in food and other goods prices in Tajikistan.

Rahman, in his annual statement at the Tajikistan Parliament, declared the period 2022-2026 as the years of industrial development and stated that it should target the development of metallurgy as well as light and heavy industry in this 5-year period. In order to achieve these goals, the aim of establishing small and medium-sized industrial enterprises was determined thanks to foreign investments.

However, some problems within the country, a corrupt bureaucratic system, power cuts in winter, lack of natural gas, limited access to the internet and its complete absence in some regions, and more importantly, deficiencies in the rule of law, especially in property rights, prevent foreign investors from coming to the country. However, during Rahman's visit to Tashkent, a special offer was made to Uzbekistan: Uzbek entrepreneurs were guaranteed the support of the President and the Government. According to Manzura Rustamova, Vice President of the Tajikistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, positive results have already been achieved in the active cooperation between the entrepreneurs of the two countries. Especially in the last 6 years, the trade turnover has increased 37 times. Compared to the first quarter of 2022, it increased by 30% compared to the same period of the previous year and reached approximately 174 million dollars.



As also seen from Rahman's visit, it is aimed to increase the Uzbek-Tajik trade volume, which was 435 million dollars in 2021, to over 1 billion dollars as soon as possible. In this context, Tashkent and Dushanbe are in the process of developing new forms of economic cooperation. As of 2021, projects that may seriously interest the two countries, such as the construction of hydroelectric power plants on the Zarafshan River in Tajikistan, are being discussed. It is envisaged that Tashkent will finance these projects and the electricity to be produced in this hydroelectric power plant will meet the needs of Uzbekistan, which needs electrical energy. The water problem and the establishment of hydroelectric power plants on transboundary rivers were one of the most important security problems between the two countries. The decision to build the Yavan hydroelectric power plant is also of great importance for the Uzbek-Tajik peace.

In addition, Tajikistan may open to Uzbekistan the operation of about 200 deposits for their joint operation, including silver and gold. Uzbekistan is a more comfortable and less costly partner for Tajikistan compared to China, whose economic activity in Tajikistan raises many questions both inside and outside the country. China is Tajikistan's largest foreign investor, and Tajikistan's growing dependence on China is troubling the Tajik side. In addition, the influence of China on the Tajik economy also causes reactions from the Tajik society.

It can be seen as a remarkable success that it has managed to solve these problems between Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, which have not been resolved for years, in the last 5 years. With the development of relations in recent years, there are at least six routes where citizens of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan can freely travel to each other by land transport. It has also been announced that the Tashkent-Dushanbe train services will start on 20 June 2022.

The development of economic and commercial relations between Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, the increase in mutual travels of the citizens of the two countries further strengthen the cooperation between the two countries. While Tajikistan is trying to solve the economic problems it has faced with the support of its neighbor Uzbekistan, it is also seen that a very important point has been reached in terms of cooperation and solidarity between the states of the region. The region, which was tried to be brought to the fore with crises until yesterday, now takes its place on the agenda with cooperation and solidarity.

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27 June 2022

Ankara Center for Crisis and Policy Studies (ANKASAM) President Prof. Dr. Mehmet Seyfettin Erol evaluated the visit of President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev to Uzbekistan on Hürriyet.az News Portal.

27 June 2022

Ankara Center for Crisis and Policy Studies (ANKASAM) President Prof. Dr. The evaluations made by Mehmet Seyfettin Erol to The Epoch Times, one of the leading newspapers of the USA, regarding the possible operation of Turkey against Syria, were published in the Vietnamese language of the same newspaper.

29 June 2022

ANKASAM Chief Advisor to the President, Retired Ambassador Aydın Nurhan, evaluated the latest developments in foreign policy at TRT World.

30 June 2022

ANKASAM International Relations Consultant Dr. Kadir Ertaç Çelik evaluated the NATO Summit on Bengütürk TV.

2 July 2022

Ankara Center for Crisis and Policy Studies (ANKASAM) AF-PAK Expert Ahmad Khan Dawlatyar's article titled "The Socio-Economic Causes and Solutions of Migration from Afghanistan" was published on the Rumeli-Balkan Strategic Studies Center (RUBASAM) website.



The latest issue of the International Journal of Crisis and Politics Studies, an international peer-reviewed journal operating within the Ankara Center for Crisis and Politics Studies (ANKASAM), has been published. Academic Keys, ASOS Index, CEEOL, Cite Factor, DRJI, Index Copernicus, Ideal Online, Research Bible, Sindex and TUBITAK DERGIPARK databases are scanned by our journal can be accessed via the link below.

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JOURNAL OF REGIONAL STUDIES

The latest issue of the Journal of Regional Studies, an international peer-reviewed journal operating within the Ankara Crisis and Political Research Center (ANKASAM), has been published. Our journal is scanned by Academic Keys, ASOS Index, CEEOL, Cite Factor, DRJI, Index Copernicus, Ideal Online, Research Bible, Index and TUBITAK DERGIPARK databases. You can reach our journal via the link below.

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