

## The Concept of Border in Terms of Political Geography and the Border between Turkey and Nakhchivan

Prof. Dr. Serhat ZAMAN\*

Ataturk University, Department of Geography Education, Erzurum, Turkey

E-mail: serhatz@atauni.edu.tr

\*Corresponding author

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ogün COŞKUN\*

Ataturk University, Department of Geography Education, Erzurum, Turkey

E-mail: oguncoskun@atauni.edu.tr

DOI Link: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v5-i12/1923>

Published Date: 07 December 2015

### Abstract

The concept of border is one of the most overemphasized and controversial topics of political geography. It can be stated that it has become a popular study field from that aspect. Considering the fact that today's world has been composed of structures called states and areas of sovereignty which have been registered by them, it is understood that the borders are very important elements regarding these sovereignty areas. However, all the borders do not share the same characteristics. While some of the borders are means of isolation, some of them bear a symbolical meaning. This research study discusses the state border between Turkey and the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic from the political geography perspective. A general description was made with the history of the border, general geographical features of the border zone and treaties. As a result, it is possible to state that the short border between the two countries has almost become invisible due to intense interactions, that is to say, it has become symbolical because both sides of the shared border is a follow-up of one another both naturally and culturally.

**Keywords:** Borders, Turkey, Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, Political Geography, Azerbaijan.

### I. Introduction

The existence of borders has been occasionally discussed and they are severely one of the most important elements of today's world. It is possible to encounter borders in a wide range from ownership of territory in a small scale to the boundaries of states on a large scale and the borders which separate the areas of sovereignty belonging to the states. Some people

consider that border is a concrete and visible physical structure. Maybe, it is the form of a distinction which started in the mind first and then came into being physically. No matter what it is, borders have been built to separate one thing from the other and it is most probably a tool which has been doing it for thousands of years. A border is a phenomenon of human beings which they have been keeping alive for a long time and an apparently it is predicted that they will continue to keep it alive for a long time because the border is both a protective factor and also a location which is being surpassed or crossed. Moreover, the border is sometimes an indicator of power and weakness. Strengthening one's existence and power by creating "the other" is one of the ways which organisms called states, particularly the models of nation-state, apply frequently because while "the other" is being created outside the borders of the country, "we", what is most desired, is formed or is wanted to be formed in the interior of the country. The border and its visible elements are the things that they look for in order to differentiate the other from oneself. While the border is sometimes an indicator of power for the area it covers, sometimes it is a territory which the inhabitants want to leave. Thus, the border is attractive for some but also it can be an unattractive environment or a land of motivation. The immigration of refugees which continue without slowing down in the world and their adventures to cross the borders are one of the most significant indicators.

The borders which are important with their distinctive features become symbolical via strong interactions in the modern states era (Zaman, 2014: 122). However, it is possible only under some special circumstances. In today's world, this condition has been encountered mostly between the states which were developed and ruled with the similar systems or between the mutual parties that share very similar ethno-cultural characteristics.

A border is a line that separates the areas of benefit and dominance (Akengin, 2010: 105). Considering another view, borders are proofs that states have sovereignty over an area of land or they are national markers. They are the indicators of authority, ownership, existence, and property (Karabağ, 2008: 16). Bennafla stresses that the border cannot be reduced to spatial boundary of state sovereignty or in other words, cannot be degraded to the area of land which encloses the territory of the states and she also states that the borders have become vague after the nation-state period and they expanded outwards and inwards like a web (Bennafla and et al., 2014: 19). Green, states that borders should not be considered as physical objects located at the ends of the countries and discusses that they are concepts whose metaphorical and symbolical meanings must be focused on (2014: 39).

As it is seen, the concept of border involves rich and varied meanings due to its dynamic structure. Like many concepts belonging to human sciences, the concept of border has experienced the processes of variety and richness in meaning due to its ability to adapt to the spirit of the time. For example, the meaning the concept of border bears during the foundation of state-nations and the meaning it carries in today's global world are not the same. When the concept of border and the research studies carried out on this issue are reviewed, it is easily understood that it is not possible to standardize this concept by making generalizations because nearly all the borders have different stories and distinctive features. Thus, the border research has become an interdisciplinary research subject. They are chosen as a research study topic by the disciplines such as history, geography, economics, anthropology, political sciences and sociology regarding their evolution processes, histories, their identity and cultural aspects, political aspects, economic functions, their sides related to security and immigration, debatable features, positions, physical and substantial factors and similar qualities. Regarding political geography, the concept of border is examined from

different perspectives and elaborated. The most important aspects of the borders are their shapes, history, formation processes, disputed enclaves or aspects, what they distinguish, where they run through, their appearances in the area of land, their geopolitical importance, and pretensions. However, changes have occurred in political geography's traditional approach to the borders in time. Political geography in the beginning was mostly interested in the concrete elements of the border (spatial analytical approach) and then it began to show interest in the ethno-cultural aspects of the borders and also their abstract sides which have visible effects. A short history of the border between Turkey and Nakhchivan, physical characteristics of the border and the mutual relationships established via the border will be discussed in this study.

## **II. Purpose and Method**

The aim of this study is to examine the border between Turkey and Nakhchivan within the framework of developing contemporary approaches of the political geography and thus making contributions to the literature of border studies. In line with this aim, besides the observations and investigations carried out around the border in different periods between 2013 and 2015, various research studies carried out about the subject were reviewed. The border's current position and its strategic position in the future was tried to be examined with the evaluation of the data obtained within the framework of spatial analysis.

## **III. Historical Background of the Border**

The border between Turkey and the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic was drawn by the Treaty of Moscow signed on March 16, 1921 and the Treaty of Kars signed on October 13, 1921. Because the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic did not have an independent status when the treaties were signed as it does today, it did not directly have a voice in the treaties. The Turkish side in that period was the direct counterparty in the treaties under the name of the Government of Turkish Grand National Assembly. Both treaties are important because they provided both Turkey and Nakhchivan to have a physical border. To state it more clearly, although the Treaties of Moscow and Kars are well-known for identifying Turkey's northeast borderlines, they are also directly influential in identifying a neighbour's status and existence because both Soviet Russia and Soviet Armenia, under the protection of Soviet Russia, made attempts to include Nakhchivan and its vicinity in Armenian borders until the treaties were signed and they took quite important decisions in order to actualize it. Some of these decisions were related to the status of Nakhchivan and also in favour of them. One of these decisions and also what made Turkey to be included in the subject is the decision to attach Nakhchivan to Armenia. After Azerbaijan in April, 1920 and Armenia in the same year passed into Soviet Russian possession, it helped a series of decisions to be taken in favour of Armenia in the union. It was understood that after being pushed into the Soviet Russian control, Soviet Azerbaijan could not take its decisions on its own because it made decisions under Russian obligation but maybe Soviet Azerbaijan's decision dated to November 30, 1920 became so important that it could change the fate of the South Caucasus because the decisions taken by the Azerbaijan Communist Party on that date were composed of the results that were in favour of Armenia. The decisions which drew the most attention were that Zangezur and Nakhchivan under the Azerbaijani control were assigned to Armenia (Atnur, 2001: 407-408). In the aforementioned meeting, except for the fact that Nakhchivan was given to Armenia, all of the others were carried into practice. It is not possible to evaluate these decisions which were taken under the control of Soviet Russia as the internal matters of the union because all

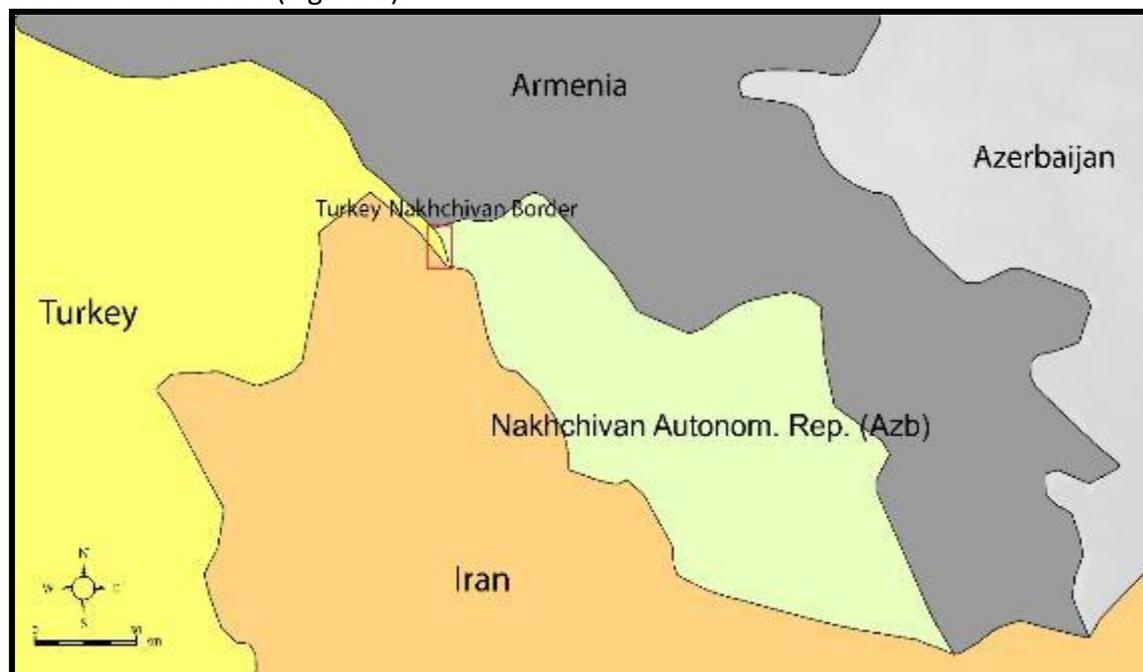
these decisions had direct effects primarily on Turkey and the other countries. For example, after Zangezur, a historical territory of Azerbaijan, passed into Armenia, the land connection between Nakhchivan and Azerbaijan was severed and also the physical contact between Turkey and Azerbaijan and thus with Turkic countries were cut off. The Armenians has never given up their claims on Nakhchivan which has no connection to the mainland of Azerbaijan. Thus, if Turkey had not reacted harshly and there had not been the local riots in Nakhchivan, it would have been possible for Armenians to occupy Nakhchivan which they attacked with heavy weapons in 1989 and 1990s just like Karabakh and its vicinity. The Armenian authorities continuously voice their ideal that Armenia would not live without Nakhchivan and Sharur (a fertile land belonging to Nakhchivan) and this shows that by shaping the future but not today, they do not hide how motivated they are. As a result, Armenia was awarded two times (192 and 1989) by the Soviet Russia during the period of the Soviet Union. Nakhchivan and Azerbaijan were the two losers in this process. The sharpest indicator of this situation is the area of Azerbaijan when it was under the Soviet rule (114,000 km<sup>2</sup>) and the area it had when it dissolved (86,000 km<sup>2</sup>) (Attar, 2003: 8). When it is considered that Karabakh and seven regions in its vicinity are still under the Armenian occupation, it is understood that the process which went against Azerbaijan during the Soviet Union still continues today.

After summarizing the political and historical condition on the Nakhchivan border, we can generally explain the attitude of Turkey towards the formation of the border during the same period and also military and political conditions of the period. As it is known, Turkey's northeast frontiers were drawn/ identified by the Treaties of Moscow and Kars. However, before these treaties were signed, some political and military operations were experienced. The most important one of them is that Russians who invaded many places in the north-eastern Turkey retreated from Anatolia due to the domestic affairs and their defeats in different fronts and at the same time while the Russian were retreating, the Armenians were trying to seize the control of these places and they inflicted illegal cruelty on local people and Muslims. Within this period, the Turkish army under the command of Kazım Karabekir Pasa launched a military operation to protect and preserve the local people who were devastated with the Armenian attacks and pressured in the east. Many places in the east were saved from Armenian gangs and troublemakers with this military campaign and the Armenian forces were pulled back to the east of Gyumri and they admitted the defeat. The Treaty of Alexandropol (Gymri) was signed between the Government of Turkish Grand National Assembly and the Republic of Armenia on December 2, 1920 with the psychological superiority of the Turkish side (Erim, 1952: 3-4). The treaty consisted of 18 items. The second item in the treaty acknowledged the newly established border between Turkey and Armenia. When this item was examined in detail, it was revealed that a form of government would be created in Nakhchivan, Sharur and Şahtatı regions remaining in the south of the Armenian border with plebiscite at a later date and a local government would be set up under the protection of Turkey (Soysal, 1983: 17-20). In summary, Turkey assumed the patronage over Nakhchivan with the Treaty of Alexandropol (Gymri) and planned that it would come under Turkish occupation with the public's will in the near future like Kars and Ardahan (Atnur, 2001: 401-402). All these processes which seemed to be in favour of Turkey remained unsettled because the Russians overthrew Thasnak government that signed the Treaty of Alexandropol (Gymri) and sovietized Armenia, so the treaty did not enter into force. However, the Treaty of Alexandropol (Gymri) prepared the ground on behalf of Turkey and Nakhchivan for the Treaties of Moscow and Kars which would be signed later.

Therefore, thanks to these treaties, Turkey ensured Nakhchivan to continue its existence under the protection of another Turkic state and after the collapse of the Soviet Union, a very strong relationship between this autonomous country and Turkey started after opening of the border crossings in Dilucu in Turkey and Sadarak in Nakhchivan. It was nearly impossible to mention any cultural or economic relations between Turkey and Nakhchivan when it was under the Soviet control due to the border policies of the Soviets; this border played a role of wall and separator in the real sense. However, people who were connected to each other with deeply rooted historical and cultural bonds lived on the both sides of the border. There were even many relative families in İğdir on the Turkish side and Nakhchivan. These relationships gained a more positive dimension with the opening of the border crossings in 1992. The prolonged isolation processing of the border was understood more clearly with the name that both sides gave to the border after opening of the border crossing. The bridge over the Aras River is a physical element of the border and the bridge being called *longing* by the Turkish side and *hope* by Nakhchivan gives a concrete clue about the approach and the meaning attributed to the border.

#### IV. The Location of the Border and its Physical Elements

The border between Turkey and Nakhchivan is very short and different values draw attention about the distance of the border in the data belonging to Turkey, Nakhchivan, Azerbaijan and the other countries. These data mention values ranging between 9 and 17 kilometres. Because the border was formed by the natural borders of the Aras River and the river continues to flow with a zigzag pattern, there are considerable differences between the measurements of border's actual length (18km) and its crow flies (10.5 km). As the border was formed entirely by the Aras River, the border begins with the ending of the Turkish-Armenian border and ends in the 18 km east of the intersection of Turkish-Iranian and Nakhchivan borders (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** The map showing the border between Turkey and Nakhchivan and neighbouring countries.

When the short border between Turkey and Nakhchivan is discussed regarding the landforms, it is seen that the border continues along the plain formed by the Aras River. As known, the Aras River flows from Eastern İğdir Plain to Sadarak Plain in Nakhchivan. In other words, it is not possible to mention any other natural obstacles throughout the border except for the Aras River. The Aras River hampered the transportation but this obstacle was exceeded with a bridge built over the river (Longing-Hope Bridge).

If we have to take the area where the border between Turkey and Nakhchivan is located as a whole, it looks like a natural corridor extending between the high areas in the north on the Armenian and Nakhchivan sides and the Little and Great Ararat Mountains in the south. It can be stated that throughout the history it was a compulsory transport route between east and west, particularly between Caspian Basin, South Caucasus, Iran, and Anatolia. This zone is located at the intersection of these four countries' land of sovereignty. These four countries are Turkey, Iran, Armenia, and the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic. This natural corridor has changed hands between different states over time. In particular, Russian, Turkish, and Iranian states struggled continuously to have control over this area. In addition to them, it is important to mention the American and English interest in this area at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Another important feature about the border between Turkey and Nakhchivan is the nearest settlements to the border on both sides and the administrative geographic structure of the border periphery. Accordingly, the Turkish side of the border is located within the administrative boundaries of Aralık district in İğdir. On the eastern part of Aralık district, strategically important Dilucu corridor which is inserted into Turkey's borders with Armenia, Iran and Nakhchivan starts. Because this corridor is a military region to a large extent, the villages belonging to Turkey were located a little on the west of the border line. Moreover, Kazım Karabekir State Hatchery is located between the border and the villages. In the light of this information, Gödekli, Aşağı Aratan, Yukarı Aratan and Emince are the Turkish villages nearest to the border. İğdir is the biggest city among the settlements close (85 km) to the border on Turkish side. İğdir gained a provincial administration status when the border crossings between Turkey and Nakhchivan opened in 1992. The border on Nakhchivan side is located within the administrative boundaries of Sadarak region. The name of this region was given to the border crossing on the Nakhchivan side and it was called Sadarak Gate. The settlements on the Nakhchivan side were located 10 km away from the border. Heydarabad District, Sadarak and Karaağaç villages belonging to Sadarak Rayon and Demirci and Kerimbeyli Villages of Sharur Rayon are nearest to them. Nakhchivan City, the capital of Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, is nearly 75 kilometers away from the border.

#### **V. Mutual Relations Established with the Border**

The short border between Turkey and Nakhchivan can be compared to a border which is intense, strong, and interactive. As it is known, while borders sometimes turn into means of isolation to prevent any kind of relationships and interactions, sometimes they become places which establish strong relationships unlike their negative functions. The border between Turkey and Nakhchivan which we discuss has the ability to depict both cases in the best way. As remembered, Nakhchivan existed under the control of the Soviet Union for some time and it did not have any border relations with its neighbouring countries apart from the Soviet's will. That's why a border crossing was opened between Turkey and Nakhchivan during the period of the Soviet Union. The most important reason for that is that there was already a crossing border which is quite close to the Nakhchivan border between Turkey and the Soviet

Union. As it is known, this border crossing is the Alican Border Gate located between Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic which was under the control of the Soviet Union like Nakhchivan during these years and Turkey. This border gate is located within the boundaries of İğdir and it is 70 km away from the Nakhchivan border. However, Turkey closed this border crossing in 1993 as a reaction and an attitude towards Armenia when it occupied Karabakh and its vicinity, an Azerbaijani territory. It was summarized in the above paragraphs that Nakhchivan did not establish any relations between with Turkey when it existed under the Soviet rule because of the existence of another border gate in a close location and the Soviet policies. This negative picture and almost “*zero relationship*” gained completely a different view with the collapse of the Soviet Union (1991), the independence of Azerbaijan (1991), and the confirmation of Nakhchivan’s autonomous status as being part of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Turkey did not lose its interest in Nakhchivan when these major changes were experienced and signed a cooperation protocol with Nakhchivan which consisted of items that would start strong relations between the two countries in 1992. Dilucu Border Gate, one of the products of this cooperation protocol, was opened in the same year and broke the wall mission of the border which it maintained for years. The opening of this gate was perceived by Nakhchivan as integration into the second motherland because their connection with the native land was cut and they had to face challenges due to Armenian attacks in the same months (McAdams ve Kocaman, 2013: 101).

Senior officials of both countries attended the opening of the border crossing. Moreover, the public came to the opening with a major crowd and enthusiasm as a result of 70 year yearning and this can be considered as an indicator of warm welcome. Suleyman Demirel, the prime minister of Turkish Republic, made a speech at the opening and he emphasized in his speech that this was not only opening of a bridge but also it was the embracing of two families of Turkish nation which summarized the feelings and opinions about the border (Atli, 2013: 11). The newly opened border crossings in the world come to the forefront due to their economic charms and their priorities. However, in addition to its economic expectations, Dilucu Border Gate caused excitement because of re-establishing cultural, historical, and maybe emotional bonds. In fact, it was understood in a very short time how sincere this excitement was when the cultural relations between Nakhchivan and Turkey and particularly with İğdir were established. The meetings of the kinsmen who lost touch with each other due to the closed border for many years and the cooperation which was easily set up in the field of different activities like music, sports, and art as if they were never separated will be enough to tell this. One of the reasons for the rapidly growing relations just after the opening of the border can be explained with ethno-cultural togetherness of both sides of the border. First, because the same language is spoken on both sides of the border, it is the most important factor that makes the border invisible. To give an example in terms of language and cultural unity, the musicians from Nakhchivan joined the weddings in İğdir and they easily gained a place in the music sector. When it is viewed that whether there was a dominant party in the relations between Turkey and Nakhchivan regarding cultural field, it is revealed that the direction of interaction in the cultural field like history and music moved from Nakhchivan to Turkey. Besides the public’s interest, some cultural practices which can be accepted as a state policy still live and they are also kept alive. The civilization houses, chess (checkmate centres) clubs nearly in every village and museums, theatres and similar cultural elements consisting of different themes in the cities helped Nakhchivan carry them to the Turkish side of the border. Some people assert that the existence of these practices in Nakhchivan was due to long years of the Soviet control. However, we must remind the fact that elements which completely

belonged to the Turkish culture were persevered and existed in here. In this sense, the statues of Dada Gorgud and Koroğlu in Nakhchivan who had an important place in the cultures of both countries give some clues about that.

It is viewed that the number of cultural practices from Turkey to Nakhchivan cannot be underrated. For example, the food culture is transferred from Turkey to Nakhchivan and it is easily maintained in there because Turkish restaurants are opened there (Cağ Kebabı). After the opening of the border, one of the elements which have been transferred from Turkey to Nakhchivan is Turkish TV channels and the other mass media. A population in a wide range of people from craftsmen to local people watches Turkish TV channels. There also some people who watch Azerbaijani national channels as well as Russian and Iranian channels. But with our observations in the country majority of the people follow Turkish media and it can be stated that they have been integrated into Turkey.

Apart from the cultural relations and the interactions which emerged from these, another type of relationship established between the two countries via border is in the field of economics. While Nakhchivan was not regarded as a big market economically (in 2015 the population is 430.000 and the area is 5500 km<sup>2</sup>), the situation is different from the point of Nakhchivan because the blocking which occurred after the invasion of Karabakh and the negative course of Azerbaijani economy for a short time after the collapse of the Soviet Union affected Nakhchivan deeply. It was interpreted that the opening of Turkish border was a great hope and opportunity for Nakhchivan as it did not have any other chance of surviving with the country which it depended on via access road which could be built over Iran. The concrete fruit of this hope began to be harvested economically in the course of time. A series of treaty consisting of economy were signed between two countries and one of the most important one is the treaty of border trade. A border trade regarding the export and import of some goods which two countries agreed upon started in March 1993 with this special treaty (Güner and Bekdemir, 1999: 129). There are mainly a few sectors which dominate Nakhchivan economy. Selling of some natural sources (salt and some metals), agricultural production, trade and tourism are the main sectors (Zaman, 2014: 85). However, what made Nakhchivan valuable and special for Turkey and particularly for Iğdir was the exemption from customs duty which would be applied on diesel fuel trade with this country. After the purchase and sale of diesel fuel which was much cheaper when compared to Turkish market, a population that earned a considerable amount of income economically emerged in Iğdir, Turkey and Nakhchivan. Due to the reduction of the exemption of this trade in 1996 and its abolition in 2000, diesel fuel was not anymore the main goods of the border trade. With the termination of diesel fuel trade, the border trade weakened gradually and this was understood from the numerical values. Another important aspect of the border relation between Turkey and Nakhchivan is that there is seasonal or short term worker immigration. The direction of this move which can also be regarded as labour emigration is from Nakhchivan to Turkey. Although there are company employees of Turkish origin who purchase construction and large-scale infrastructure works by tender, they are very few in numbers when compared to those who come from Nakhchivan to Turkey. As in almost all states of the former Soviet Bloc., both Azerbaijan and Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic had difficulty in adapting themselves to the free market economy and they suffered heavy economic hardships including mainly unemployment. While the other former Soviet Bloc states struggled with only reconstruction and recovery processes after the dissolution, in addition to these, Azerbaijan and Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic experienced hard times which occurred due to Armenian occupation. Therefore, in that period although a considerable amount of the working population in

Nakhchivan had qualified professions, they faced unemployment due to the employment problems. Turkey- Nakhchivan border which opened in that period made important contributions to both sides and it also provided great opportunities at least in the process of establishment and ensuring security in Nakhchivan. At the beginning the workers from Nakhchivan came to Iğdır, the biggest settlement on Turkish side, to work in farming and construction sectors and then they began to get a place in different fields of business and also they were accepted by their employers. Today the Nakhchivanian workers still work in Iğdır and its villages during the harvest season. If we have to give an example to the transmission of cultural practices via border, the Nakhchivanian stone and marble masters made changes in the shapes of the tombstone in Iğdır, particularly where the Azerbaijani Turks lived and they engraved the pictures of the deceased on the tombstones just like in Nakhchivan and this application was considered to be something new for Iğdır. Although there were families who did not accept these implementations, this cultural element was applied and gained a place in the society. The immigration of Nakhchivanian workers to Turkey, which we called as labour emigration, was not only restricted to Iğdır and they migrated to many cities in Turkey, primarily to Istanbul and Antalya after they learned about the country, saw the opportunities and made contacts. Due to their language skills in Russian and Turkish, the Nakhchivanian workers could find jobs in Antalya in tourism sector and in Istanbul in trade. However, the visa regimes between Turkey and Nakhchivan cause important difficulties for the Nakhchivanian workers. We will not discuss the details here as the mutual visa requirements between Turkey and Nakhchivan and their reasons are another topic of discussion. However, we hold the belief that the friendly relationship between the two countries contradict with these applications.

In terms of economic relations between Turkey and Nakhchivan, Turkey is not only a big market for Nakhchivan but also it is a field for Nakhchivan to meet European economies and to get in contact with them after the collapse of the Soviet Union. It is possible to explain these with the transportation connections of the two countries. The regular flights between Nakhchivan and Istanbul via Turkish Airlines (THY) and the bus services run by the bus companies from Iğdır on the Turkish side of the border from Nakhchivan to many cities in Turkey helped Nakhchivan to get out of its closed structure which is unique to itself. Thanks to these connections, Nakhchivan's dependence on Iran and Azerbaijan decreased. Nakhchivan is thought to be connected to the ongoing construction of the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars Railway and Silk Road project with a secondary road (Kars-Iğdır- Nakhchivan) and thus it will be connected to the further west via another transportation system.

## **VI. Conclusion**

While we were writing this article, undoubtedly the hot topic which many European countries and the world discussed and had the difference in opinions was undoubtedly the issues related to the concept of border. The immigration wave was interpreted by some as the second migration of tribes and it continued largely from the Middle East, Southern Asia, and some countries in Africa towards Europe secretly but openly today, so this immigration wave keeps the hot discussions about the borders on the agenda and it seems that it will continue to keep it on the agenda some more time. Therefore, it is important to state that the studies related to the borders will be important in the future just as it was in the past because these research studies feed the social theory and they also give an opinion to the institutions which develop policy. In our day many countries face big problems due to lack of policy related to immigration and borders. Even the platforms which develop common policies like European

Union experience inconsistencies about the borders within themselves. In our study, we examined the border between Turkey and Nakhchivan and we achieved some results. Accordingly, although the border in question was connected to one another with a border crossing recently (1992), it is revealed that when the history of the border and its vicinity were reviewed, the relations were based on a long history. In particular, it is known that Turkey places special importance on Nakhchivan in accordance with its interest and policies towards Southern Caucasus, Caspian and in general Turkic countries and regions of the Central Asia because this border is considered as an opening move by Turkey.

Ataturk's instructions intended for the delegation working on the agreements which determined the status of Nakhchivan to make intense efforts (Sümer, 1992: 6) seem to summarize Turkey's attitude towards this issue. Turkey is not the only country that shows interest in this area because both Iran and Russia make an effort to have an influence on this area. Moreover, it is important to state that Iran is the second country which has a foreign representative office in the country (Consulate General) apart from Turkey.

The border between Turkey and Nakhchivan has become an intensively interactive border where the physical elements seem to disappear due to the strong relationships established by the two countries because the iron curtain was lifted and there was only the Aras River flowing peacefully. Both countries took opportunities with the border. The relations between the two countries that are not quite different from each other regarding their history, culture and languages have great importance for the Southern Caucasus. Nakhchivan which was called "dead-end-street" before due to Armenian blockage has integrated into the western world via Turkey in our day. As it can be remembered, Turkey carried out the same mission for Georgia which declared its separation from the Soviet Union and was a neighbor of Turkey and Turkey made an effort to integrate Georgia into the western world. Moreover, Turkey would have done the same for Armenia but due to Armenia's occupation of Azerbaijani land and its historical claims about Turkey, this connection has not been established.

In conclusion, it seems that the borders whose visibility increased during the era of nation-states but existence was discussed during the era of modern states will be the subject of much bigger discussions for a long time. We are of the opinion that as long as there are push and pull factors which result from the differences between the development levels of the world countries, the borders will be important. Moreover, what should not escape from the attention is the existence of abstract and virtual borders which cannot be seen with eyes apart from the physical borders and the possibility that they might increase in the future because there are still identity, culture, language, and religion conflicts in our world and the existential meaning the borders carry for these conflicts still continue.

### **Referances**

Agnev, J. and Muscara, L. (2012). *Making political geography* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.

Akengin, H. (2010). *Siyasi coğrafya, insan ve mekân yönetimi*. Ankara: Pegem Akademi Yayınları.

Atlı, C. (2013). Iğdır Nahçıvan ilişkilerinde önemli geçiş noktası Hasret Kapısı- açılışı ve iki ülke ilişkilerindeki rolü. *Uluslararası Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi*, 6(28), 7-17.

Atnur, İ. E. (2001). *Osmanlı yönetiminden sovyet yönetimine kadar NAHÇIVAN (1918-1921)*. Ankara: Atatürk Kültür, Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu, Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları.

Attar, A. (2003). Zangezur ili nasıl ermenilerin oldu? *Askerî Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 1(2), 1-10.

- Bennafla, K., Heyman, J., Wilson, T. ve Van Schendel, W. (2014). "Sınır"ı tartışmak: yuvarlak masa söyleşisi. *Toplum ve Bilim*, 131, 11-31.
- Cohen, S. B. (2009). *Geopolitics: the geography of international relations* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.
- De Blij, H. J. (2009). *The power of place: geography, destiny and globalization's rough landscape*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Diener, A. C. and Hagen, J. (Ed.) (2010). *Borderlines and borderlands: political oddities at the edge of the nation-state*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.
- Dittmer, J. and Sharp, Jo. (Ed.) (2014). *Geopolitics: an introductory reader*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Erim, N. (1952). Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin kuzey doğu ve doğu sınırları. *Ankara Üniversitesi Hukuk Fakültesi Dergisi*, 9(1,2), 1-26.
- Flint, C. and Taylor, P. J. (2014). *Siyasi coğrafya: dünya ekonomisi, ulus devlet ve yerellik* (Çev: Fulya Ereker). Ankara: Nobel Yayınları.
- Green, S. (2014). Sınır araştırmaları: alanla ilgili bazı düşünceler. *Toplum ve Bilim*, 131, 32-43.
- Gümüşçü, O. (2010). Siyasi coğrafya açısından sınırlar ve tarihi süreç içinde Türkiye'de sınır kavramı. *Bilgi*, 52, 79-104.
- Güner, İ. ve Bekdemir, Ü. (1999). Dilucu gümrük kapısından yapılan sınır ticareti ve Iğdır'a etkileri. *Türk Coğrafya Dergisi*, 34, 123-139.
- Karabağ, S. (2008). *Jeopolitik açıdan sınırlar*. Ankara: Gazi Kitabevi.
- McAdams, M. A., Kocaman, S. (2013). Using Historic Preservation as a Para-Diplomatic Agent in Cross-Cultural Conflict Resolution in International Border Areas: A Case Study in the Kars Province in Turkey. *International NGO Journal*, 8(5), 100-107.
- Soysal, İ. (1983). Türkiye'nin siyasal antlaşmaları I. cilt (1920-1945). Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları.
- Sümer, F. (1992). Mustafa Kemal Paşa: Nahçıvan Türk kapısıdır. *Türk Dünyası Tarih Dergisi*, 64, 5-6.
- Şimşek, O. (2010), Nahçıvan'ın jeopolitik ve jeostratejik önemi. *Kafkas Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 6, 111-132.
- Zaman, S. (2014). *Siyasi coğrafya açısından Nahçıvan Özerk Cumhuriyeti*. Ankara: Pegem Akademi Yayınları.
- Zaman, S. ve Coşkun, O. (2014). Turizm coğrafyası açısından bir değerlendirme: Nahçıvan Özerk Cumhuriyetinin turizm potansiyeli. *Kafkasya Üniversiteler Birliği Uluslararası Ağrı Sosyal Bilimler Kongresi 25-27 Eylül 2013- Ağrı kitabı içinde*, (ss: 73-81). Ağrı: Ağrı İbrahim Çeçen Üniversitesi.