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RETHINKING REINTEGRATION PROGRAM FOR EX-BOKO HARAM FIGHTERS: A UTILITARIAN APPROACH

ÖZ *Eski Boko Haram savaşçılarını topluma yeniden entegre etmek etik midir? Teorik bir çerçeve olarak faydacı ahlak ilkelerini kullanan çalışma, eski Boko Haram üyelerini topluma yeniden kazandırma kararının faydacı perspektifle uyumlu olduğunu, çünkü karar vericilerin bunu onları reddetmenin neden olacağı olumsuz etkileri göz önünde bulundurduktan sonra yaptığını göstermiştir. Bununla birlikte, yeniden entegrasyon programının sonucunun faydacı teorinin nihai amacına ulaşmadığını çünkü politika yapıcıların Boko Haram saldırısının hem doğrudan hem de dolaylı mağdurlarının mutluluğunu dikkate almadığını savunmuştur. Çalışma, başarılı bir yeniden entegrasyon programı sağlayacak ve faydacı amacı karşılayacak ahlaki bir karara varmak için, mutlulukları Boko Haram teröründen olumsuz etkilenen insanların endişelerini ve sorunlarının nasıl ele alınacağını dikkate almayı önermektedir.*
Anahtar Kelimeler: *Nijerya, Normatif Etik, Yeniden Entegrasyon Programı, Faydacılık, Boko Haram Saldırısı Mağdurları*

ABSTRACT *Is it ethical to reintegrate ex-Boko Haram fighters into society? Using utilitarian moral principles as a theoretical framework, the study showed that the decision to reintegrate ex-Boko Haram members into the society is in line with the utilitarian perspective because decision-makers did so after considering the negative effects that rejecting them would cause. However, it argued that the outcome of the reintegration program did not lead to the ultimate purpose of utilitarian theory because policymakers failed to consider happiness of both direct and indirect victims of Boko Haram attack. In order to reach a moral decision that will ensure a successful reintegration program and meet the utilitarian aim, the study recommend considering the concerns of people whose happiness has been negatively impacted by Boko Haram terrorism and how to address their issues.*
Keywords: *Nigeria, Normative Ethics, Reintegration Program, Utilitarianism, Victims of Boko Haram Attack*

INTRODUCTION

Is it morally permissible to reintegrate former Boko Haram (BH) fighters into society? This type of question inquires about the characteristics of a good moral decision and its justification (Cox,2021).This paper contends that the best way to approach this type of question is to apply fundamental moral principles in moral philosophy, specifically normative ethics, which covers the issue of what is ethically acceptable and unacceptable(Driver, 2005). Normative ethics could assist us in making good moral judgments, particularly when dealing with situations that create moral dilemmas or have ethical implications. A moral dilemma arises when an individual is confronted with the need to select between conflicting moral values(See, Macintyre, 1990).

Through the lens of utilitarianism moral theory, this study seeks to address the moral concerns stemming from the implementation of the Nigeria amnesty program for BH terrorists. It aims to uncover why the outcomes of the amnesty initiative failed to align with the expectations of the majority of people.

UTILITARIANISM

Utilitarians argued that when determining the rightness of an action, we should consider the consequences of its implementation for the people involved. A right action promotes the happiness of the greatest number of people involved and a wrong action reduces it. In other words, proponents of utilitarianism linked right action to happiness of the greatest number of people (Brink, 2022; Bentham, 2004). Quinton (1973) explains that utilitarianism in "its standard form …can be expressed as the combination of two principles: (1) the consequentialist principle that the rightness, or wrongness, of an action is determined by the goodness, or badness, of the results that flow from it and (2) the hedonistic principle that the only thing that is good in itself is pleasure and the only thing bad in itself is pain" (p.1). According to Shaw (1998), Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832), "who invented the term utilitarian," claimed that "…pleasure was the only good thing in itself, and that states of affairs were to be judged by how much pleasure (or pain) they gave to those involved; the ultimate standard therefore could only be the general happiness" (Bentham & Mill, 2004). Bentham has shown us what we should do every day to advance happiness in society. It simply means that before taking any action, we should consider its potential effects to see if they would lead to happiness. Bentham further maintained that it is the responsibility of the government to support human behaviours that advance happiness and to oppose those that advance suffering in society. In other words, utilitarianism is a moral theory that assesses the rightness and wrongness of human actions based on whether they tend to increase or decrease happiness of greater number of people (Quinton, 1973; Nahra, 2014). Bentham made an additional insightful contribution to knowledge by pointing out that the principle of utility is not only intended to evaluate individual actions but also those of governments(Bentham, 1994).

Bentham demonstrated the criteria that will help us distinguish between right and wrong behavior. He argued that we should consider the propensity of our actions to enhance not only our own but also everyone else's happiness. Concerning measures to prevent pain in human society, Bentham claimed that punishment will be useful in discouraging people from inflicting pain on others since it imposes pain. He added that punishment can only be justified if it contributes to the reduction of crime in society (see Plamenatz and Duignan, 2023). In other words, punishment is necessary to prevent people from acting in ways that are likely to promote pain in society (Draper, 2002). Given that human nature despises pain and

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that punishment is intended to inflict pain on the offender, Bentham's theory that punishment will help deter people from inflicting pain on others makes a logical sense.

With this criteria, one can estimate the level of the pain inflicted on a person as well as the community where the crime was committed. Sverdlik (2022) highlights the factors Bentham claims should be taken into account in order for punishment to be effective and one of these is that attempt should be made to understand reasons that prompted the perpetrator to commit an offence. Bentham further added that punishment helps to promote happiness in society by protecting individuals and state against harm (Bentham, 1830).

In relation to the topic of the amnesty and reintegration program for former BH members, one of the many points made by Bentham in the aforementioned section that I would like to draw attention to is the fact that both individual and governmental actions should be assessed to ascertain the degree to which they have either promoted happiness or pain. This is relevant to this study because the decision to grant amnesty was made by state actors, and the purpose of this study is to determine whether the outcome meets the ultimate goal of utilitarianism, which is the promotion of happiness in society. Using utilitarianism as a guide, this study will demonstrate that basing decisions on the consequences of an action is permissible if it promotes the happiness of all parties involved. It will also demonstrate that the outcome of the reintegration program for ex-BH members is not right from a utilitarian standpoint because policymakers failed to consider factors that will hinder everyone's happiness before implementing the policy.

THE NIGERIAN AMNESTY PROGRAMS AND ITS OUTCOMES

The Umaru Musa Yar'Adua's administration initiated amnesty and reintegration program in 2009 to combat the spread of militancy in Nigeria Niger Delta region (Agwu et al., 2022). The decision to grant amnesty and reintegration program for Niger Delta militants was made on the notion that amnesty would promote peace in the region than military operations against the militants. To put it another way, after considering the benefits and drawbacks of amnesty and military operations, state actors judged that amnesty would advance peace more than military operations against the militants. Even though the outcome of Niger-Delta amnesty and reintegration program did not completely resolve concerns of the Niger-Delta people, relative peace was restored in the region through the implementation of the program (Ofozaba et al., 2023). In other words, granting amnesty to Niger-Delta militants benefitted the state as it augmented happiness in the region, a goal military operation against the militants could not achieve. This method of decision making aligns with the ultimate goal of a normative ethical theory called utilitarianism. This moral theory argues that good decision augments happiness in society while bad decision promotes harm (Das, 2020). According to this moral theory, the consequences of a decision determine whether it is good or bad. Although military action against the Niger-Delta militants may appear to be a justified approach in the sense that Niger-Delta militants used violence to achieve their goal,however, military operation failed to augment happiness, as its application could not stop violent conflicts in the region(Nwankpa,2014). The same idea influenced the decision of the state actors to grant amnesty to ex-BH members and reintegrate them into society(See, Agboga, 2022). They justify the amnesty option by claiming that military operations against BH members were ineffective and that refusing to accept rehabilitated ex-BH members into society would worsen the insecurity problem in Northeast Nigeria

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BH terrorism has made peaceful human coexistence difficult, particularly in Northeast Nigeria (Ajah, 2020). To stop the spread of BH terrorism the government adopted military operations against this sect, however, this counter-terrorism approach could not completely stop BH members from committing terrorist acts (Habibu, 2016)prompting the government to consider granting amnesty to them (Adigbuo, 2014). However, the decision to reintegrate ex-BH members was criticized, especially by direct and indirect victims of BH attack (Vanda, 2018) as the claim made by policymakers that rejecting them would worsen security situation(Agbakwuru,2021) appears to fall short of victims expectations from the government. Many have questioned whether it is morally right to accept reintegrated ex-BH members into society. For example, Onikepo (2021) questioned whether it was morally justified to punish individuals that committed minor offences and grant amnesty to BH members whose acts resulted in the deaths of many innocent people. Some have pointed out, however, that provisions of the Nigerian constitution authorize the state to grant amnesty to offenders, and thus the amnesty granted to Boko Haram militants is considered to be in accordance with the law. For instance, section 175 of the constitution states that the president has the authority to grant pardons to individuals involved in or convicted of offenses (Ngwoke & Abayomi, 2022). Despite the reasons given by policymakers for reintegrating ex-BH members, many victims are opposed to the idea (Owonikoko, 2022). In other words, unlike the amnesty and reintegration program for Niger-Delta militants, that argumented happiness in the Niger-Delta region, the amnesty and reintegration program for ex-Boko Haram members failed to achieve the same goal.

How The Decision To Grant BH Amnesty Fit Into The Utilitarian Moral Argument?

Jeremy Bentham, a utilitarian proponent, appears to suggest that when making ethical decisions, the ideal decision to consider is the one whose end result will generate greater good. In this context, it implies that what defines what is right may not be our idea of what a proper action should be, but rather whether the action we believe to be right will increase pleasure in society when implemented. This supports the idea that amnesty and reintegration programs for repentant ex-BH members are consistent with utilitarian thinking as policymakers focused on what they believe is the best option for preventing the spread of BH terrorism. In other words, they considered every option and chose amnesty as the most effective means of promoting peaceful human coexistence in places where BH terrorism is prevalent. However, what policymakers believe is the best option for promoting happiness for all has not resulted in the happiness of all those affected by BH terrorism. This is the aspect that amnesty falls short of the utilitarian purpose.

Why The Amnesty And Reintegration Program Failed To Achieve The Utilitarian Purpose?

From the foregoing, we can deduce what the goal utilitarians aim to achieve in ethical decision making. This goal is to promote happiness of all and sundry and decisions that help policymakers to achieve this goal is right in their thinking. It is also revealed that utilitarians focus on outcomes of actions to determine decision that will help augment happiness in society. Bentham (1994: 17) demonstrated the relevance of happiness and pain in shaping our behaviors and actions, which I believe is important in understanding why humans react in the way they do for outcomes of decisions they deemed favorable or unfavorable.

Bentham explains:

"Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure. It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do, as well as to determine what we shall do. On the one hand the standard of right and wrong, on the other the chain of causes and effects, are fastened to their throne.

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They govern us in all we do, in all we say, in all we think: every effort we can make to throw off our subjection, will serve but to demonstrate and confirm it"

To know if the outcome of a decision will lead to happiness of everyone that is affected by it, Mitchell (1918) citing Bentham explains:

To a person considered by himself, the value of a pleasure or pain considered by itself, will be greater or less, according to the four follow- ing circumstances: 1 Its intensity. 2 Its duration. 3 Its certainty . . . 4 Its propinquity . . . But when the value of any pleasure or pain is considered for the purpose of estimating the tendency of any act by which it is produced, there are two other circumstances to be taken into the account; these are, 5 Its fecundity . . . 6 Itspurity. . . [When a community is considered, it is also necessary to take account of] 7 Its extent; that is, the number of persons to whom it extends....(p.165).

Bentham termed this method of determining whether an act will cause pain or pleasure "felicific calculus", and he wanted to demonstrate what policymakers should focus on when deciding the proper action, particularly when addressing situations with moral implications. Mitchell attempted to show how this calculation is applied in other to determine whether a decision will produce happiness over pain. Mitchell explains that when "applying the calculus, one begins with the first distinguishable pleasure or pain which appears to be produced by an act, multiplies the number of its intensity units by the number of duration units, and then multiplies this product by the two fractions expressing certainty and proximity"(ibid). What this means is that when making a decision, one should first consider if the outcome would generate more pleasure than pain. If we are faced with a circumstance in which every decision we make must result in both pleasure and pain, will the total number of pleasures produced by the outcome of our decision outnumber the entire number of pains? For example, will the implementation of an amnesty program increase the satisfaction of all those affected by BH terrorism in the community where this decision will be implemented? Will the outcome of amnesty bring more pleasure than pain if amnesty is the best choice to stopping BH terrorism? If it must produce both pleasure and pain, will the overall number of pleasures produced outnumber the entire number of pains? Although Bentham's 'felicific calculus' may be difficult to apply in practice, it is effective in focusing policymakers' attention to factors to be examined in decision-making. This study acknowledges that determining how much happiness or suffering a choice can cause might be difficult because what one individual considers to be happiness in right now may be painful in the future. However, this difficulty may have been averted if some effort had been made to learn what the community and victims think about the idea of reintegrating repentant former BH members prior to their reintegration. This is not to argue that the amnesty program is a bad idea, but understanding what people think about it can help the government find solutions to address their concerns in the amnesty procedure, which will lead to a successful reintegration of ex-BH members. Bentham has provided insightful ideas about how pain and pleasure regulates our behaviours and considering this unavoidable factors in decision making is vital in helping us select a decision that promote happiness in society. It is not wrong to claim that policymakers or state actors have the right to decide what they believe is best for the people they govern; yet, when a decision is inconsistent with the people's expectations of what is just or right, their reactions are likely to result in civil disobedience. For this reason, when it becomes necessary for the government to make a decision that the vast majority of people would deem unfair, it is of the utmost importance to ask for their opinions and engage with them to address their concerns about the decision. John Stuart Mill, a utilitarian, clarified how most people define what is just and unjust. He explains that it is

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widely recognized that everyone should receive what they deserve, whether good or bad. It is considered unjust if someone receives good or suffers misfortune without deserving it. This idea conveys the concept of justice in its most clear and strong form, as perceived by the general public(Mill, 2003). In other words, it is considered unfair if acts that violate the law go unpunished. This could be why scholar like Onikepo(2021) believe it is wrong to offer amnesty to people who have caused harm to innocent citizens. In other words, the outcome of the Nigeria amnesty program failed to promote happiness of all because of these moral concerns. Happiness utilitarians advocate for is the happiness of both offenders and victims. Did policymakers consider the happiness of both victims and reintegrated ex-BH members in their decision-making process?.

The utilitarian principle of maximizing happiness has helped elucidate in this paper the actions essential for promoting happiness and those that should be avoided to prevent the reduction of overall societal happiness. Given that the goal of this paper is to demonstrate how the amnesty and reintegration programs fall short of the ultimate goal of utilitarian principles, which is happiness, it is necessary to discuss what utility or happiness means to utilitarians. Shaw(1998) explains that proponents of utilitarianism evaluate actions based on their usefulness to individuals and that their primary task is to encourage people to choose actions that will increase overall happiness and avoid actions that will decrease happiness in society. To put it another way, utilitarians equate utility to the happiness of all. We can see from the following that utilitarians like Bentham and Mill support actions that serve to increase happiness in society. They also contend that it is the responsibility of the state to advance the wellbeing of its citizens. In other words, according to utilitarians', justice is connected to both individual actions and governmental policies that promote the pleasure of everyone in society (Askari&Mirakhor, 2020).

Utilitarian principles have helped to demonstrate what government policy should have aimed to achieve with the implementation of amnesty and reintegration of ex-BH fighters. In other words, policymakers ought to have evaluated outcomes of amnesty program by its "utility, that is, by the degree to which they have better consequences than alternatives" (West, 2008). It has also demonstrated that individuals are free to pursue goals that they believe will promote their happiness as long as such goals do not cause harm to others. The hedonistic calculus is a contribution of Bentham that is also relevant to this study (Woodward, 2017; Grundstein, 1953). The hedonistic calculus proposes a method for calculating the total number of happiness or pain produced by an action. One method is to assess the extent to which the outcome of a particular action tends to produce either happiness or pain in society. Using this criterion, this study will assess the extent of pain caused by the BH insurgency by examining the experiences of victims: victims' families and communities impacted by Boko Haram terrorism. This approach is necessary because it will allow us to estimate the extent of suffering caused by BH terrorism. And the reality is that BH terrorism affects not only the happiness of direct victims, but also the happiness of those living in neighbouring communities and countries. To give one example, a UN report on the deadly effects of BH terrorism revealed that some of the displaced people are from nearby countries.

The report reveals that "there were more than 2.2 million persons in the country who had been internally displaced as a result of the conflict with Boko Haram, 1.4 million of them in Borno State. Some 186, 000 took refuge in neighboring Cameroon, Chad and Niger. As of August 2016, the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) has managing 15 official camps for internally displaced persons in the newly

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recovered and accessible areas around Borno State, containing over 300, 000 such persons"(cited in Adeyeri & Aluede 2021, p. 142).

Although my primary concern is not the plight of Boko Haram victims in neighbouring countries, however, this approach will assist researchers whose research goal is to investigate the extent to which Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria has affected the happiness of individuals from neighbouring countries. It can also be used to show why the reintegration of repentant ex-BH members was strongly opposed by the vast majority of victims of BH attack and community members. For example, if the number of individuals still suffering from the pain caused by BH terrorism exceeds the number of reintegrated BH members, the pain of their reintegration will automatically exceed the total number of happiness in the society where they were reintegrated.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrated that the decision to grant amnesty to ex-BH members aligns with the utilitarian position in the sense that policymakers believed that punishing them would result in greater evil in society due to the delicate nature of BH terrorism. On the other hand, it demonstrated that the policy's outcome fell short of the utilitarian ultimate goal because it failed to promote the happiness of both direct and indirect victims of BH attacks. According to the utilitarian principle, policymakers must first consider whether their decisions will cause pain or promote happiness for the greatest number of people affected by the situation. This criterion, however, was overlooked because no attempt was made to determine whether such policy would promote victim happiness. As a result, victims were dissatisfied and felt they had been treated unfairly during and after the amnesty proceedings. The ultimate goal of utilitarianism is to promote happiness for all, and in the Nigeria context, the amnesty program failed to meet this target because no attention was paid to understanding how the outcome would affect the happiness of the greatest number of people affected by Boko Haram terrorism. Although it is difficult to quantify the happiness of all people affected by BH terrorism, however, knowing the extent to which BH terrorism has affected the happiness of direct and indirect victims can help determine whether an amnesty program for ex-terrorists will augment happiness in society. Furthermore, utilitarian moral theory places more importance on the outcomes of an action than it does on the motivations that drive people to engage in that action. Based on this, the Nigerian government's decision to grant amnesty to former Boko Haram fighters in order to prevent the spread of Boko Haram terrorism would not have been criticized if the outcome resulted in the happiness of all parties involved. In other words, whether government policy is morally right or wrong in this situation is determined by the level of happiness produced by the amnesty program.

The flaw in the amnesty and reintegration program for ex-BH members is that policymakers failed to address the concerns of victims and community members before reintegrating ex-BH members into society. This contradicts utilitarian goals because utilitarians seek to increase happiness for all. In other words, policymakers should have prioritized the happiness of reintegrated ex-BH members as well as victims and indirect victims of BH attacks, but instead paid less attention to victims and focused more on reintegrated ex-BH members. This paper does not advocate for the rejection of reintegrated ex-BH members, but rather urges the government to investigate victims' concerns and find solutions to their concerns.

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21. YY'DA TEMEL DIŞ POLİTİKA SÖYLEMLERİ ÜZERİNDEN ÇİN DIŞ POLİTİKA ALGISININ ANALİZİ

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ANALYSIS OF THE PERCEPTION OF CHINA'S FOREIGN POLICY THROUGH THE MAIN FOREIGN POLICY DISCOURSES IN THE 21st CENTURY

ÖZ *Algı bireylerin duyularından başlayarak bilginin işlenmesi, yorumlanması ve örgütlenmesi olarak tanımlanabilir. Karar vericilerin algıları yaşadıkları sosyal ve kültürel ortamdan, aldıkları eğitim formasyonu, din ve dil gibi birçok bileşenden etkilenerek politika yapım sürecinde çözümlenmesi gereken bir konudur. Bu makalenin temel amacı algı kavramını ve uluslararası ilişkilerdeki yerini izah ederek 21. Yy'da ÇHC'nin temel söylem ve stratejilerini dış politika algısı bağlamında tartışmaktır. 1980'lerden sonra izolasyon politikası terk edilerek küresel ekonomiye entegre olmaya çalışan, Karma Ekonomi Modelini uygulayan, devlet kapitalizmi olarak adlandırılabilecek politik/ekonomik sistem Çin'in nasıl algılanacağını/tanımlanacağını zorlaştırsa da Çinli yöneticilerin benlik algısı, diğer aktörlerin Çin algısı ve dünyada nasıl bir imaj yaratıldığı sorunsalı oldukça önemli bir yerde durmaktadır. Karar verici elitin kendine özgün dünyayı okuma/algılama biçimi tartışılırken Çinli uzmanlar ve teorisyenler Avrupa-Amerika merkezli bir epistemoloji-ontoloji ve metottan ziyade Çin dış politikasının kendi bağlamı içerisinde anlaşılması gerektiğini düşünmektedir. Özellikle Konfüçyanizm ve Marksist ideolojinin Çin dış politikasına eklemlenen bazı kavram, öğreti ve ilkeleri bulunmaktadır. Bu makalede Çin Komünist Devrimi'nden (1949) günümüze kadar karar vericilerin ürettiği Çin Rüyası, Çin Karakterli Politika, Yüzyıllık Maraton, Sosyal Uyum, Barışçıl Yükselme gibi söylem ve stratejiler üzerinden Çin dış politika algısı tartışılmıştır.*

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Çin Halk Cumhuriyeti, Dış Politika, Algı*

ABSTRACT *Perception can be defined as the processing, interpretation and organization of information, starting from the senses of individuals. The perceptions of decision makers are affected by many components such as the social and cultural environment in which they live, the educational formation they receive, religion and language, and is an issue that needs to be resolved in the policy-making process. The main purpose of this article is to explain the concept of perception and its place in international relations and to discuss the basic discourses and strategies of the PRC in the 21st century in the context of foreign policy perception. Although the political/economic system that can be called state capitalism, which tried to integrate into the global economy by abandoning the isolation policy after the 1980s, applying the Mixed Economy Model, makes it difficult to perceive/define China, the self-perception of Chinese administrators, the perception of China by other actors and what image it has in the world. The problematic of its creation stands in a very important place. While discussing the decision-making elite's unique way of reading/perceiving the world, Chinese experts and theorists think that Chinese foreign policy should be understood in its own context rather than a European-American-centered epistemology-ontology and method. In particular, Confucianism and Marxist ideology have some concepts, doctrines and principles that are integrated into Chinese foreign policy. In this article, the perception of Chinese foreign policy is discussed through discourses and strategies such as Chinese Dream, Policy with Chinese Character, Centennial Marathon, Social Harmony, Peaceful Rising, produced by decision-makers from the Chinese Communist Revolution (1949) to the present day*

Keywords: *People's Republic of China, Foreign Policy, Perception*

GİRİŞ

Güç ve çıkar gibi reel konulara odaklanan geleneksel yaklaşımların aksine postpozitvist kuramlar ve teoriler gerçeklik kadar algının da devletlerin dış politika stratejilerini ve hedeflerini etkileyebileceğini tartışmaktadır. Özellikle karar alma mekanizmasındaki karar verici elitlerin algıları, içinde bulundukları sosyolojik ortamdan, ideolojik yapıdan ve ulusal tarih anlatılarından etkilenmektedir.

Çin Halk Cumhuriyet'inin tarihsel/kültürel birikimi, modern dönemde vuku bulan ideolojik dönüşümler, ekonomik ve teknolojik anlamda yaşadığı olağanüstü değişim ve dönüşüm Çin dış politikasının tüm veçheleriyle anlaşılmasını zorlaştırmaktadır. Bu makalenin temel hedefi Çin dış politikasında üretilen temel söylemlerin ve deklere edilen stratejilerin/hedeflerin hangi yönleriyle algı, hangi yönleriyle gerçeklik olduğunu izah etmektir.

Dünyada yaygın olarak kullanılan Çin tehdidi kavramsallaştırılmasıyla oluşturulan olumsuz Çin algısına karşın 1970'lerden sonra ABD ve diğer Batı ülkelerinin Çin'i dünyaya entegre etme çabaları, Çin'in Sosyal Uyum ve Barışçıl Yükselme söylemleri tartışılması gereken meselelerdir. Bu konuda bazı soruların sorulması gerekmektedir; devletler ve liderler dünyayı nasıl görür, hangi inanç ve değerler devletlerin davranışlarını açıklayabilir? Karar vericilerin zihinleri nasıl işler? Liderler dış politika kararlarını nasıl alır? Çin Halk Cumhuriyeti ve karar verici elitler dünyayı nasıl görmekte ve algılamaktadır? Hangi duygusal, tarihsel ve mantıksal motivasyonlar ya da engeller Çinli karar verici elitin ürettiği dış politika çıktılarını etkilemektedir?

Bu makalede öncelikli olarak dış politika analiz düzeyleri izah edilerek, birey seviyesinde yapılan analizlerde karar verici aktörlerin algıları çözümlenmiştir. İkinci olarak 21. yy'da dış politika algılarını besleyen temel söylemler ve tarihsel dönüm noktaları Çin Halk Cumhuriyeti üzerinden analiz edilmiştir.

DIŞ POLİTİKADA ANALİZ DÜZEYLERİ

Genel olarak geleneksel uluslararası ilişkiler teorileri liderlerin/devletlerin pragmatist olduklarını ve akılcı ilkelerle hareket ettiklerini varsayarlar. Postpozitivist kuram ve teoriler ise kültür, psikoloji, tarihsel geçmiş gibi parametrelerin uluslararası aktörlerin davranışlarını etkileyebileceğini düşünürler.

Dış politika devletlerin resmi dış ilişkiler toplamı olarak tanımlanmaktadır (Hill, 2003:3). Dış politika yapımında olaylar, karar vericiler ve sisteme ait unsurlar hesaplanarak yorumlanır ve genel sonuçlara ulaşılır. Günümüzde dış politika analizi giderek çok faktörlü (multifactorial) ve çok seviyeli (multilevel) hale gelmektedir (Erişen, 2013:355). Farklı değişkenler ve aktörlerin de siyasa yapımına ve karar verme mekanizmasına dâhil olmasıyla sadece sistemik unsurlar değil duygular, psikolojik ve kültürel faktörler karar vericilerin algılarını dolayısıyla politik çıktıları etkilemektedir.

Analiz düzeyi tartışması ilk kez Kenneth Waltz tarafından 1950'lerde yapılmıştır. Bu analiz düzeyleri mikro düzeyden makro düzeye doğru; birey, devlet ve uluslararası sistemden oluşmaktadır. Karar vericilerin rolünün giderek arttığı günümüz dış politikasında özellikle ulus altı aktörler, karar vericiler ve devletlerin özgün değerleri göz önünde bulundurulmaktadır. Harold ve Margaret Sprout dış politikayı şekillendiren iç unsurlara ve dış politikayı anlamada çevresel etkilere odaklanmışlardır (1956). Synder, Bruck ve Sapin dış politikada devlet altı analiz düzeyini geliştirerek dış politika çıktılarından ziyade bireylerin zihinlerini çözümleyerek kararların nasıl alınması gerektiği ile ilgilenmişlerdir (2002). Teorik ve kuramsal olarak yapılan bu çalışmalardan hareketle karar vericilerin algıları devletlerin dış politika stratejilerini ve algılarını belirlemede önemli bir etken olmuştur.

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DIŞ POLİTİKA ANALİZİNDE KARAR VERİCİLERİN ALGILARI

Devlet ve toplum analizlerinde iki metodolojik yaklaşım bulunmaktadır: Birinci yaklaşım her ülkenin benzersizliğini vurgulayarak genellemeyi reddeder. Diğer yaklaşım ise toplumların genel kalıplarını tarihsel yasalar üzerinden değerlendirir (Garnaout vd,2009: 8). Son zamanlarda birinci yaklaşım ön plana çıkarak aktörlerin özgün siyasal kültür değerleri, hafıza kurumları, yatkınlıkları, tehdit ve fırsat algıları doğrultusunda dış politika analizi yapılmaktadır.

Postmodernitenin gelişimiyle birlikte disiplinler artık net bir şekilde ayrılmamaktadır. Bilişsel psiolojinin konusu olan algı, psikopolitika, biyopolitka, psikokültür gibi kavramların ve alt disiplinlerin dış politika analizine eklemlenmesini mümkün kılmıştır. Algılanan dünya adlı eserinde Merleau Ponty (2005) postpositivizm ile birlikte modern bilimin dışladığı algıyı ve sadece rasyonel aklın bilim üretebileceği konusunu tartışmaktadır. Artık yalnızca nesnel bilginin yol göstericiliği değil kişilerin dünyayı nasıl gördüğü ve yorumladığı önem kazanmaktadır. Algı, duyu organları tarafından kavranabilen gerçeklerin zihin tarafından idrak edilmesi ve yorumlanması olarak tanımlanmaktadır (Hodder 2000:5). Uluslararası ilişkiler disiplininde ihmal edilen bu olgu dış politika yapımında bulunan karar verici elitin politik davranışlarının çözümlenmesinde oldukça kritik bir yerde durmaktadır.

Algı konusunun dış politika analizinde önemli bir parametre olmasının birinci nedeni küresel ölçekte güçlü olmak isteyen devletler kendileri ve öteki devletler hakkında geliştirdiği algıları/imajları yöneterek ve yönlendirerek güçlerini sürdürebilirler. Çin'in dünyada potansiyel bir dünya gücü olmasıyla birlikte ABD ve Çin arasında gerçekleşen rekabetin bir diğer adı da algı savaşıdır. Her iki taraf da kendi rüyalarının, önerdikleri dünya düzeninin ve güvenlik anlayışlarının dünya barışına hizmet edeceğini iddia etmektedir. Çin ve ABD arasındaki bu rekabet iki ayrı siyasal kültürün, iki ayrı algılama biçiminin de tartışılmasını gerektirmektedir. Trump'a göre Amerika ve Çin arasındaki ekonomik mücadele aslında açık toplumlar ve kapalı otoriter rejimler arasındaki savaşı temsil ediyor. Bu konuda özellikle Çinli uzmanlar, demokrasinin en ideal yönetim biçimi olarak gösterilirken diğer rejimlerin diktatörlük, otoriterlik gibi kavramlarla ifade edilmesine karşı çıkmaktadır (Wei wei; 2021).

Algı konusunun dış politikadaki öneminin diğer bir nedeni de devletlerin dost/düşman, fırsat/tehdit tanımlarının karar vericinin gördüğü resmi etkilemesidir. Bu konuda realistlere göre devletlerin çıkarı ve akılcı seçimleri dış politikada belirleyici olurken, uluslararası ilişkilere çoğulcu perspektifle bakan teorisyenlere göre uluslararası sistemin özelliklerinin yanında karar verici elitin psikolojik durumları, kültürel kodları ve algıları belirleyici olmaktadır.

ÇİN DIŞ POLİTİKASINDA ALGIYI OLUŞTURAN TARİHSEL BAĞLAM VE POLİTİK SÖYLEMLER

Çin Dış Politikasında "Kendilik" Algısı ve "Öteki" Devletlerin Çin Algısı

Dünyanın en eski medeniyet ve devlet geleneğine sahip olan Çinlilerin kendilerini uluslararası sistemde konumlandırdıkları yer ve diğer uluslar nezdinde nasıl algılandıkları önemli bir tartışmadır. Ekonomik, teknolojik ve siyasal anlamda potansiyel süper güç olan Çin Halk Cumhuriyeti'nde kendilik ve ötekilerle ilgili sahip olduğu algıların çözümlenmesinde tarihsel ve kültürel bazı parametrelere bakmak gerekmektedir.

Tarihsel olarak devletlerin/ulusların yaşadığı zaferler, kayıplar ve travmalar bir kolektif hafıza oluşturur. Kalın'ın da tespit ettiği gibi "Tarih hiçbir zaman sadece geçmişe ait bir yer değildir. Tarih bizimle ve bugünle bilirlikte yaşamaya devam eder. Bizim bugün kendimize, evrene ve varlığa nasıl baktığımızı belirler" (Kalın,

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2018:20). Çin algısını oluşturan tarihsel dönüm noktalarını Holcomble şu şekilde özetlemektedir: Qing Hanedanlığı'nın 19. yy'dan itibaren emperyalist güçlere karşı direnememesi ve Aşağılanma Yüzyılı tecrübesi, 1912'de imparatorluğun ilga edilip Çin Cumhuriyeti'nin kurulması, 1949 Çin Komünist Devrimi'nden sonra kurulan bağımsız Çin Halk Cumhuriyeti, Büyük İleri Atılım (1958), 1960'larda gerçekleşen Kültür Devrimi, 1976'da Mao'nun ölümü ve sonrasında Reform ve Açılım Dönemi (gaige kaifen), 2000'lerden sonra Çin'in küresel bir aktör olması (2017:21).

Ülkelerin benlik tanımlarında hangi konularda kendini istisnai konumda gördüğü de geniş tartışmaların yapılabileceği bir meseledir. Amerika veya İngiliz istisnacılığının yanı sıra Asya'nın yükselişe geçmesiyle birlikte artık Çin istisnacılığı da merak edilmektedir. Çin'de hanedanlıklar kendilerini dünyanın merkezinde görürken çevredeki ülkeleri "barbar"lar olarak telaki etmişlerdir. Çin bir baba gibi çevreyi koruyan, komşu devletleri ödüllendiren veya cezalandıran bir baba olarak tanımlamışlardır. Orta Krallık Sendromu (Middle Kingdom Complex) olarak tanımlanan bu anlayış günümüzde Çin'in güçlenmesi ihtimalinde uluslararası sistemde bir hegemonya yaratabileceği tartışmalarını beraberinde getirmiştir (Pye, 1972).

Çin'in kendilik algısının yanı sıra diğer devletler nezdinde oluşan Çin imajı ve algısının da çözümlenmesi gerekmektedir. Perception and Misperception adlı çalışmasında liderlerin sahip oldukları inançların ve kabullerin algısal yanlışlıklara ve önyargılara neden olabileceği dolayısıyla dış politika kararlarının da buna göre şekilleneceği düşünülmektedir (Jervis, 2017). Bu konuda batı medyasının Çin hakkında çizdiği imaj ve küresel anlamda yarattığı etki Çin için büyük bir zorluk yaratmaktadır. Batılı demokratik değerlere uyulması gerektiği yönünde ÇHC sıklıkla eleştirilmektedir (Hermann, 1980:344).

Özellikle ABD'nin yarattığı olumsuz Çin algısı medya ve sinema gibi araçlarla tüm dünyayı etkileyebilmektedir. İlk kez 1993'te geliştirilen "Çin Tehdidi" kavramı birçok akademisyen ve uzman tarafından kullanılarak siyasal literatüre yerleşmiştir. Bu tehdidin görünen nedenleri şunlardır: Birinci olarak Çin'in artan ekonomik kapasitesinin askeri güce dönüşebilme ihtimali; ikincisi 4 Haziran 1989'da gerçekleşen Tiananmen Meydanı olaylarından sonra Çinli yöneticilerin demokratik değerlere karşı olan tavrı ve bunun yarattığı hayal kırıklığı; üçüncü olarak Çin milliyetçiliği ile artan anti-Amerikan duygulardır (Yee & Storey, 2012: 30).

Buna karşın olumsuz Çin imajı ve algısının değişmesi için komşularla ve diğer aktörlerle pozitif ve olumlu ilişkilerin geliştirilmesi, yumuşak gücün arttırılması, bölgesel ve küresel örgütlerde aktif rol oynanması ve uluslararası sorumlulukların yerine getirilmesi gibi hedefler belirlenmiştir (Sutter, 2012:4-5).

Çok Kutuplu Dünya Düzeni ve Hegemonya Tartışmaları Bağlamında Çin Algısı

Konfüçyüs'ün "Gökyüzünde iki güneş yeryüzünde iki imparator olmaz" tespitinden hareketle Çin'in potansiyel süper güç olması ABD başta olmak üzere diğer Batılı ülkeler nezdinde tehdit oluşturmaktadır. Çin'in bir hegemonya oluşturup oluşturmayacağı sorunsalında teorisyenler farklı düşünmektedir. Bazı teorisyenler Çin'in dünyada hegemonya yaratmak gibi hedefinin olmadığını düşünmektedir. Bu bağlamda tarihsel sürece dikkat çeken Şayegan "Çinliler barutu buldukları halde top yapmayan matbaayı buldukları halde batı Rönesans'ının önemli yönlerinden biri olan dünyanın keşfine çıkmayan tek halktır"demektedir (2003).

1955'te formüle edilen ve 1982'de Çin anayasasında yer alan "beş ilke" Çin dış politikasının temel ilkeleri olarak kabul edilmektedir: Egemenlik ve toprak bütünlüğüne karşılıklı saygı, karşılıklı saldırmazlık, iç işlerine

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müdahale etmeme, eşitlik ve karşılıklı yarar ile barış içinde bir arada yaşama (Lui, 2017:13). Başta Batı ülkelerinde olmak üzere dünyanın çeşitli bölgelerinde artan "Çin tehdidi" algısına karşılık, Çin hükümeti kendisine yönelik kaygıları azaltmak için "barışçıl kalkınma" ve "uyumlu dünya" söylemlerini geliştirmiştir (Zhu, 2013:123).

İkinci olarak 2008 Finansal krizle birlikte yükselen ve çok kutuplu sistemi öneren Çin'in konumu, dış politikası, kültürel ve toplumsal yapısı, ekonomik kapasitesi uluslararası ilişkiler disiplininde en trend meseleler haline gelmiştir. Kapitalist ekonominin sorgulanmasının yansıra ABD'nin süper güç olduğu tek kutuplu dünya düzeni ve Avrupa merkezli paradigma sorgulanarak küresel ekonomik kriz, terörizm, işsizlik uyuşturucu, etnik çatışmalar doğal kaynaklara olan aşırı talep Asya ülkelerini işbirliği ve barışçıl yöntemlerle çıkar elde etmeye itmiştir (İsina, 2013:11). Bu bağlamda dünyada yaşanan ekonomik kriz Çin için bir fırsat yaratmış, mevcut uluslararası sisteme karşı alternatif paradigmalar ve kurumlar geliştirmesine olanak sağlamıştır.

Sonuç olarak Mersheimer ve Friedberg gibi realistler, statükoya karşı olan Çin'in, Amerika'yı zorlayacağını ve Asya'daki hegemonyasını artıracağını düşünmektedirler. Jones Nye gibi liberal uzmanlar ise aksine Çin'in liberal dünya düzenine uyumlu politikalar geliştireceğini öngörmektedir (Fingar, 2016: 2).

Çin Karakterli Dış Politika Algısı

Çin'in vurguladığı Çin Karakteri Chinese Characteristics (zhōngguó tèsè) kavramı dış politikada Mao Zedong, daha sonra Deng Xiaoping tarafından kullanılmış ve bugün Xi Jinping tarafından yeniden gündeme getirilmiştir (Perez-Garcia, 2021:3). Çin istisnacılığını tanımlayan bu terim, Çin'in kendine özgün siyasal kültürü ve tarihsel geçmişi ile oluşan politik ilkeler, değerler ve stratejilere karşılık gelmektedir. İstisnacılık, Çin'in dış politika stratejileri, politik kültürü ve kadim medeniyeti ile mümkün olabileceğine dayanan bir kavramdır.

Çin'de karar verici elitin özgüveninde ve benlik algılanmalarında Çin'in siyasal kültürünün güçlü ve zayıf yönlerin de tespit edilmesi gerekmektedir. Hiyerarşiye saygı, iddialı ekonomik kalkınma hedefleri, ekonomik reformlar ve büyüme oranları Çin Karakterli dış politikada güçlü yönleri oluştururken; yönetimdeki veraset anlayışı, siyasal örgütlenmedeki sorunlar, parti-yönetim ilişkileri temel zayıflıklar olarak kabul edilmektedir (Lockett, 1988:475).

Çin karakterli dış politika algısında öncelikli olarak karar vericilerin ekonomide önerdikleri "Çin Modeli"ni vurgulamak gerekmektedir. 1978 Açık Kapı ve Reform politikasıyla tedricen küresel ekonomiye entegreolan Çin'in en büyük motivasyonu 2000'lerden sonraki yükselişi ve 2008 finansal krizde ABD ve Avrupa ülkelerine göre daha az etkilenmiş olmasıdır. Reform programlarıyla yabancı yatırımcılara alan açmak, serbest piyasa ve bireysel girişimler için fırsat sunmak gibi hedefler belirlenmiştir. Bu hareketlilik ve ekonomik dönüşüm güneybatı sınırlarının ötesindeki devletler de dahil olmak üzere Çin'in uluslararası ilişkilerde bulunduğu konumu dönüştürmüştür (Jacques, 2016: 15). Ekonomik güç, askeri kapasite, bölgesel/küresel etkenliğinin artması ve sonuçta yıllarca izole olan bir ülkenin dünyaya açılması Çin açısından bazı riskleri de barındırmaktadır. Çinliler ticaret vasıtasıyla ötekiyle temas kurarken siyasetçiler toplumun algılarının değişeceği konusunda endişelenmiştir. Çünkü kabul edilmiş değerler, inançlar, ötekiyle temas sonucunda sorgulama ve özelleştirmeyi beraberinde getirir (Hodder, 2000:112).

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1978'den sonra açık kapı ve reform uygulamaları ile "Sosyalist Çin"in kapitalist ekonomisi oldukça büyük bir paradoks olarak görünmektedir. Çin'de neyin komünizme neyin kapitalizme ait olduğu meselesi bir paradoks yaratmıştır. Çin konusunda uzmanlar, bu soruna şu şekilde bir çözüm bulmuşlardır: Çin sosyalizmin erken aşamasındadır, bu nedenle biraz kapitalizmin görülmesi normaldir (Gittings, 2005:104-105). Bu süreçte dogmanın yerini pragmatizm almış komünizmden her türlü ayrılmada "Çin özellikleri" tezahür etmiştir. Çin'e özgün olan "sosyalist piyasa ekonomisi", ülkenin dış dünyayla ekonomik ilişkisini güçlendirerek Çin'i dışa dönük bir ulus haline getirmiş fakat bu durum siyasal modernleşme reform ve açılım döneminde istikrarın ve rejimin devamlılığı için çok sıcak karşılanmamıştır (Fingar, 2016).

Yüzyıllık Maraton Söylemi

Çin'in siyasal tarih sürecine bakıldığında I. Afyon Savaşı (1839-1842) ve II. Afyon Savaşı'nda (1856-1860) yaşanan yenilgiden 1949 yılına kadar olan dönem Aşağılanma Yüzyılı olarak adlandırılmıştır. Bu dönemde Çin, Japonya ve İngiltere başta olmak üzere birçok ülkenin sömürüsüne açık hale gelmiştir. 19. yüzyılın sonlarında, Avrupalı güçler Çin'i "Doğu Asya'nın Hasta Adamı" olarak nitelendirmiştir. Çin'de milliyetçiler ve komünistler arasında gerçekleşen iç savaş sona ererek komünizm lideri olan Mao savaşı kazanmış Çin Halk Cumhuriyeti'nin 1 Ekim 1949 yılında ilan edilmesiyle toplanan "Çin Halk Siyasi Danışma Konferansı Ortak Programı" ile Çin dış politikasının temel ilkeleri ve yöntemi belirlenmiştir (Özalp, 2023:168).

1949'da Komünist devrimin öncüsü Mao Zedong'un politik propagandalarından biri bu yüzyıllık aşağılanmadan kurtularak endüstriyel ve kalkınmış güçlü bir Çin yaratmaktı. Mao döneminde dünyaya kapalı olan Çin, Birleşmiş Milletler başta olmak üzere uluslararası örgütlere katılmak suretiyle uluslararası siteme entegre olmaya başlamıştır. Bu dönemde uluslararası sistemde Çin ile ilgili olumlu bir algının yükseldiği söylenebilir.

Bugün Xi'nin vurguladığı hedef ise 2049'da komünizmin 100 yılını kutlayarak dünyanın süper gücü haline gelmektir. Xi'ye göre Çin'in eski küresel konumuna geri getirmek için dünya ekonomisinin kabaca üçte birine hükmetmek gerekmektedir. Bu görüşe göre Yüzyıllık Maraton'un (The Hundred-Year Marathon) sonunda Çin ulusunun Büyük Uyanışı gerçekleşecek ve Çin Halk Cumhuriyeti, dünyanın en büyük gücü olacaktır (Pillsbury, 2005).

Çin Rüyası Söylemi

Her ulusun kendilik algısı ve imajına sahip olduğu sistemde ABD'nin Amerikan Rüyası İngiltere'nin İngiliz Rüyası literatürde çokça tartışılmıştır. Çin Rüyası fikri her ne kadar Xi döneminde parti tüzüğüne girmişse de bu söylemi ilk kullanan lider Hu Jintao'dur (Ferdinand 2016: 942).

1978-1979 yıllarında basın ekibiyle Japonya, Malezya, Singapur ABD'yi ziyaret eden Deng Xiaoping Çin'in dünyaya entegre olma istediğinin mesajını vermiştir. Yabancı yatırımların, serbest piyasa koşulların geliştirilmesi için yapılan yasal düzenlemeler ve resmi özel ekonomik bölgelerin oluşması sağlanmıştır. Kırsal reformlarla tarım sektörünün serbestleşmiş, zorunlu ürün miktarı düşürülmüş, kentlerde kamu iktisadi teşebbüslerine serbest pazarlama yetkisi verilmiştir. Çin Rüyasının gerçekleşmesi için keskin ideolojik ve model değişikliğini Xiaoping "Gelişme mutlak prensiptir", "Ak ya da kara fark etmez, fareyi yakalayan iyi kedidir" deyimleri ile pragmatist bir açıklama getirmiştir.

Jinping ulusal ihtişamı, Çin karakterli siyasal hedefleri ve stratejileri belirlediği Çin Rüyasını şu şekilde vurgulamaktadır: "İki asırlık hedeflerin gerçekleştirilmesi için Çin'in rüyasını gerçekleştirmeliyiz. 2049'a

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kadar Çin'in harmoni güç ve refah ilkeleri ile dünyanın her yerinde olması gerekir." Bu rüyanın gerçekleşmesi için sadece politik sahada değil aynı zamanda gündelik hayatta da -çocuklardan yetişkinlere kadar- bu propaganda yerleştirilmeye çalışılmaktadır. Okul ve üniversitelerde "Çin'in Rüyası, Benim Rüyam" (China Dream My Dream) başlıklı konuşma ve yazı istenmektedir (Golley vd. 2020:25).

Çin son 30 yıldır her yıl ortalama % 10'luk bir oranla, büyüyen bir ülke konumuna gelmiştir (Guo, 2016: 320). Nominal GSYİH açısından dünyanın ikinci en büyük, satın alma gücü paritesi (SAGP) açısındansa en büyük ekonomisi ve ayrıca dünyanın en büyük mal ihracatçısı ve en büyük ikinci mal ithalatçısıdır . Çin'de metropollerdeki gelişmeler son yirmi yılda kırsaldan kente üç yüz milyon insanın göç etmesine imkân sağlamıştır. Metropollerde, giderek artan yatırımların ve özel girişimlerin varlığı, teknoloji ve inovasyon alanındaki gelişmeler, tarıma dayalı bir ekonomiden endüstriyel ekonomiye geçiş Çin'in dünyadaki siyasal etkisini de artırmıştır. Uluslararası sisteme dâhil olan Çin siyasal etkisini de arttırmak istemektedir. BM DTÖ, APEC, BRICS, ŞİÖ, G 20 gibi örgütlerde ve oluşumlarda belirleyici bir konumdadır.

Çin rüyasının hangi yönleriyle algı hangi yönleriyle gerçekliğe yakın olduğu tartışmasında öncelikle 1978'den itibaren izolasyon politikasının terk edilerek uygulanan reformlar ve ekonomik uygulamaların yer aldığı görülür. Çin'in GSYİH, satın ama gücü, ithalat ve ihracat istatistiklerine bakıldığında hızla büyüyen bir dev ekonomi söz konusudur.

Uyumlu Toplum ve Barışçıl Yükselme Söylemi

16 Ocak 1980'de Komünist Parti merkezi komitesinde Xiaoping, 3 temel alandaki görevi şu şekilde sıralamıştır: Barışçıl Yükselme, Tayvan'ın dahil olduğu Tek Çin ve bazı alanların modernizasyonu (tarım, endüstri, bilim/teknoloji, askeri savunma) (Rozman, 2013:68). Barışçıl yükselme ve uyumlu toplum söylemi Çin'in dış politikasına özgün söylemler olarak tartışılmaktadır. İçte ve dışta uyumun gerçekleştiği, devletlerin barış içinde birlikte yükseleceği söylemine dayanmaktadır. Amerika ve Avrupa'nın merkezdeki liderlik konumunun aksine Çin sosyal uyumun sağlanacağını ve dünya devletlerinin bir mozaiğin parçası olduğunu düşünmektedir.

Çin'in dünyayı algılama biçimine bakıldığında kültürel parametrelerin muhakkak analiz edilmesi gerekmektedir. Örneğin Ahenkli Toplum Anlayışı/Algılayışı Konfüçyüs'e göre iyi idare hükümranın hükümranlığını, kulun kulluğunu, babanın babalığını, oğulun da oğulluğunu bildiği toplumlarda gelişir (Zizek, 2010). Bu statik roller bilindiği takdirde toplumda bir uyum (social harmonious) gerçekleşecektir. Batıda bireylerin dinamik rol algılayışına sahip olan demokrasi ise bu yönetim modelinin aksini önerir. Demokrasiyle yönetilen toplumlarla meritokrasinin ve konfüçyan değerlerin etkili olduğu Çin toplumunun algısının aynı olması beklenemez. Dolayısıyla her topluluğu kendi özgün deneyimleri ve sosyal/siyasal yapısından hareketle incelemek, onların dünyaya hangi pencerelerden baktığını iyi analiz etmek gerekir.

Çin'in dış politika olarak yakın planda dünyaya tek vaat ettiği mega projelerden biri olan Kuşak Yol Girişimi ile devletlerin sadece ekonomik kalkınması değil siyasal sorunların da çözülmesi ve sosyal uyumun gelişmesine katkı sunacağı düşünülmektedir. Tek Kuşak Tek Yol (OBOR) olarak da adlandırılan bu devasa projenin siyasi, sosyal, ekonomik, tarihi ve kültürel etkileri bulunmaktadır. Bir anlamda Hayali Cemaatler olarak mitsel ütopyanın gerçekleştirilmesi için bir girişim olabilir mi sorusunu akıllara getirmektedir (Perez-Garcia, 2021). İpek Yolu'nun canlandırılmasında temel iki hedef şu şekilde özetlenebilir; birincisi ülkenin birliği ve bütünlüğü vurgulanarak tarihsel, ekonomik ve kültürel kapsamda sahip olunan üstünlüğü bütün dünyaya duyurmak; ikincisi ise ulusların özgüllüklerine dokunmadan ve iç meselelerine müdahale etmeden

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yumuşak güç enstrümanlarını geliştirmek (Perez-Garcia, 2021:31). Diğer hedefler ise; siyasal koordinasyon, finansal entegrasyon, ticaret, etkin yatırımlar ve kültürel bağlantılar olarak sıralanabilir (Kulaksız, 2019:50). Bu girişimin beş temel noktada bağlantı sağlayacağı öngörülmektedir; hükümetlere ve bölgesel örgütlere görüşme ve girişim imkânı verecek olan politik alan, lojistiğin ve enerjinin kullanımı için tesislerin bağlantısının sağlanması, engelsiz ticaret bağlantısı için yatırımların teşvik edilmesi ve ticaretin kolaylaştırılmasına yönelik kolaylıklar, finansman kurumlarını kapsayan para akışı, insanları birbirine bağlayacak olan ulaşım güzergahı olması.

Siyasal, ekonomik ve kültürel olarak tartışılan bu amaçlar doğrultusunda Çin'in eşitlikçi bir ilişkiye dayanan işbirlikleri geliştirmeyeceği, bunun aksine tarihsel olarak uyguladığı haraç devletinin yeniden canlanacağı ve asimetrik ilişkiler geliştirerek kendi hegemonyasını oluşturacağı yönünde ciddi eleştiriler ve tahminler yapılmaktadır. Fakat Çinliler bunun bir plan veya strateji olmadığını, öneri veya girişim olarak okunması gerektiğini söylemektedir (Shichor, 2017).

Sonuç olarak barışçı bir uluslararası ilişkiler ortamı Çin'in ekonomik kalkınmasının ve ortaklarıyla olan ekonomik işbirliklerinin gerçekleşmesine olanak tanırken; uluslararası sistemde küresel bir ortak yararın ve sürdürülebilir bir barış ortamının sağlanacağı öngörülmektedir. Barışçıl yükselme ve sosyal uyum söylemi Mandalik Bölge tanımlaması ile de uyuşmaktadır. Bu tanıma göre çeşitli ülkelerin gücünün birleşimi ile çatışma değil uyum olacaktır. Örneğin Türkiye batıyı temsil ederken (xiyu) doğuyu temsilen Çin, kuzeyde Rusya, güneyde Hindistan, mandalik bir bölge oluşturabilir (Dellios & Yılmaz, 2008:15).

SONUÇ

Çin'in siyasal ve ekonomik gücünün artmasıyla birlikte demografik, politik ve kültürel olarak dünyada çok fazla değişiklik olmuştur. Bu değişiklikler farklı alanlardan dikkat çekmiş ve daha ileri çalışmalara ihtiyaç duyulmuştur. Çin dış politikasının çözümlenmesinde algı ve gerçekliğin söylem, eylem ve stratejilerle nasıl inşa edildiğini çözümlemek önem teşkil etmektedir.

Genel olarak Çinli karar vericilerin benlik algıları büyük bir Çin medeniyeti, tarihsel geçmiş ve konfüçyanizmin temel ilkeleri ve komünizmle şekillenmiştir. Çin'in en büyük motivasyonu ekonomik anlamda önerdiği Çin Modelidir. Sosyal Uyum (Social Harmonious), Barışçıl Yükselme (Peaceful Rise-Development) gibi kavramlarla Çin'e özgün bir dış politika terminolojisinin oluştuğunu söylemek mümkündür.

Çinliler hem sömürge çağında yaşanan travmaların tekrarlanmaması hem de tarihsel anlamda kaybedilen ulusal onurun yeniden kazanılması için kendilerine özgün kültürel, toplumsal ve siyasal tecrübelere, değerlere ve ilkelere özellikle vurgu yapmaktadır.

1978'den sonra modernleşme süreci ve reform ve açılım döneminde neoliberal dünya düzenine uyumlanmasından sonra ortadoksi komünist yapısı da çözülür mü sorularını akıllara getirmiştir. Sonuç olarak ekonomik olarak modern fakat politik olarak modern olmayan Çin Halk Cumhuriyeti'nin ticaret vasıtasıyla ötekiyle temas etmesi ve politika yapıcıların algılarını değiştirmesi, yeni fikirlerin ülkeye gelmesiyle kabul edilmiş değerlerin ve inançların toplum tarafından sorgulanması "riskini" beraberinde getirebilir.

Çin'in kendilik algısının yanında diğer devletlerin Çin algısının formüle edilmesi de gerekmektedir. 1980'lerden sonra ekonomik olarak liberalleşen fakat siyasal olarak batılı değerlere karşı direnç gösteren

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Çinliler diğer devletler nezdinde "tehdit" olarak algılansa da uluslararası sisteme entegre olma çabası, sosyal uyum, barışçıl yükselme gibi söylemlerle bu olumsuz imaj değiştirilmeye çalışılmaktadır.

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2010-2016 YILLARI ARASINDA TÜRKİYE-RUSYA İLİŞKİLERİNİ SEKTEYE UĞRATMA İHTİMALİ OLAN OLAYLAR ÜZERİNE BİR DEĞERLENDİRME[1]

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AN EVALUATION OF THE EVENTS THAT HAVE THE POSSIBILITY OF DISTURBING THE TURKEY-RUSSIA RELATIONS BETWEEN 2010 AND 2016

ÖZ *Avrasya coğrafyasının iki önemli aktörü olan Türkiye ve Rusya'nın Kafkasya, Ortadoğu, Orta Asya ve Karadeniz havzasında etkin bölgesel aktörlerdendir. İki ülke bütün bu alanlarda jeopolitik rakip konumundadır. Bu rekabet tarih boyunca iki ülkenin dönemsel özellikleri ile paralel olarak gelişme göstermiştir. Bu bağlamda Türkiye–Rusya ilişkilerinin geleceğinden bahsedebilmek için iki devletin dünü, bugünü ve yarını arasındaki bağı rasyonel bakış açısıyla dikkate alarak olaylara ve olgulara yaklaşılmalıdır.*

2000'li yılların başında Rusya'da Putin ve Türkiye'de Erdoğan döneminin başlamasıyla Türkiye- Rusya ilişkileri rekabetten ortaklığa ve iş birliği anlayışına dönüşmüştür. İki aktör arasındaki ilişkilerdeki bu dönüşüm hem iç dinamiklerin hem de uluslararası sistemde gelişen olayların etkisi olmuştur. İç dinamik olarak, Erdoğan ve Putin'in ikili ilişkilerdeki gelişmeler karşısında takındıkları tavır, ilişkilerin güçlenmesine sebep olmuştur. Dış etken olarak ise Avrupa Birliği ve Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'nin Türkiye ve Rusya'ya uygulamış olduğu yalnızlaştırma ve yabancılaştırma politikası, iki aktörü rahatsız etmiş ve uluslararası arenada, birlikte hareket etmesini sağlamıştır. Ayrıca Ankara ve Moskova'nın Batı ile olan ilişkilerin seyrini değiştirmiştir. Ancak Suriye iç savaşının ortaya çıkması, Rusya'nın Kırım ilhak etmesi, Rusya Hava Kuvvetlerine ait savaş uçağın angajman kurallarına uymaması nedeniyle Türk jetleri tarafından düşürülmesi ve Ankara Rus Büyükelçisi Andrey Karlov'un suikast sonucunda öldürülmesi, Türkiye ile Rusya ilişkilerine zarar vermiştir. Bu çalışma, 2010-2016 yılları arasında Türkiye ile Rusya arasındaki ilişkilere zarar veren olaylar incelenmiştir. İncelemede, iki aktör karşılıklı anlayış, uzlaşma ve başarılı bir şekilde olayları çözmüş ve ikili ilişkileri uzun süren sancılı bir sürece girmesine izin vermemiştir.
Anahtar Kelimeler: Türkiye-Rusya İlişkileri, Suriye Krizi, Uçak Krizi, Kırım İlhakı, Karlov Suikastı.

ABSTRACT *Two important actors of Eurasia, Turkey and Russia in the Caucasus, the Middle East, Central Asia and the Black Sea basin is one of the effective regional actors. The two countries are geopolitical competitors in all these areas. This competition has developed in parallel with the periodic features of the two countries throughout history. In this context, in order to talk about the future of Turkey-Russia relations, events and facts should be approached by taking into account the bond between the past, present and future of the two states from a rational perspective.*

With the beginning of the Putin era in Russia and Erdoğan era in Turkey in the early 2000s, Turkey-Russia relations transformed from competition to partnership and cooperation. This transformation in the relations between the two actors was influenced by both internal dynamics and events in the international system. In terms of internal dynamics, the attitude of Erdoğan and Putin towards the developments in bilateral relations has led to the strengthening of relations. As an external factor, the isolation and alienation policy implemented by the European Union and the United States against Turkey and Russia disturbed the two actors and enabled them to act together in the international arena. It also changed the course of Ankara and Moscow's relations with the West. However, the emergence of the Syrian civil war, Russia's annexation of Crimea, the shooting down of a Russian Air Force warplane by Turkish jets due to not complying with the rules of engagement, and the assassination of the Russian Ambassador in Ankara, Andrey Karlov, damaged the relations between Turkey and Russia. This study examined the events that damaged the relations between Turkey and Russia between 2010 and 2016. In the review, the two actors showed mutual understanding, compromise and successfully resolved the events and did not allow bilateral relations to enter a long painful process.
Keywords: Turkey-Russia Relations, Syrian Crisis, Aircraft Crisis, Crimea Annexation, Karlov Assassination.

[1] Bu çalışma yazarın "Soğuk savaş sonrası Türkiye-Rusya ilişkilerinin yaşanan gelişmeler bağlamında incelenmesi" başlıklı Yüksek Lisans tezinden üretilmiştir.

GİRİŞ

1917-1923 yılları arasında Türkler, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu sonrası yeni devlet kurma sürecine girerken, Rusya da ideolojik dönüşüm sürecine girmiştir. Siyasal hayatta iki devlette yaşanan radikal değişim ve dönüşüm belki de şartların ve sistemin zorlamasıyla iki aktör arsında ilişkiler normalleştirmiştir. Birinci Dünya savaşı sonrası ve 20 Temmuz 1936 tarihinde imzalanan "Montreux Boğazlar Sözleşmesi" ne kadar olan dönem her iki devlet açısından ilişkiler dostluk çerçevesinde ilerlemiştir. İkinci Dünya Savaşı ve ardından Sovyetlerin yayılmacı politikasına ve tehditlerine karşı Batı Blok'unun kurmuş olduğu NATO'ya Türkiye'nin 1952 de üye olmasıyla Türkiye, Batı eksenli politika izlemiş ve Batı Bloku içinde yer almıştır. Ancak 1962 Küba krizi ve 1964 yılındaki Johnson Mektubu sonrasında Türkiye tek taraflı bir dış politika izlemenin doğru olmadığını anlayarak Sovyetler ile ilişkilerini düzeltmek, normalleştirmek ve geliştirmek için adımlar atmıştır. Bunun için Türkiye, Rusya ile ilişkileri düzeltmek adına ilk olarak 1963-1965 yılları arasında Türkiye, Sovyetler Birliği'ne üst düzey makamlarca ziyaretler gerçekleştirmiştir. Yine bu dönemde Soğuk Savaş'ın yumuşama dönemine girmesi ve Sovyet lideri Nikita Kruşçev'in, Türkiye'ye NATO ittifakından çıkmaksızın kendileriyle iyi ilişkiler kurulabileceği teminatını vermesi, ilişkilerin normalleşmesini hızlandırmıştır. Bu iki ülke arasındaki normalleşmenin sonucunda 1966'da ilk kez Sovyetler Birliği lideri Leonid Brejnev, Türkiye'yi ziyaret etmiştir.

1991 yılında Sovyetlerin lağvedilmesiyle soğuk savaş dönemi sona ermiştir. Soğuk Savaş'ın sona ermesi, uluslararası siyasal sistemde ciddi bir değişim- dönüşüm süreci ve ülkeler açısından eksen kaymaları yaşanması, Türkiye- Rusya ilişkilerinde yeni bir döneme girmesine neden olmuştur. Bu bağlamda 1991-2000 yılları arasında yaşanan sorunlara ve krizlere rağmen genel çerçevede iki aktör arasında ilişki, iç ve dış dinamiklere bağlı olarak hem siyasi hem de iktisadi alanda rutin seviyede gelişme sağlanmıştır.

2000'li yılların başından itibaren Türkiye'de Erdoğan, Rusya'da Putin'in etkisi ve yaklaşımları, iki aktörün birbirlerine karşı uzun süren rekabet politikasını değiştirmiştir. İki aktörün söylem ve uygulama düzeyinde tutarlı ve istikrarlı davranması neticesinde rekabet yerine ortaklık ve iş birliği anlayışı hâkim olmuştur. Dolayısıyla bu dönüşümde, ikili ilişkilere hâkim olan iç unsurların yanı sıra uluslararası alanda yaşanan gelişmeler, her iki ülkenin bu gelişmeler karşısında takındıkları tavır, ikili ilişkilerin gelişimini etkilemiştir. Özellikle Avrupa ve Amerika Birleşik Devletleri (ABD)'nin Ankara ve Moskova hükümetlerine uygulamış olduğu yalnızlaştırma ve yabancılaştırma politikaları, Türkiye ve Rusya'nın bu politikalara karşı duydukları rahatsızlık, iki tarafın Batı ile olan ilişkilerinin seyrini değiştirmiştir. Ancak 2008 sonrası dünyada, uluslararası sistemde yaşanan gelişmelerle birlikte ikili ilişkiler tekrardan güncellenerek, Türkiye ile Rusya arasında bölgesel rekabet canlanmıştır. 2011 yılında Suriye iç savaşının ortaya çıkması ve 2014 yılında Rusya'nın Kırım'ı ilhak etmesi, 2015 yılında yaşanan uçak krizi ve Rus elçinin Ankara'da suikast sonucu öldürülmesi, Türk-Rus ilişkileri 2000'li yılların başından beri gerçekleşen tarihi yakınlaşmanın kırılmasına ve 2000 sonrası ikili ilişkilerde en kötü seviyelere gerilemesine sebep olmuştur. Ancak bu krizleri Türkiye ve Rusya, uzun soluklu bir sürece taşımamış ve hatta Rusya uçak krizini 8 ay gibi kısa bir dönemde unutmuş ve 15 Temmuz darbe girişiminde Rusya, Türkiye'nin yanında yer almıştır.

Dolayısıyla 2010-2016 yılları arasında ulusal, bölgesel ve küresel düzeyde gerçekleşen olaylar Türkiye ve Rusya ilişkilerini etkilemiştir. Bu çalışma Suriye krizi, Kırım'ın ilhakı, 2015 uçak krizi ve Rusya Büyükelçisi Andrey Karlov'un öldürülmesi üzerinden Türkiye- Rusya ilişkileri irdelenmiştir. Başka bir ifade ile 2010-

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2016 yılları arasında Türkiye ile Rusya arasındaki ilişkileri etkileyen olaylar üzerinden bir inceleme yapılmıştır.

Çalışmanın amacı, yukarıda belirtilen olayların Türkiye-Rusya ilişkilerini nasıl bir etki ve ne gibi bir sonuç ortaya çıktığı incelenmektedir. Bu çerçevede, çalışma konusunu ve amacını açıklamaya yardımcı olacak iki soru sorulmuştur. Bu sorulardan birincisi, 2010-2016 yılları arasında Türkiye ile Rusya arasındaki ilişkileri olumsuz etkileme potansiyeli olan olaylar nelerdir? İkincisi ise, bu olayların neticesinde Türkiye ile Rusya arasındaki ilişkiler dondurulmuş mudur? Bu iki sorunun cevaplanması ile bu çalışma, Türkiye- Rusya ilişkileri ile ilgili yazılı kaynaklara katkı sağlaması öngörülmektedir.

Araştırma sorusu ile ilgili varsayım, Türkiye ile Rusya ile ilişkiler özellikle Erdoğan ve Putin döneminde liderler düzeyinde gerçekleştirilen diplomasi ile stratejik ortaklık seviyesinde yürütülmüştür. İki aktör arasındaki ilişkileri olumsuz yönde etkileyebilecek ve dondurulabilecek olaylar karşısında Erdoğan ve Putin, olayları, güvenlik ve çıkar merkezli yaklaşarak ikili ilişkileri sekteye uğramasına izin vermemiştir.

Çalışma dört bölümden oluşmaktadır. Birinci bölümde, Suriye krizinin ortaya çıkması sonrası Türkiye ve Rusya'nın bu krize yönelik tutumu ve davranışları irdelenmektedir. Ayrıca Suriye krizinin çözümünde iki aktör arasında ortaya çıkan fikir ayrılıkları da ele alınmaktadır. İkinci bölümde, Rusya'nın uluslararası hukuka aykırılık teşkil edecek olan Kırım'a uyguladığı askeri müdahalenin, Türkiye ile Rusya arasındaki ilişkilerde nasıl bir etki yarattığı ortaya konulmaktadır. Üçüncü bölümde, uçak krizinin Türkiye–Rusya ilişkilerine yansıması açıklanmaya çalışılmaktadır. Dolayısıyla bu bölümde, uçak krizinin hangi koşullarda meydana geldiği, etkileri ve sonuçları değerlendirilmektedir. Dördüncü bölümde, Karlov suikasti sonrası Rusya'nın Türkiye'ye yaklaşımı ve iki aktör arasındaki ilişkilerin seyrini nasıl etkilediği incelenmektedir.

SURİYE KRİZİNİN TÜRKİYE-RUSYA İLİŞKİLERİNE ETKİSİ

17 Aralık 2010 tarihinde Tunus'ta bir gencin kendini yakması ile başlayan ve protestolar ile devam eden Arap Baharı, Ortadoğu özelinde domino etkisi göstererek birçok Arap ülkesini etkilemiş, uluslararası sistemde değişimler yaratmış ve antidemokratik liderlerin devrilmesine sebep olmuştur (Sağsen, 2011). Arap Baharı sürecinde Rus lider Putin, Suriye'deki hegemonyasını kaybetmemek için Suriye lideri Beşar Esad'ı desteklemiştir. Rusya'nın bu desteği neticesinde, Esad rejimi devrilmemiş ve sürecin devamında muhalifler arasında iç savaş yaşanmıştır. Türkiye ise Esad'ın devrilmesini destekleyerek muhaliflere yardım etmiştir. Bu bağlamda Ankara ve Moskova arasında Suriye politikasında ciddi düşünce farklılıklar görülmüş ve dolayısıyla Türkiye-Rusya ilişkilerini doğrudan olumsuz yönde etkilenmesi beklenmiştir.

Rusya, Arap Baharı sürecinde ilk başta Suriye olmak üzere Ortadoğu da başlayan halk ayaklanmalarının kısa sürede sonlanacağını düşünmüş ve buna paralel olarak Mısır ve Tunus'ta sessiz kalarak temkinli hareket etmiştir. Fakat bu süreç, Moskova'nın Ortadoğu politikasını siyasi ve ekonomik ilişkilerinin kilit ülkeleri olan Libya ve Suriye'ye sıçraması ile Rusya, daha aktif bir politika izlemeye başlamıştır. Özellikle Suriye de yaşanan olaylara doğrudan müdahil olmuştur. Sebebi ise, Suriye'nin Rusya açısından Ortadoğu'ya açılan kapısı olmasıdır. Bu nedenle, Esad rejimi Moskova'nın bölgedeki politikaların devamlılığı ve sürekliliği açısından önemlidir (Karadağ, 2017).

Beşar Esad, 2000 yılında Suriye'de iktidara gelmesiyle babasından farklı olarak Sovyet ideoloji yerine pragmatik bir dış politika benimsemiştir (Duran, 2011). Bu nedenle, Rusya ile ilişkileri sıkıntılı bir sürece girmiştir. Türkiye ile ilişkileri ise 20 Ekim 1998 tarihinde Türkiye ve Suriye arasında imzalanan Adana

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Mutabakatı ile olumlu bir ivme kazanmıştır. Özellikle Türkiye'de, 2002 yılında tek başına iktidara gelen AK Parti ile ikili ilişkiler en üst seviyeye çıkmıştır. Özellikle ABD'nin 2003 yılında Irak'ı işgal etmesi ve bu durumu Ankara ve Şam hem ulusal hem de ortak güvenlik anlayışı olarak algılaması nedeniyle ikili ilişkiler daha da güçlenmiştir. Dolayısıyla 2000'li yılların başında Türkiye ile Suriye arasındaki ilişkiler, olumlu yönde bir seyir izlemiştir (Maden, 2011).

Arap Baharının ilk başladığı dönemde hem Suriye'nin diğer Ortadoğu ülkelerine göre ekonomisi daha iyi durumda olması hem de Esad rejimine karşı muhalefetin olmaması nedeniyle Suriye'ye isyan hareketlerinin sıçramayacağı düşünülmüştür. Ancak Beşar Esad'ın Filistin yanlısı ve İsrail karşıtı politikaları, bu beklentilerin aksine Suriye, Arap Bahar'ının en kanlı cephesi olmuştur (Ataman, 2012)

Suriye krizinin çözümünde Türkiye ve Rusya farklı politikalar benimsemiştir. Nedeni ise, 2000 yılı ile birlikte her iki ülkenin Ortadoğu coğrafyasına yönelik aktif bir dış politika geliştirmesidir. Türkiye, Erdoğan'ın iktidara gelmesi ile ülkenin dış politika önceliğini Ortadoğu'ya verirken, Vilad%emir Putin ise Kafkaslardan sonra Ortadoğu'ya ağırlık vermiştir (Çağlar, 2012). Nitekim Suriye krizinde Ankara, Esad rejiminin değişimini savunarak, yerine Suriye halkının demokratik bir şekilde seçilen iktidara bırakılmasını müdafaa etmiştir. Moskova ise, Esad rejiminin korunması gerektiği yaklaşımını savunmuştur (Duran, vd. 2012). Rusya'nın bu yaklaşımının Arap Baharı, uluslararası sisteme dayanan hesaplaşmalar ve etkiler, Suriye'deki maddi çıkarlar ve din olmak üzere dört temel nedeni vardır (Trenin, 2013).

Erdoğan ile Beşar Esad arasında 2010 yılına kadar ilişkiler, yakın temas çerçevesinde gerçekleşmiştir. Bu dönemde Türkiye bağlamında Suriye, Ortadoğu'ya açılan bir kapı; Suriye açısından ise Türkiye, batıya açılan bir köprü olarak görülmüştür (Çağlar, 2012). Dolayısıyla 2002-2010 yılları arasında ikili ilişkiler "sıfır sorundan" neredeyse "sıfır ilişkiye" ve tam bir uyumdan, dolaylı bir çatışmaya dönüşmüştür (Kellner ve Roza, 2013).

Arap Baharı ile ortaya çıkan halk hareketlenmeleri, 2011 yılında Suriye'de etkisini göstermiştir. Türkiye, Suriye'de yaşanan halk ayaklanmasına karşılık Beşar Esad'a reform yapması gerektiğini vurgulamıştır. Bu amaçla, 6 Nisan 2011'de Erdoğan, dönemin Türkiye Dışişleri Bakanı Davutoğlu'nu Suriye'nin başkenti Şam'a göndermiştir. Şam yönetimi ile ikili görüşmeler gerçekleştiren Davutoğlu, Esad rejimine Kürtlere kimlik verilmesini, ordunun şehirlere sokulmamasını ve olağanüstü halin kaldırılmasını tavsiye etmiştir. Ancak Esad, yapmış olduğu açıklamada, Türkiye'nin tavsiyelerini dikkate almadığı görülmüştür (Has, 2012). Davutoğlu, Suriye'de yaşanan halk ayaklanmasının devam etmesinin Türkiye'nin bölge çıkarlarına ters düştüğünü ve bundan dolayı da Davutoğlu, krizin çözümünü sağlamak amacı ile ağustos ayında tekrar Şam'a gitmiştir. Davutoğlu ile Beşar Esad, reform hakkında görüşmeler düzenlemiş ve 14 maddelik bir yol haritası üzerinde uzlaşma sağlanmıştır. Ancak daha sonra Beşar Esad, uzlaşılan yol haritasını uygulamaya sokmayacağını açıklamıştır. Davutoğlu, Ankara'nın tavsiyelerine ve iki ülke tarafından uzlaşılan yol haritasına uyulmamasını "…artık Suriye ile konuşulacak bir şey kalmamıştır." (Aljazeera, 2014) şeklinde açıklama yapmıştır ve birtakım siyasi, ekonomik ve askeri yaptırımlar uygulanacağını belirtmiştir.

Suriye'de yaşanan halk hareketlenmelerine karşılık Beşar Esad, sivil insanları öldürmüştür. Dolayısıyla Esad, insan hakları ihlal etmiştir. Esad'ın bu katliamı, BM Güvenlik Konseyi'ni harekete geçirmiş ve BM Güvenlik Konseyi, ilk olarak 21 Nisan 2011'de Suriye krizi temelinde Esad'ı gündeme almıştır (Ağır ve Aksu, 2017). ABD, Almanya, Fransa ve İngiltere Esad rejiminin uygulamış olduğu şiddeti kınayarak sorunun kesin çözümü konusunda rejime çağrıda bulunmuştur. Ancak Rusya, bu durumu, Suriye'nin iç sorunu olduğunu

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savunmuştur. Rusya, bu nedenle Suriye iç sorununu BM Güvenlik Konseyi'nde görüşülmesine karşı çıkmıştır. Daha sonra BM Güvenlik Konseyi, 4 Şubat 2012 ve 19 Temmuz 2012'de Esad rejiminin Suriye'deki katliamı durdurulması hususunda tekrar gündeme almış ancak bu gündem, Rusya'nın veto hakkını kullanması ile başarısızlıkla sonuçlanmıştır (Çalışkan, 2016).

Türkiye, tavsiyelerine ve uzlaşılan yol haritasına uygulamaktan vazgeçen Esad rejimine yönelik Suriye politikasında, revizyona gitmiştir. Ankara'nın bu yeni Suriye politikası, Esad rejiminin sona ermesi ve Suriye halkının tekrar sandığa gidip demokratik yöntem ile yeni bir hükümetin kurulmasıdır. Rusya ise, Türkiye'nin Esad rejimini değiştirme politikasına ilk başta temkinli yaklaşsa da devam eden süreçte Esad'ın Suriye'de devam etmesi gerektiğini savunmuştur (ORSAM, 2012). Rusya'nın Esad rejimini desteklemesi, Moskova-Şam ilişkilerine pozitif etki yaratırken, rejimin değişmesini isteyen Türkiye ile ilişkilerinde ise negatif etki yaratmıştır.

Türkiye ile Suriye arasında gerilen ilişkiler, 22 Haziran 2012 yılında Türkiye'ye ait F-4 tipi savaş uçağının Esad rejimi tarafından düşürülmesi (Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Dışişleri Bakanlığı, 2012) ve daha sonra Suriye'nin Tel-Abyad bölgesinden 3 Ekim 2012 tarihinde Türkiye'nin Akçakale ilçesine atılan top mermisi ile daha da tırmanmıştır (Orhan, 2012). Rusya, Ankara-Şam arasında artan gerilimde ilk açıklamayı, Rusya Federasyonu Yakın Doğu özel temsilcisi olan Bogdanov'dan gelmiştir. Bogdanov'a göre, Türkiye ve Suriye arasında yaşanan olayların tekrarlanmaması için iki ülke ait güvenlik güçlerinin doğrudan diyalog kurması gerektiğini belirtmiştir (Sputniknews, 2012). Dışişleri Bakanı Lavrov ise, Ankara-Şam arasında "sıcak hat" kurulması gerektiğini ve bu gerçekleşirse, Türkiye ile Suriye arasında yaşanan bu tip olayların önlenebileceğini ifade etmiştir. Esad rejimi, Rusya'nın "sıcak hat" önerisine onaylasa da Türkiye bu öneriyi kabul etmemiştir (Kök, 2012).

10 Ekim 2012 tarihinde Moskova'dan Suriye Havayolları'na ait bir yolcu uçağında silah taşındığı yönünde istihbarat alınmıştır. Türk tarafı, bu istihbaratı dikkate almış ve yolcu uçağını Türk savaş jetleri, Ankara Esenboğa havaalanına indirmiştir. Güvenlik birimlerinin yapmış olduğu incelemede, uçağın kargo bölümünde askeri malzemeler bulunmuştur. Türkiye bu malzemelere el koymasıyla Türkiye ile Rusya arasında ilişkilerde gerilim yaşanmıştır. Ancak Rus Dışişleri Bakanı Lavrov, Türkiye'nin bu olayda Chicago sözleşmesine dayanarak uluslararası hukuktan doğan haklarını kullandığını açıklayarak, iki ülke arasında yaşanan gergin ortamı yatıştırmıştır (Özel, 2015).

Suriye'de yaşanan iç savaş, Türkiye'nin sınır güvenliğini tehdit oluşturmuştur. Türkiye, bundan dolayı, Aralık 2012 yılında Suriye sınırına konuşlandırmak amacıyla NATO'dan patroit füzeleri talep etmiştir. Davutoğlu, başta Rusya olmak üzere hiçbir ülkenin, Türkiye'nin NATO'dan talep ettiği patriot fuzesi ile ilgili endişe duymaması gerektiğini belirtmiştir. Ankara'nın bu açıklamasından sonra Rusya Federasyonu Dışişleri Bakanlığı sözcüsü Lukaşeviç, bu talebin bölgeye istikrar getirmeyeceğini ifade etmiştir. Lukaşeviç ayrıca; "Türk mevkidaşlarımıza önerimiz tamamen farklıdır. Potansiyelinizi, kısa sürede Suriye'deki taraflar arasında diyalog ortamının sağlanması için, Suriye muhalefetini etkilemek üzere kullanınız" (Kök) açıklamasında bulunmuştur. Lavrov ise, Suriye'de Esad rejimine karşılık oluşabilecek herhangi bir gruplaşmanın tarafı olmayacaklarını belirtmiştir (Reuters, 2012).

Erdoğan, iki ülke arasında yaşanan krizin ne Ankara'ya ne de Moskova'ya fayda sağlamayacağını öngörerek Rus lider Putin'e milli bayram münasebetiyle kutlama mektubu göndermiştir. Bu mektup ikili ilişkilerin iyileşmesi adına olumlu bir adım olmuştur. Türkiye'nin atmış olduğu bu adım, iki aktörün Suriye

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konusunda fikirlerin aynı seviyeye gelmese de taraflar arasında daha çok çözüm merkezli görüşmeler yapmasını sağlamıştır. Görüşmelerin ilk adımı ise Ağustos 2016 yılında gerçekleşen Erdoğan-Putin zirvesidir. Bu zirve de Ankara'nın en önemli kazanımı, Türkiye'nin Özgür Suriye Ordusu (ÖSO) aracılığıyla IŞİD için kritik önemdeki Cerablus'a düzenlemeye planladığı Fırat Kalkan operasyonunu, Rusya tarafından sert tepki gösterilmeyeceği ve Rusya'nın bu operasyona karşı bir adım atmayacağı ile ilgili uzlaşı sağlanmasıdır (Erşen, 2016).

Esad rejimi ile muhalifler arasında Halep'te yaşanan şiddetli çatışmaların durdurulması için Türkiye, birçok defa güvenli bölge oluşturulmasını talep etmiştir. Ankara'nın bunu talep etmesindeki neden, Halep'te zarar gören sivil halkın tahliye edilmesi içindir. Bundan dolayı Ankara, yukarıda da değinildiği gibi Ağustos 2016'da çatışmaların durdurulması amacıyla İran ve Rusya ile görüşmeler başlatmıştır. Erdoğan bu süreçte, Ruhani ve Putin ile birçok kez görüşmüştür. Aynı yılın Ekim ayında Esad rejiminin ve muhaliflerin silahlarını bırakması, sivil halkın Halep'ten tahliyesi ve bu bölgelere insani yardım ulaştırılması niyetiyle liderlerle detaylı görüşme yapmıştır. Bu görüşmeler sonucunda aralık ayında tahliyeler başlamıştır. Tahliyeler sonrası Türkiye, Rusya ve İran'ın Suriye krizinin çözümü konusunda kendi aralarında görüşme trafiğini devam etmesinin önemli olduğunu açıklamıştır. Daha sonra liderler, 20 Aralık 2016'da tekrardan toplantı düzenlemiştir. Bu toplantı Türkiye, İran ve Rusya Dışişleri Bakanları tarafından Suriye krizinin çözümü konusunda ortak bir adım atmak için Moskova'da gerçekleştirilmiştir. Görüşmeler neticesinde sekiz maddeden oluşan "Moskova Bildirgesi" olarak kayıtlara geçen bir anlaşma metni yayınlanmıştır (Sayın, 2017).

Rusya, Suriye krizi çözüm sürecinde Esad'lı bir geçiş dönemini savunurken, Türkiye ise bu geçiş sürecine Esad'ı muhatap olmadan katılacağını açıklamıştır. Daha sonra Türkiye tarafı Moskova bildirgesini imzalanmasının Suriye krizi çözümünde önemli bir adım olduğunu belirtmiştir. Nitekim, Kasım 2015 uçak krizi ardından Türkiye ve Rusya arasında normalleşmeye başlayan ilişkilerin tekrardan gerilmesini engellemek için Suriye krizi çözümü konusunda iki tarafta uzlaşmak adına politikalar ortaya koymuştur. Bununla birlikte Moskova bildirgesi Türkiye ve Rusya'nın Suriye krizi konusunda uzlaşmaya varması, iki ülke bağlamında hem stratejik ortaklığın devamı hem de devam eden Suriye'deki iç savaşın çözülmesi açısından önemlidir (Karadağ, 2017).

KIRIM SORUNUNUN TÜRKİYE-RUSYA İLİŞKİLERİNE ETKİSİ

Kırım sorunu, Sovyetler Birliğinin dağılmasından sonra Rusya ve Ukrayna arasında ortaya çıkan temel sorunlardan biridir (Marples, vd. 1995).

2000 sonrası Rusya'da iktidar değişmiş ve Putin'in iktidara gelmesiyle Rusya'nın Ukrayna üzerindeki politikaları değişmiştir. 2004 "Turuncu Devrimi" ve sonrası batı yanlısı Yuşçenko'nun Ukrayna'da iktidara gelmiş ve dolayısıyla Ukrayna'daki bu siyasi iktidar değişimi, Ukrayna ile Rusya arasındaki ilişkilerin gerilmesine neden olmuştur. İki ülke arasındaki bu gergin ortam Kırım'da hemen etkisini göstermiştir. Ukrayna'nın AB veya NATO'ya olası katılımını Rusya, ulusal güvenliğini tehdit olarak algılamıştır. Rusya, bundan dolayı Ukrayna ve Kırım üzerindeki politikalarını, tutumunu ve davranışlarını değiştirmiştir (Sarıkaya, 2014).

Moskova ile Kiev arasındaki kriz, 2014 yılında AB ve Ukrayna arasında imzalanması öngörülen Ortaklık ve Serbest Ticaret Anlaşması'nın gerçekleşmemesi üzerine başlamıştır. Bu antlaşmanın imzalanmamasına tepki gösteren batı yanlısı Ukraynalılar, Yanukoviç yönetimine karşı protestolar başlatmıştır (Sarıkaya). Bu

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protestolar ülke geneline yayılmıştır. Ukrayna yönetimi protestolara daha fazla dayanamayarak istifa etmiştir. Ancak ülke yönetimine tekrar Batı yanlısı bir politikacı olan Poroşenko'nun gelmesi ile özellikle Rus nüfusun ağırlıklı olduğu Kırım ve Doğu Ukrayna'da protestolar, iç savaşa dönüşmüştür (Sandıklı, vd. 2014).

Rusya yanlısı Ukraynalı siyasetçiler ve sanatçılar, toplantılar düzenleyerek Rusya'dan yardım istemiştir. Rusya, bu çağrıyı dikkate alarak hem Rusya'dan hem de Ukrayna'dan oluşturmuş olduğu milislerle Kırım'ı, 27 Şubat 2014'de ilhak etmiştir (Sarıkaya). Rus yanlısı milisler başbakan olarak Sergey Aksenov seçmiştir. Aksenov, Kırım Otonom Cumhuriyeti'nin hukuki statüsünün belirlenmesi için bağımsızlık ve Rusya'ya katılım referandumu gerçekleştirileceğini açıklamıştır (Özdal, vd. 2014).

Sonuç olarak Kırım, Rusya Federasyonu tarafından ilhak edilerek Rusya'nın 22. otonom cumhuriyeti olmuştur. Bu durum Rusya'nın Karadeniz'deki siyasi, askeri ve ekonomi gücünü arttırmıştır (Sandıklı, vd.). Batılı ülkeler Kırım'ın Rusya tarafından işgal edilmesine karşılık ekonomik yaptırımlar uygulama kararı almıştır. Türkiye bu yaptırım kararını uygulamamıştır. Ancak Türkiye, Kırım Tatar Türklerinin tutumu olan Ukrayna'nın sınır bütünlüğünü desteklemiştir (Akbaş, 2018).

UÇAK KRİZİNİN TÜRKİYE-RUSYA İLİŞKİLERİNE ETKİSİ

24 Kasım 2015 Salı günü Rus Hava Kuvvetleri'ne ait SU-24 askeri uçakları, Suriye sınırındaki mevzileri bombalarken Türkiye sınırını geçmiştir. Sınırı geçen savaş uçaklarına çok sayıdaki uyarı yapılmış ancak bu uyarılara pilotlar duymazlıktan gelmiştir. Netice olarak, Rus savaş uçakları Türkiye hava sahasını ihlal etmiştir ve bu ihlallerin devam etmesi sonucu Türk jetleri angajman kurallarına uymuştur. Dolayısıyla Türk jetleri, Türkiye sınırını ihlal eden Rus savaş uçaklarını, Hatay Yayladağı bölgesinde vurarak, düşürmüştür. Bu olay sonrası Ankara ve Moskova arasındaki ilişkiler, kısa süreli kopmuştur ve ciddi bir krize yol açmıştır (Şahbazov ve Şahtahtı, 2016). Rus uçağı düşürüldükten sonra hem Türkiye hem de Rusya kendisini haklı çıkaracak söylemler ve kanıtlar üretme gayreti içine girmiştir. Türkiye, Rus savaş uçağını defalarca Türkiye hava sahasını ihlal ettiğini, uçağın radar izini gösterecek şekilde delillerle ortaya koyarken, Rusya ise, daha çok iki taraf arasındaki güç kapasitesinden kaynaklanan farkın verdiği güçle kendi tezlerini meşrulaştırmaya çalışmıştır (Özlük, 2015).

Türkiye, daha öncede Suriye sınırında Suriye'ye ait hava araçlarını etkisiz hale getirmiştir. Türkiye'nin bu kadar sert bir tavır takınmasının nedeni, 22 Haziran 2012 tarihinde Türk Hava Kuvvetlerine ait RF-4E Phantom tipi savaş uçağının herhangi bir uyarı yapılmaksızın Suriye Lazkiye kentine 8 mil/ 15 km mesafede denize düşürülmesidir (Bostan, 2012). Olay sonrası Ankara, Suriye ve Irak sınırı kapsayan angajman kurallarının değiştirmiş ve Türkiye'den izin almadan sınıra yaklaşan herhangi bir tehdit unsur/unsurlarını anında karşılık verileceğini açıklamıştır (Türkten, 2015). Bu açıklamadan sonra ilk önce 23 Mart 2014 tarihinde iki adet MIG-23 Suriye savaş uçağı, daha sonra 16 Mayıs 2015'te Suriye Hava Kuvvetlerine ait bir askeri helikopter Türkiye hava sahasını ihlal etmiş ve bundan dolayı Türkiye, yeni angajman kuralları gereği ihlal eden yabancı unsurlar, Türk savaş jetleri tarafından vurulmuştur (Baykara, 2017).

Türkiye ve Rusya arasında ilişkileri etkileyebilecek birçok bölge vardır. Bu bölgeler; Balkanlar, Kafkaslar, Karadeniz ve Ortadoğu'dur. İfade edilen bu bölgeler Ankara ve Moskova'nın çıkarları örtüşmekte ve ayrışmaktadır. İki aktör arasında bu bölgelerde örtük bir rekabet, zaman zaman da açıktan bir karşı karşıya gelme söz konusudur. Daha öncede belirtildiği gibi Suriye'de Ankara muhalifleri, Moskova ise Esed rejimini Suriye iç savaşında desteklemiştir. Putin, Rus dış politikasında uygulamış olduğu "revizyonist" politikalar

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Suriye'de 2015 yılı itibariyle etkisini göstermeye başlamıştır. Bu bağlamda Rusya, Esad rejimini Suriye'deki hava gücünü güçlendirmek için Eylül 2015'te Rus hava birliklerini konuşlandırmıştır. Rus hava birlikleri, 30 Eylül 2015 tarihinden itibaren Suriye'de hava operasyonlarına başlamıştır (İmanbeyli, 2015).

Ankara- Moskova hattı açısından Türkiye'nin Suriye sınırında uygulamış olduğu yeni angajman kuralları, ikili ilişkiler etkilenmiş ve Rusya, Suriye'nin hava sahasını korumak adına adımlar atmıştır. Bunun ilk adımı olarak da 30 Eylül 2015 tarihinden itibaren Rusya, kendi menfaatini ve emniyetini gerekçe göstererek Esad rejimi ile birlikte bölgedeki teröristlere havadan saldırı düzenlemiştir. Bu saldırılarda Rusya Hava Kuvvetlerine ait savaş uçağının 3-4 Ekim tarihlerinde, Türk hava sahasını iki defa ihlal etmiştir. Olay sonrasında Ankara-Moskova arasında diplomatik görüşmeler gerçekleştirilmiştir. Görüşmelerde, Türkiye net bir tavır sergilemiş ve Türk sınırını ihlal edilmesi durumunda yeni angajman kurallarını uygulanacağını taraflara iletmiştir (Baykara, 2017).

Rusya, Türkiye'nin yeni angajman kuralları konusundaki tutumunu dikkate almamıştır. Bu bağlamda, Rusya'nın Suriye'deki hava operasyonları sırasında Rus savaş uçakları Türkiye sınırını tekrardan ihlal etmiştir. Rus savaş uçakları ile Türkiye'nin kendi sınır güvenliğini korumak için devriye görevi yapan Türk savaş uçakları karşı karşıya gelmiştir. Söz konusu bu durum her iki aktör açısından da istenmeyen bir senaryodur. Ancak bu senaryo, 24 Kasım 2015 tarihinde Rus savaş uçaklarının Türkiye hava sahasını ihlal etmesi ile gerçekleşmiş ve bu ihlalin neticesinde Türkiye, angajman kurallarını uygulayarak Rus savaş uçağını düşürmüştür (Taşçı, 2015).

Olay sonrası Türkiye sakinliğini koruyarak uluslararası hukuk çerçevesinde elindeki tüm delileri BM ve NATO'ya gönderirken, Rusya ise, Türkiye ile stratejik ortaklığı yok sayarak duygusal, kırıcı ve yıkıcı tavırlar sergilemiştir (Yılmaz ve Hazır, 2016). Bu çerçevede ilk olarak Putin, "Rus uçağının düşürülmesini sırtımızdan bıçaklanmak olarak yorumluyoruz" şeklinde açıklamada bulunmuştur (CNNTÜRK, 2015). Ardından Putin, Türkiye'ye ekonomi ve ticari yaptırımlar uygulamak için Rus hükümetinin ilgili makamlarına talimat vermiştir. Bunların yanı sıra Suriye'de Esad rejimine karşı Türkiye'nin desteklediği muhalif gruplara karşı Rusya, hava saldırılarını yoğunlaştırmıştır (Çopuroğlu ve Karpuzcu, 2017).

Yaşanılan olayda, savaş jetlerinde bulunan iki Rus pilot paraşüt ile 500 metre arayla atlamış ve pilotlardan biri muhalif grupların yerden açmış olduğu ateş sonucu öldürülürken diğeri ise yaralı olarak kurtarılmıştır. Yaralı olarak kurtarılan pilot ilk açıklamalarında Türk sınırına girmediklerini ve Türkler tarafından ikaz edilmediklerini açıklamıştır (Ergan, 2015).

24 Kasım'da Türkiye ile Rusya arasında yaşanan uçak krizi sadece Türk ve Rus devletleri arasında değil bölgesel ve küresel ölçekte bir krizin başlangıcı olma ihtimali söz konusu olmuştur. Çünkü NATO ittifakı üyesi bir devlet, ilk defa Rus savaş uçağı düşürmüştür. Bu sebeple NATO açısından da uçak krizi önem teşkil etmektedir. Ancak, uçak krizi bölgesel ve küresel düzeyde bir soruna dönüşmemiştir (Çopuroğlu ve Karpuzcu, 2017).

Lavrov, kriz sonrası Ankara- Moskova arasındaki vize serbestliğinin askıya alındığını ilan etmiştir. Yine Lavrov, Rus turistlere Türkiye'ye gitmeyim mesajı vermiş ve bu mesaj üzerine Moskova sosyal medyasına bağlı birçok platformda "Türkiye'ye gitmiyoruz" kampanyası başlatılmıştır. Özellikle Rusya, Rus turistler üzerinden Türkiye'yi turizm gelirlerinde zarara uğratmaya çalışmıştır. Aynı zamanda Rusya, Türkiye'ye karşı sebze ve meyve ithalatında ambargo uygulamıştır (Yılmaz ve Hazır, 2016).

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Rusya Kültür Bakanı Viladimir Medinsky, kriz sonrası yapmış olduğu açıklamada, Rusya içerisindeki Türk özerk bölgelerinde TÜRKSOY'un faaliyetlerinin durdurulması tavsiyesinde bulunmuş ve bu konuda ilgili kurumlara talimatları vermiştir. Kültür alanında etkileri sadece bununla sınırlı kalmayarak, Türk Kültür Merkezini kapatılmış ve eğitim alanında da bazı üniversitelerdeki Türk öğrencilerin vizeleri iptal edilmiştir (Yılmaz ve Hazır, 2016).

Türkiye-Rusya ilişkilerinde petrol ve doğal gaz politikaları ve ticareti, her iki ülke stratejisi için önemli bir rol oynamaktadır. Türkiye kullandığı doğal gazın 2014 yılı itibariyle %54 'nü Rusya'dan karşılamaktadır. Bu açıdan Ukrayna örneğinde olduğu gibi Türk kamuoyunda Rusya'nın doğal gaz kesme konusunda Türkiye'ye problem yaşatacağı ile ilgili şüpheler oluşmuştur. Türkiye açısından bu durum, enerji bağımlılığı her zaman için dış politikada elini daraltan ve kısıtlayan unsur olarak karşımıza çıkmıştır (Yılmaz ve Hazır, 2016).

Türkiye ise kriz sonrası olaya duygusal yaklaşmayarak sağduyulu ve tansiyonu düşürmeye yönelik davranışlar sergilemiştir. Türkiye'deki yetkililerin söylemleri ve uluslararası medyaya verdiği mesajlarda olaya karşı üzüntü duyduklarını belirtmişlerdir. Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan, kriz sonrası ilk açıklamasında "uçağın Rusya'ya ait olduğu anlaşılsaydı farklı şekillerde bir ikaz yoluna gidilebilirdi." diyerek konuyu görüşmek üzere Putin ile irtibata geçmek istediğini belirtmiştir. Yine iyi niyet göstergesi olarak Rus savaş uçağından düşen pilotun cenazesini Rusya'ya getirilmesi konusunda Türkiye'nin çabası olmuş ve çabanın sonucunda cenaze, Türkiye Dış İşleri Bakanı Mevlut Çavuşoğlu ile birlikte Rusya'ya gitmiştir (Özlük, 2015).

KARLOV SUİKASTİNİN TÜRKİYE-RUSYA İLİŞKİLERİNE ETKİSİ

Esad Rejimi, Rusya savaş uçakları ile birlikte Aralık 2016'da Halebi tekrar geri almıştır. Bu olaydan sonra Türkiye'de özellikle Rusya büyükelçiliği ve konsolosluğu önünde kendini sözde İslamcı örgüt olarak tanımlayan gruplar tarafından, protesto gösterileri düzenlenmiştir (Hürriyet, 2016). Protestoları düzenleyen bu gruplar Halebi geri alma sürecindeki yaşanan sivil ölümlerin sorumlusunu, Rusya olarak açıklamıştır (AA, 2016).

Bu protestoların ardından Türk-Rus Toplumsal Forumu Eş Başkanı Türk Milletvekili Çonkar, "Burada Rusya'nın rejim üzerindeki etkisi ve yönlendirme gücü bilindiği için Türk halkı bence doğru adrese tepkilerini gösteriyor. Burada Rusya'dan beklentimiz aynen Türkiye'nin göstermiş olduğu insani hassasiyeti Rusya'nın da göstermesidir. Bunu kamuoyunun haklı tepkisi olarak okumak lazım". (SputnikNews, 2016) ifade ederek protesto gösterilerinin haklılığını savunmuştur.

Türkiye'de Rusya'ya karşı artan protestolar, ikili ilişkileri bozmak için yapılmıştır. Nitekim Ankara Büyükelçisi Andrey Karlov, 19 Aralık 2016 tarihinde Ankara'daki Çağdaş Sanatlar Merkezi'nde gerçekleştirilen fotoğraf sergisine katılmıştır. Bu sergide, Ankara Çevik Kuvvet Şube Müdürlüğü'nde görevli Mevlut Mert Altıntaş tarafından düzenlenen silahlı saldırı sonucunda elçi Karlov, öldürülmüştür. Suikast öncesi 20 Aralık 2016 tarihinde, Türkiye-İran-Rusya Dışişleri Bakanlarının Suriye krizi çözümü için Esad rejimi ve muhalifler arasında barış görüşmelerine aracılık etmek adına Moskova'da toplanması planlanmıştır (Türkiye Gazetesi, 2018). Bu yüzden elçi suikastı, bu önemli toplantıdan bir gün önce gerçekleştirilmesi, Türk ve Rus hükümetleri arasında Kasım 2015'te yaşanılan uçak krizine benzer gerilim yaşanması amacı taşımaktadır.

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Rusya medyası, suikast sonrası yayınlanan haberlerde, Rus büyükelçisinin katili, ABD'de yaşayan Fethullah Gülen olduğu belirtilmiştir. (Bu açıklamada Fethullah Gülen terör örgütü ibaresinin yerine İslami bir hoca olarak tanımlanması dikkat çekmektedir.) Karlov suikastı sonrası açılan soruşturmaya göre suikastçı Altıntaş, çok sayıda önemli "elektronik" iz bırakmıştır. İncelenen bu elektronik deliller sayesinde sık sık aradığı tespit edilen çok sayıda FETÖ bağlantılı memurlar tutuklanmıştır (Ivshina, 2019).

Rusya, soruşturma için delil olarak en zor işin terörist Altıntaş'ın bıraktığı telefon ve dizüstü bilgisayarın içeriğine erişmek olduğunu ve Türk güvenlik hizmetlerinin bunu yapamadığını belirtmiştir. Bundan dolayı soruşturmaya Rus özel servisleri de katılmıştır. Türk devlet medyasına göre, Ruslar Altıntaş'ın akıllı telefonunu hacklemeye çalışmış ancak bunu başaramadığını ifade etmiştir (BBC, 2016).

Ancak, Aralık 2017'ye kadar Moskova'dan gelen uzmanların Altıntaş bilgisayarının sabit diskinden alternatif bilgi çıkarma yöntemlerini kullanarak bazı verileri okuyabildiği bildirmiştir Soruşturmaya göre, Karlov öldürmeden önce Altıntaş, tüm dosyaları bilgisayardan silmiştir. Ayrıca Rus uzmanlar sabit diskte terörist Fethullah Gülen'den bahseden iki belgeyi ve hizmet kelimesini içeren 690 dosya bulmuştur. Dolayısıyla, Büyükelçi Karlov suikastıyla ilgili soruşturma hem Ankara hem de Moskova hükümetleri tarafından yakından takip edilmiştir (Ivshina, 2019).

Putin, Karlov suikastı sonrası ilk yapmış olduğu toplantıda saldırganı kimin yönlendirdiğini öğrenmek için soruşturma başlattıklarını ve "…bu cinayet, bir provokasyondur ve Türkiye-Rusya ilişkileri ile Suriye'deki barış sürecini bozmayı hedeflemektedir." (BBC, 2016) şeklinde açıklamada bulunmuştur. Erdoğan ise Putin ile hemfikir olduklarını onun yapmış olduğu açıklamaya benzer ifadeler kullanarak; "Bu, Türkiye ile Rusya ilişkilerinin normalleşme sürecini bozmaya yönelik bir provokasyondur. Rusya yönetimi de Türkiye Cumhuriyeti yönetimi de bu provokasyona gelmeyecek kadar irade sahibidir" (BBC, 2016) şeklinde beyanda bulunmuştur. İki ülke liderlerinin suikast sonrası yapmış oldukları açıklamalarda, olayı soğukkanlı idare ettiklerini ve uçak krizi gibi ikili ilişkilerin gerilmesine ve kopmasına izin verilmediği görülmüştür.

SONUÇ

Arap Baharı sürecinde Suriye'de ortaya çıkan iç çatışma, Türkiye ile Rusya arasındaki ilişkileri yoğunlaştırmıştır. Bu bağlamda, Suriye krizi sürecinde iki ülke arasında hem çatışma hem de iş birliği dönemi yaşanmıştır.

Suriye meselesi Türkiye ve Rusya için hayati önem taşımaktadır. İlk aşamada IŞİD'in yenilgiye uğratılması ve terörün ülkeden kovulması hem Türkiye hem de Rusya için ortak bir hedeftir. Ancak iki ülke arasında terör örgütü noktasında Türkiye için "kırmızı çizgi" olarak ifade edilen PYD terör örgütü konusu, Rusya tarafından bölgede kullanılabilecek ve iş birliği yapılabilecek terör örgütü kapsamında değerlendirilmektedir. Türkiye, Rusya'nın PKK terör örgütünün bir alt kolu olan PYD terör örgütü ile iş birliği yapmasına karşı çıkmaktadır. Bu konu Türk-Rus ilişkilerinde en çok tartışılan konulardan biri olmuştur.

Suriye meselesi Türkiye ve Rusya açısından hayati önem taşımaktadır. İlk aşamada IŞİD'in yenilgiye uğratılması ve terörizmin ülkeden kovulması hem Türkiye'nin hem de Rusya için ortak bir hedeftir. Ancak bu noktada Türkiye için bir "kırmızı çizgi" olarak ifade edilen PYD terör örgütü meselesi Rusya açısından bölgede kullanılabilen ve iş birliği yapılabilen bir örgüt olarak görülmektedir. Türkiye, PKK terör örgütünün

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bir alt kolu olan PYD terör örgütü ile Rusya'nın iş birliği kurmasına karşı olmuştur. Bu konu, Türk-Rus ilişkilerinde en çok tartışılan konulardan biri olmuştur.

Türkiye, Rusya'nın Kırım'ı ilhak etmesi sonrası ABD merkezli Batı'nın Rusya'ya karşı yürürlüğe koymuş olduğu yaptırımları uygulamamıştır. Türkiye'nin bu yaptırımlara uymamasının nedeni, Türkiye ile Rusya arasında özellikle Erdoğan ve Putin döneminde hem siyasi hem de ekonomik anlamda inşa edilen güçlü ilişkilerin etkisindendir. Ayrıca Türkiye'nin tarihsel manada çok önemli bir yere sahip olan Kırım'da yaşanan krize karşı sessiz kalması da Rusya açısından olumlu görülmüştür. Bu olumlu görüş, Türkiye ile Rusya arasındaki ilişkileri etkileyecek olan uçak krizi ve elçi Karlov suikastı sorunun derinleşmesini engellemiştir.

Tarih boyunca Türkiye ve Rusya, ikili ilişkilerde siyasi ve ekonomik çıkarlarını birbirinden ayırmayı bilmiştir. Ancak uçak krizinin ortaya çıktığı ilk dönemde özellikle Rusya, siyasi gerginliği iyi yönetememiştir. Uçak krizi öncesi Ankara ve Moskova en büyük ekonomik ortaklarından biri iken kriz sonrası siyasi anlamdaki gerginlik iki ülke arasındaki en çok ticari ilişkileri etkilemiştir. Bu bağlamda, özellikle ticari alanda Rusya, yüksek ve ani kayıplar yaşarken, Türkiye ise zaman içinde kayıplar artmıştır. Bu olumsuz koşulları gören iki aktörde, karşılıklı olarak olumlu adımlar atarak, ikili ilişkileri normalleştirme çabası içerisine girmiştir.

Türkiye-Rusya ilişkilerinde Soğuk Savaş sonrasında gelişen karşılıklı iş birliği, iki ülkenin birbirlerine yönelik dış politikalarında tek belirleyici unsur olmamıştır. Aslında devletler arasındaki iş birliği sadece dış politikadaki yakın vadeli iş birliğine göre değil, aynı zamanda tarihsel ve jeopolitik gerçeklere göre de şekillenmektedir. Bu açıdan bakıldığında Türkiye-Rusya ilişkileri tarihsel süreci nedeniyle kırılgan bir yapıya sahiptir. Rusya tarihsel süreç içerisinde her zaman Türkiye için bir tehdit kaynağı olmuştur. Bunun nedeni Rusya'nın potansiyel gücüdür. Bu güç zaman zaman yayılmacı bir stratejiye bürünmüştür. Özellikle Osmanlı döneminde her iki taraf da hâkim güç olmak için birbiriyle mücadele etmiştir. Türkiye ile Rusya arasında barışın olduğu ya da en azından savaşın olmadığı dönemlerde bile Türkiye, Rusya'nın potansiyel gücü nedeniyle Rusya'ya şüpheyle yaklaşmıştır. Bu bağlamda, barış dönemindeki ekonomik gelişmelere rağmen Rus askerlerinin Gürcistan'a girmesi ve Dağlık Karabağ sorunuyla ilgili olarak Rusya'dan Türkiye'ye gelen tehditkâr uyarılar Türkiye için her zaman şüphe uyandıran konular olmuştur. Türkiye'nin tarihi ve jeopolitik konumu nedeniyle Rusya'ya yönelik güvenlik endişeleri askeri/güvenlik konularında da devam etmektedir. Bu, iki halk arası ekonomik ve kültürel yakınlaşma olsa da devletler düzeyinde Türk-Rus ilişkileri mesafeli olmasına sebep olmaktadır.

Türkiye ve Rusya küresel, büyük ve bölgesel güç olabilmek için birbirlerine olan ihtiyaçlarının farkına varmıştır. Erdoğan ve Putin dönemi iki aktör arasında ticari, ekonomi ve siyasi olarak birbirlerine bağımlılığı artmıştır. Bu bağlamda, uçak krizi ve elçi Karlov'un suikast sonucu öldürülmesi olayı, iki aktör arasında savaş nedeni olarak sayılabilecek vakalardır. Bu vakalarda iki aktör karşılıklı anlayış ve uzlaşma içerisinde başarı bir şekilde vakaların barışçıl bir şekilde çözülmesini bilmiştir. Hatta bu olaylardan elçi Karlov suikastı, iki devleti birbirlerini daha da yakınlaştırmıştır.

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ASYALI VE BATILI ÇOK YÖNLÜ DİPLOMASİSİNİN ORTA ASYA'YA BAKIŞ AÇILARININ KARŞILAŞTIRILMASI VE ORTA ASYA'NIN TEPKİSİ

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A COMPARISON OF WESTERN AND ASIAN MULTILATERALISM IN THEIR APPROACH TO CENTRAL ASIA AND THE CENTRAL ASIAN RESPONSE

ÖZ *Son 20 yılda Orta Asya'yı Rus etkisinin üssü olarak gören uluslararası ilişkiler söylemine artık meydan okunuyor. Avrupa Birliği ve Çin, sırasıyla Yeni Orta Asya Stratejisi ve Kuşak ve Yol Girişimi aracılığıyla bölgeye olan ilgilerinin arttırmaktadırlar. Her iki plan da bölgeyle ekonomik ve siyasi bağların güçlendirilmesini hedeflemektedir ve bu bölgesel güç dengelerinin değişimine yol açabilir. Amerika Birleşik Devletleri, 2021'den bu yana Afganistan'dan ve görünüşte bölgeden çekilirken, bir kez daha bölgeye müdahil olmak için politikasını yeniden çizme aşamasındadır. Araştırma, Batı ve Asya Çok Yönlü Diplomasisinin Orta Asya'ya yaklaşımını tahlil etmeyi amaçlayacaktır. Batı ve Asya'nın çok yönlü yaklaşımı uzun vadede geliştikçe, Orta Asya üzerinde nüfuz mücadelesi bölgenin kalkınması açısından kritik hale gelecektir. Dünyadaki tüm güçler hakimiyet için yarışırken, Orta Asya devletlerinin tepkisi uzun vadede kritik rol oynayacaktır. Bununla birlikte bu araştırma, Orta Asya'daki Batı ve Asya çok yönlü diplomasisinin, jeopolitik konumu ve çok vektörlü politikası nedeniyle bölgedeki çok taraflılığın pragmatik ve karmaşık mekanizmalarını ortaya çıkardığını ileri sürmektedir.*
Anahtar Kelimeler: Orta Asya, Rusya, Çin, Rekabet, Diplomasi, Çok Yönlü Diplomasi

ABSTRACT *Within the past 20 years, the international relations discourse that conceived Central Asia as a base of Russian influence is now being challenged. The European Union and China have stated their increased engagement in the region through the New Central Asia Strategy and Belt and Road Initiative respectively. Both plans include strengthening economic and political ties to the region, which could result in a shift of power. While the USA has withdrawn from Afghanistan and seemingly from the region since 2021, it has redrawn policy to be once again more involved within the region. The research will aim to deconstruct the approach of Western and Asian Multilateralism to Central Asia. As the approach of Western and Asian multilateralism develops over the long term, the battle for influence over Central Asia will become critical to the development of the region. With all of the world's powers vying for domination, the reaction of the Central Asian states will play a critical role in the long term. Nevertheless, this paper argues that Western and Asian multilateralism in Central Asia exposes the pragmatic and complex mechanisms of multilateralism in the region due to its geopolitical position and multi-vector policy.*
Keywords: Central Asia, Russia, China, Cooperation, Diplomacy, Multilateralism

INTRODUCTION

As independent Central Asia seeks to assert itself on the world stage, the European Union (EU), United States of America (USA), Russia, and China are vying for power; Central Asia is becoming the new battlegrounds of Western and Asian multilateralism. This paper aims to explore the question of what Western and Asian multilateralism looks like in Central Asia, how it acts, and finally, how Central Asia responds to them. For an independent Central Asia, the Western and Asian states vying for power create a pragmatic, multi-vector Central Asia, which translates to increased agency in foreign policy and relations. As a relatively unexplored area of academic and policy research, this paper aims to bridge the gap of knowledge in academic literature of the ongoing policy in Central Asian scholarship. This is done through the compilation, exploration, and analysis of English, Russian, Chinese, Turkish, and Central Asian sources and policy documents.

Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan constitute the landscape of Central Asia. Within the context of this essay, the timeframe of analysis will be between 1991 and 2023. Through utilising the policy papers of the EU, USA, Russia, and China, two distinct understandings of multilateralism and diplomacy emerge. Western Multilateralism, which promotes economic and political cooperation above sovereignty and Asian Multilateralism, which puts sovereignty and stability above all else. This essay will analyse the discourse, mechanisms, and policy applications of Western and Asian Multilateralism through the lenses of realism, liberalism, and constructivism theory. The theories of realism, liberalism, and constructivism are used in conjunction to provide a broader and in-depth analysis, rather than a combination of two theories. Selecting less than realism, liberalism, and constructivism results in an incomplete analysis and understanding of multilateralism in Central Asian. All three theories in conjunction provide the necessary insight into the multi layer diplomatic processes of Central Asia. Succeeding this analysis, a separate section will outline the consequences of the Central Asian identity crisis of the 1990's, and their consequent reaction towards various multilateralisms, through how they function as competitive vectors. Mentions of Turkey and Iran as a distinct mechanism, when relevant, are also included amongst Western and Asian Multilateralism. As a developing form of diplomacy, multilateralism in Central Asia is expected to gain further traction and create a multivector, economically integrated, and global Central Asia.

Literature Review

While there has been significant research into international Organisations and multilateralism in academia, there is a distinct lack of research towards its manifestation in Central Asia. (Stone, 2012) Central Asia was labelled and understood as Post-Soviet Space due to the retention of the Soviet power structure. Central Asia was initially reluctant to leave the USSR. The Central Asian states voted overwhelmingly to renew the Union in 1991, demonstrating a clear interest of the elites to maintain the current relations of power. (Montgomery, 2022) Under Yuri Andropov's campaign of anti-corruption in the early 1980's, many elites had been replaced by pro-Moscow officials. In addition to the decades of purges and russification of the region, the Central Asian leadership had become complacent in their place in the Soviet system.(Montgomery, 2022) However, leadership across the region shifted to a paternal autocracy in 1991 to preserve their position in the hierarchy. In essence, the new leadership was just a rebrand of the previous one. Especially in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan, the leadership

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remained practically unchanged.(Montgomery, 2022) This contributed greatly to the understanding that Central Asia was continuing its previous path as a zone of Soviet (currently Russian) influence in the 1990's due to the unchanged ties it had to Moscow. Due to the perceived impermeability of the Post-Soviet Space, many scholars did not recognise the region as an independent entity in the international relations domain. Therefore, many academic works and policy papers during the late 1990's and early 2000's do not separate Central Asia as an independent entity. This caused Central Asian scholarship to be a subsection of Post-Soviet Space scholarship rather than a category of its own, which has caused a lack of academic interest and output. Due to this limitation, there is a smaller pool of available literature regarding multilateralism in Central Asia compared to other regions. In addition, the lack of extensive language skills in Mandarin, Russian, Kyrgyz, Uzbek, Kazakh, and Tajik have reduced the accessible literature to the author.

İsmayilov (2013) in 21. Yuzyil Rusya Diş Politika Doktrinleri'nde Güney Kafkasya Ve Orta Asya Değerlendirmesi details the historic development of Russian policy towards Central Asia. Ismayilov delves into history and connects it to the present in a deconstruction of Russian domestic and foreign policy objectives. While talking about multilateralism in Central Asia, it is crucial to discuss the effects of Soviet influence across the 20th Century and the legacy that Russia bears in the region. Ismayilov provides great context into the ideology and methodology of the historic progression of Russian foreign policy in Central Asia. This is especially important while considering strategies outlined in policy papers. As outlined in Central Asia: Contexts for Understanding Lewis (2022) points out that the newly formed Central Asian states were thrust in a position where they had to establish and legitimise themselves within the international order. The question of legitimacy was of fundamental importance for the Central Asian states in the 1990's. Even after this transitional period in the 1990's, many still viewed Central Asia as a "Post-Soviet Space". Within this understanding of Central Asia, it is important to analyse the attitudes of other entities towards the Central Asian states to comprehend their approach towards the integration of Central Asia in the international order. This will be very useful in exploring the identity crisis of Central Asia in the 1990's.

Since the 2010's and the colour revolutions across areas of Russian influence, there has been a renewed interest towards Central Asia. This is especially evident in the change of attitude towards Central Asia through four key documents produced by the EU, USA, China, and Russia.

The European Union's shift in attitude towards Central Asia in the 2007 EU Strategy for Central Asia and the 2019 EU Strategy for Central Asia is crucial to understanding the prospects of Central Asia as a new strategic region in the 21st Century. The EU's 2007 Central Asia strategy outlines key areas of focus for the allocation of EU development aid and diplomatic engagement in the region. These areas encompass addressing security threats, safeguarding human rights, fostering economic development, facilitating the growth of transport and energy infrastructure, and upholding environmental preservation. In comparison, the 2019 strategy document focuses more on Central Asia as a commercial and industrial partner.(European Parliamentary Research Service , 2019) The shift from development aid to an upcoming major economic partner demonstrates the evolution of the EU-Central Asian partnership to a new level. The key indicator for this shift is Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan being considered upper-middle income countries, which disqualifies them from developmental aid. The strategy's emphasis on the main players of the region as the EU, Russia, and China demonstrate that the EU has acknowledged it has to

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compete for future cooperation with the Central Asian states. Dzhuraev and Muratalieva (2020) deconstructed the launch of the new EU Strategy for Central Asia in "The EU Strategy On Central Asia". The aim of the article is to evaluate and analyse how the implementation of the new Strategy can be beneficial for both Central Asia and the European Union. Dzhuraev and Muratalieva (2020) argue that the new Strategy is a great step forward from the 2007 policy on establishing closer relations and reacting to the changing status quo within the region. Dzhuraev and Muratalieva understood and contextualised the EU's attitude towards the region in the wake of the US withdrawal of Afghanistan, China's Belt and Road Initiative, and the political ties of Russia throughout the region.

The United States Strategy for Central Asia 2019-2025 by the US Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs (2020) emulates the EU's Strategy for Central Asia 2019 policy paper, however, with the United States as a key actor in the region. It is a very important document to understand and interpret the scope, context, and methodology the US will pursue within Central Asia. Within the paper, policies are outlined in relatively vague terms, although care is given to promote the importance of American influence within the region. This paper is a key document to understand the US perspective on external and internal actors in the region and to what extent the US is willing to expand its influence within Central Asia. It provides a great starting point into integrating the US approach into multilateralism within Central Asia as the crucial method to prevent Chinese or Russian dominance. Through the EU and US strategy documents, the foundations of Western Multilateralism are established in the context of this essay.

Xi Jinping's keynote speech given at the China-Central Asia Summit on the 19th of May 2023 is a clear summary and indicator of how China wants to pursue its strategic objectives in the region. The speech outlines 4 objectives: stability, prosperity, harmony, and interconnectedness in Central Asia.(Jinping, 2023) It further outlines strategies to achieve these priorities, primarily through economic and cultural exchange. The biggest contributor to all of these objectives is the Belt and Road Initiative, launched by Xi Jinping in 2013 in Kazakhstan. Throughout Xi Jinping's speech, it is clear that there is a difference in attitude towards Central Asia by China when compared to the EU and USA. Stability and peace as an objective is a clear distinction from the EU and USA. Clarke (2017)'s "The Belt and Road Initiative: China's New Grand Strategy?," emphasises the BRI as a Chinese attempt at gaining strategic influence and proposing an alternative to US hegemony, while in another view he suggests that the BRI is the manifestation of Beijing's geopolitical goals to break perceived US influence in Central and South Asia. Similarly to Clarke (2017), Zorbay (2019) in Kuşak-Yol Projesi Ve Türkiye'nin Orta Asya Hedefleri suggests the monumental Belt and Road Initiative proposes a potentially gargantuan economic, cultural, and political shift within the region. This expression of Chinese policy, along with the Russian "Near Abroad" forms the foundations of the methodology of Asian Multilateralism. Clarke (2017), Zorbay (2019), and Jinping (2023)'s speech provide useful context to the development of Chinese interests in Central Asia.

The Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation, published 31st of March 2023, outlines the modern understanding of the Russian "sphere of influence". The term "Near Abroad" is used for most of the old Soviet republics, but in essence refers to Belarus, Ukraine, the Caucasian states, and Central Asia. Similarly to China, Russian Federation (2023)'s goals in the Near Abroad are focused on stability, peace-building, integration, and cooperation. The pattern emerging from Chinese and Russian documents is that stability and peace is the priority for all active and developing diplomatic mechanisms in the region. With such close alignment of their goals, Russia and China's position regarding each other becomes

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questionable. Some Scholars have observed that rivalries between rising powers in Asia have introduced an Eastern dimension to the "New Great Game" in Central Asia (Contessi, 2015). Contessi (2015) has argued that the complementarity between the advanced industrial economies and the extractive economies of Eurasia is driving the emergence of a new form of continentalism. While more recent opinions have offered nuanced perspectives on the realism of such a proposition, Contessi (2015) maintains that an expanding Sino-Russian axis could give rise to a "Greater Asia" that challenges the international order. If the trends highlighted in this special issue continue and deepen in the future, they may serve as a corollary to the early assessments mentioned. It is important to note that these assessments are still in their early stages and their future evolution poses considerable challenges. However, this does not mean that the exercise of analysing and anticipating their development should be disregarded. Such assessments present real challenges for analysts and policymakers alike, and therefore, despite being tentative and accompanied by appropriate cautionary notes, they hold both scholarly and policy relevance.(Contessi, 2015)

Multilateralism Theory

Multilateralism is a particularly demanding form of international cooperation. It requires a strong sense of collective identity in addition to shared interests. In the context of the early 21st Century, multilateralism plays a huge role in defining the strategic importance of Central Asia. In exploring the multitude of political and economic interactions surrounding Central Asia, it is important to define what Multilateralism is. According to de Wijk, Thompson, and Chavannes (2020), the Western interpretation of Multilateralism (the dominant understanding in this discourse due to the concept's Western origin) is liberal internationalism. The basis of the definition of Multilateralism rests on G. John Ikenberry who argues that the logic of liberal internationalism is tied to 5 conditions: open trade and exchange, commitment to rule-based order, a form of security cooperation, the idea that power politics can be 'tamed' by building stable relations in pursuit of mutual gains; and finally, that liberal internationalism will foster the spread of liberal democracy(de Wijk, Thompson, & Chavannes, 2020). Furthermore, de Wijk, Thompson, and Chavannes (2020) split multilateral cooperation into 2 categories: "inter-nation" multilateralism based on protecting sovereignty (e.g. NATO, Warsaw Pact, CSTO) and "supranational" multilateralism in which nations relinquish some of their sovereignty in return for additional prosperity and stability (e.g. European Union).

In contrast, Cox (1992) suggests that Multilateralism can only be understood in the context in which it exists, and that context is the historical structure of the world order. He further goes on to say that Multilateralism is also not a passive and dependent activity, and can be seen in cases as an active force shaping the world order(Cox, 1992). Indian scholarship on multilateralism bears resemblance to the ideas of Robert W. Cox and challenges the dominant understanding of multilateralism as liberal internationalism. According to Shahi (2013), Indian scholarship has 4 key tenets:

"Multilateralism is based not on static but on potentially dynamic institutions and rules. Multilateralism is more a function of norms rather than institutions and the normative shifts in multilateralism can be captured through the sociological process of norm localisation which implies the melding of global norms in accordance with the regional culture. Norm localisation is shaped more effectively by regional than global forces. The leadership provided by the actors of new multilateralism goes beyond the structural leadership offered by the global hegemon."(Shahi, 2013)

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To define multilateralism in Central Asia, it is essential to synthesize the approach of different scholarships. The combination of Robert W. Cox's and Indian Scholarship's alternative discourse and the Western discourse on multilateralism, a single definition can be created. Therefore, multilateralism, in the context of Central Asia, is a reactive and evolutionary force of global sociological, political, and economic norms localisation. While the methodology differs between the dominant and alternative discourses, the goal of all parties involved in the multilateral axis of Central Asia is to elicit positive reactions of the indigenous governance towards their own norms.

WESTERN MULTILATERALISM

The broad understanding of multilateralism as a concept generally originates from a Western influenced standpoint. What many consider as multilateralism is the combination of European multilateralism and American multilateralism, under the blanket term Western multilateralism. While American multilateralism can trace its roots to European multilateralism and share common methodology, the unique position of the USA as a superpower has created an exclusive variant of European multilateralism. The EU is classified as a singular foreign policy entity in the context of this essay due to the predominantly economic and social interactions with Central Asia. As a single economic market with centralised regulations on social development, and no direct territorial connection to Central Asia, EU policy towards Central Asia is formulated uniformly. The USA had direct political involvement in the region as recent as 2021, due to the war in Afghanistan, and has had more direct interactions based on counter terrorism and military access with Central Asia. In the 21st Century, Central Asia has gained new importance to the EU and USA, which is reflected in their increased economic and social involvement in the region. This is reflected in the revised strategy documents of the EU (2019 EU Strategy for Central Asia) and the USA (United States Strategy for Central Asia 2019-2025). To understand this shift in attitude, it is imperative to deconstruct the origins of Western multilateralism through analysing the historic institutions contributing to the idea of Western multilateralism. As regional integration is a goal for Central Asia, analysing the origins of the EU could merit a quantifiable methodology on how regional integration organisations develop. As the sole supranational entity in this analysis, the ideas embedded in the foundations of European multilateralism are critical to understanding the policy of the modern EU. Through this analysis, it is possible to discern the practical and policy applications, within the realms of realism, liberalism, and constructivism, of Western multilateralism in the context of Central Asia.

European Multilateralism Discourse

The European Union did not merely appear as a regional supranational organisation without any precedent. While some consider the Holy Roman Empire (HRE) as a direct predecessor to the European Union, prominent scholars such as Peter Wilson, Len Scales, and Tom Scott recognise that there is more depth to this issue.(Coy et al., 2017) Over its 1000 year history, the HRE developed and adapted to become a supranational authority of a significant part of Europe. Its various institutions and practices evolved to preserve the empire, which is evidenced by its outstanding endurance and durability over the course of millenia. The key connection between the HRE and EU, in the context of this essay, is that multilateralism is a millenia old practice in Europe, in one way or another. The HRE presented many institutions that demonstrated cooperation in judicial, economic, and political matters. The development and acceptance of negotiation institutions for centuries of European political development has ingrained a sense of democracy and multilateralism in the political psyche. Negotiation and compromise is easily

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observed across hundreds of treaties and imperial courts that stopped inter-HRE conflict. Even though the HRE has ceased to exist for more than 200 years, its millennial existence is difficult to erase from political thought in Europe. Observing the HRE's legacy on Europe through the lenses of realism, liberalism, and constructivism yields a better understanding of its effects on the EU.

For realists, international anarchy and the fragility of security makes international institutions marginal to state politics. John Mearsheimer defines international institutions in The False Promise of International Institutions as:

"institutions as a set of rules that stipulate the ways in which states should cooperate and compete with each other. They prescribe acceptable forms of state behaviour, and proscribe unacceptable kinds of behaviour. These rules are negotiated by states, and according to many prominent theorists, they entail the mutual acceptance of higher norms, which are standards of behaviour defined in terms of rights and obligations" (Mearsheimer, 8)

Even in the dismissive nature of realism, according to the aforementioned definition, international institutions do have a stake in world politics as propagators of diplomacy. The acceptance of such rules permit a cohesive and beneficial form of multilateral diplomacy for states, especially to smaller states. As states, using these international institutions, permits safer conduct to achieve strategic objectives. In an age where war is both economically, socially, and politically expensive, international institutions aid states to use multilateral diplomacy as a cost effective measure. Even for hardcore realists, this is a substantial alternative to pursue in an anarchical international order. If the HRE is considered a practically powerless and puppet organisation, its capabilities of providing conflict negotiation, political stability, and a platform for diplomacy was desirable. Therefore, a similar institution (EU) is not unexpected to eventually form after its demise. However, the modern manifestation of the institutional platforms of the EU are not sufficiently explained through realism theory.

Liberalism as argued by Robert Jervis and Andrew Moravcsik, is the culmination of societal ideas, interests, and institutions that influence state behaviour by shaping state preferences.(Moravcsik, 1997) This is done through the dissemination of domestic interests aggregated by institutions.(Jervis, 2016) In this context, the various bodies and estates of the HRE represent a liberal viewpoint of domestic interest attempting to shape institutions and policy. The representation of most classes of the population, albeit dominated by monarchy and aristocracy, could be viewed as a proto-liberal code of multilateral conduct.(Whaley, 2006) The various institutions and decision making processes of a binding resolution of the European Union mirror the HRE's approach quite similarly. As a result, the institutional legacy of the HRE and heritage of the EU from a liberal perspective is the adherence to institutional decisionmaking.

In a similar fashion to liberalism and borrowing some themes of realism, constructivism's approach to understanding the HRE's legacy is an amalgamation of history and social understanding. As Jervis (2016) suggests; in the perspective of constructivism, agents and structures do not exist independently, but form, reproduce, and change each other.(Jervis, 2016) The history of supranational institutional development and multilateral negotiation is common social development across the HRE, which, according to constructivism, has evolved into the modern day EU. To interpret the HRE and EU as independent and isolated institutions would be contradictory to constructivism. Therefore, constructivism would argue that the social understanding of supranational identity, combined with the

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history of supranational institutions, presents a continuous narrative of the HRE and EU as the spirit of European Multilateralism.

With established historical institutions of multilateralism, supranationality, and negotiation, there is no surprise that modern discourse of European Multilateralism manifests itself primarily through liberal and constructivist approaches, in the form of economic and political interdependence. According to Amartya Sen (2007), credibility of multilateral engagement accrues from building and nurturing coalitions of interest, taking into account the opinion of others, keeping open lines of communication, and affording respect to different views and values, creates effective and meaningful engagement. The historical legacy and utilisation of multilateralism in Europe makes it a credible and effective style of engagement. However, this is only the case while dealing within the confines of the EU's members. European multilateralism on a global platform represents one aspect of Western Multilateralism. The other aspect being the United States of America and its approach to multilateralism.

American Multilateralism Discourse

As a dominant force in international relations and a part of the common understanding of "Western", the USA has a distinct approach on multilateralism in contrast to the EU. This could be traced back to the liberal internationalism of President Woodrow Wilson. Aptly named as "Wilsonianism" , this idea of promoting democracy, defending human rights, and the spread of capitalism, is America's distinctive approach to multilateralism.(Hoffmann, 1995) Stanley Hoffmann (1995) identifies the revival of Wilsonianism in the Clinton Administration's foreign policy as a pragmatic variant of Wilsonianism. This reincarnation of liberal democratic internationalism aims to expand free trade, democracy, and protect human rights through use of force, if necessary.(Hoffmann, 1995) This is evident from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, whose goals were to establish and promote democracy and human rights, according to US narratives. However, the methodology of American liberal internationalism does not necessarily conform to the liberal methodology of international relations. American foreign policy and its approach to multilateralism can be better understood by being broken down into three methodologies. The unique situation of the USA permits a variety of strategies to be used because of the sheer size of the foreign policy apparatus. The hard and soft power utilised in American foreign policy can be categorised under realism, liberalism, and constructivism methodology.

John Mearsheimer (1994) posits that institutions have minimal influence on state behaviour, and thus hold little promise for promoting stability. From the perspective of the US, it is possible to bypass and avoid international institutions and act using its hard power capabilities. The Invasion of Iraq in 2003 after the controversial United Nations Security Council Resolution 1441, demonstrates that the US is willing to manipulate and bypass international institutions to achieve its strategic objectives. While many states and officials protested the legitimacy of the US invasion, none attempted to actively deny US military action. Even in diplomatic exchanges, there are instances where the US opts to avoid negotiating with international institutions and prefers bilateral arrangements. This is clearly observed in US-Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) member states interactions, where the US has adopted bilateral strategies with the relevant countries instead of engaging with the SCO as an organisation. Ziegler suggests that the US's approach is not necessarily aimed at undermining the SCO but rather acknowledges the organisation's limited effectiveness and internal challenges stemming from competition between China and Russia.(Ziegler, 2013) Therefore, from the realist view, American

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multilateralism cares little for international institutions, merely using them if it is convenient. Hard power, in the form of a global military network is the true avenue of American multilateralism; the sheer size and scale of America's military permits it to diplomatically engage with confidence and impunity.

On the other hand, the US' encouragement and initiative in creating multilateral organisations such as the United Nations, North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), and the Bretton Woods institutions (World Bank and International Monetary Fund) demonstrate that there is a desire to create a liberal international order. Hence it would be unfair to assume that the US does not have any elements of liberalism within its foreign policy. If we apply Jervis' and Moravcsik' understanding to the US, it paints a picture of institutional hegemony. Many international institutions being founded or dominated by the US is a clear contribution of US multilateralism to Western multilateralism. This is similar to the EU's approach to multilateral institution building, but for the US, it is backed through military power in addition to economic power. Therefore, the methodology of societal ideas, interests, and institutions influencing state behaviour by shaping state preferences does not exist. In fact, the opposite is true for the US. American multilateralism. Cox, Lynch and Bouchet (2013:13) in US Foreign Policy and Democracy Promotion argues that "the prime mover of liberal theory is the ability of democratic peoples and governments to maintain an enduring peace among themselves based on their character as individuals, groups and political units." He further suggests that the other components of liberal theory: economic interdependence, multilateral institutions and American leadership complement democracy as constituent elements of the project, but their contribution is merely secondary in the formulation of US Foreign Policy.(Cox, Lynch and Bouchet, 2013) In the context of liberalism, American multilateralism means the ability to manipulate a web of international institutions to advance America's hegemonic stance.

Constructivism is a great methodology for both US policy practitioners and academics to understand the image America creates for itself. Over the course of the 20th Century, the USA has managed to cultivate an image as the defender of democracy, human rights, and capitalism. Multilateralism is a particularly demanding form of international cooperation. It requires a strong sense of collective identity in addition to shared interests. The collective identity of the US lies in democracy and capitalism. Domestically, this has translated into the social understanding that the US has taken the mantle of world hegemon, police, and caretaker of freedom. Jervis reinforces this understanding through how national leaders and the US thinks of itself in certain ways that mould the perception of the US on the world and how leaders behave. This provides the core of the social understanding of what the US' place is in the world. The United States sees itself as devoted to universal values and willing to make sacrifices for the greater good. While this notion could be easily argued against, Jervis uses the example of Iraq being the latest in a series of behaviours that generates great costs and few benefits.(Jervis, 2016) This attitude to provide service to the "greater good" is arguably the greatest contribution of American multilateralism to the understanding of Western Multilateralism.

The combination of realism, liberalism, and constructivism analysis form the discourse of American multilateralism in Central Asia. Each brings a different approach to the discourse: realism manifests in hard power; liberalism manifests in the maintenance of the liberal international order; constructivism directs American actions with a sense of "greater good". With the American discourse established, with

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the combination of the European discourse, it is possible to discern the policy approach of Western multilateralism in Central Asia.

Western Multilateralism in Practice

The combination of American and European multilateralisms form the interpretation of Western multilateralism as a political force of institution building, rules based international order promoting economic interdependence and democracy through its institutional or military power. To analyse the policy approach of Western multilateralism in Central Asia, the EU and US strategy documents for Central Asia must be placed under scrutiny through the perspectives of realism, liberalism, and constructivism, to contextualise the effects of the discourse on policy.

The 2019 EU Strategy on Central Asia revolves around three key pathways, which form the basis of EU-Central Asia cooperation. These are: Partnering for Resilience, Partnering for Prosperity, and Working Better Together.(European Parliamentary Research Service , 2019) The goal of all of these pathways, as outlined by the document, is to "forge a stronger, modern and non-exclusive partnership with the countries of Central Asia so that the region develops as a sustainable, more resilient, prosperous, and closely interconnected economic and political space."(European Parliamentary Research Service , 2019:1) Due to the lack of EU membership in regional multilateral organisations, the EU has adopted to create bilateral agreements called Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (EPCAs), that aim to establish a framework of engagement with signatory Central Asian states. These are created in a way to not obstruct or be exclusive of other cooperation initiatives such as free trade agreements and custom zones. The emphasis on non-exclusivity represents important political signalling towards Russia and China. EU enlargement towards Eastern Europe and potential partnerships in the South Caucasus region in the 2000's caused Russian hostility towards the EU for the supposed instigation of Colour Revolutions and encroachment of Russia's sphere of influence. The EU acknowledges the large influence that Russia and China have over Central Asia via institutional, economic, and political connections, and is actively trying to avoid negative reactions that could close off the entire region.

The United States Strategy for Central Asia 2019-2025 has a central focus on using Central Asia as a stabiliser for Afghanistan and economic cooperation through regional stability. The US Strategy paper outlines five key goals that revolve around regional independence, counter terrorism, connectivity, promotion of law and human rights, and US investment in Central Asia.(US Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, 2020) The strategy, issued in 2020, exists in the context of increased efforts by the US to contain Russian and Chinese influence in Central Asia.(Xianghong, 2020) Policy objectives of the strategy include strengthening Central Asian independence from malign actors, limiting dependency, and advancing US national security interests.(US Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, 2020) The USA is very much pushing for the "C5+1" negotiation platform, encompassing Central Asian states with Afghanistan, to promote territorial integrity and engagement of Central Asian states in Afghan stability. In this framework, the US aims to increase its influence in the region through economic investments into Central Asia and attract Central Asian investments into Afghanistan to contribute towards regional stability. The US also aims to counter Russian and Chinese influence in Central Asia to confine trade routes to areas the US is capable of projecting power in. Chinese circumvention of the Malacca straits and the South China sea through Central Asia for trade would severely hamper US ability to enforce a naval bottleneck, an outcome truly undesirable for US influence on world trade.

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The US and the EU acknowledge that Russia and China are the more dominant players in Central Asia in each of their respective strategies. From a realism perspective, only a conflict or antagonisation of Central Asian states towards Russia and China would allow them to dominate the region. As conflict is too costly and antagonisation of Central Asia is considerably difficult given the existing political, cultural, and economic ties to Russia and China, the EU and the US have to contain and erode their influences passively to be competitive. Following conflict and political agitation, becoming larger trading partners and not provoking Russia and China into retaliatory actions is the most cost effective and long term viable strategy for building Western influence. This is seen in the EU strategy for creating frameworks of trade and the US strategy of improving private sector investment capabilities. In addition, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan are of great importance to the US as after the withdrawal from Afghanistan and the takeover of the Taliban, border security in Afghanistan became a key objective. Consequently, to prevent terrorism spilling over the border to threaten Central Asian stability, investments are being made into reinforcing border security in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.(US Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, 2022) Overall, from a realism perspective, the EU and US acknowledge the current superiority of Russian and Chinese influence in Central Asia and the need to contain this influence via offering lucrative cultural, political, and economic alternatives. Compared to the discourse surrounding Western multilateralism, the policy applications in Central Asia are more passive than expected. This is a clear acknowledgement of the potential escalatory(between the West and Russo-Chinese axis) consequences of aggressive policy in Central Asia.

As the representatives of the Western world, the US and EU hold significant power across many multilateral institutions. However, the regional multilateral institutions in Central Asia mostly remain off-limits for the EU and US, which prevent their engagement in the region to the bilateral format. This is a severe obstacle in the face of liberal engagement by Western multilateralism, which does have a reliance on a rules based, inclusive international order within its discourse. However, the non-interventionist and non-exclusionary economic cooperation approach has yielded results, with the EU becoming a large trading partner of Central Asia.(European Parliamentary Research Service , 2019) In addition, the EAEU member states (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan) have not been forced to choose between EU or Russia, which has eased the permeation of EU influence. The US has a comparatively more cultural approach, with the promotion of Western values and English through academic and social exchange programmes taking the lead. Both the US and EU, however, consider the promotion of democracy, human rights, and independence as a key objective; as a pathway to breaking the ties between Central Asia and the Russo-Chinese axis. In essence, the liberal perspective on Western multilateralism's function in Central Asia is composed of the emphasis on fostering economic partnerships and propagating Western values to break the economic and cultural dominance of China and Russia. This parallels the discourse surrounding Western multilateralism in the sphere of liberalism to the policies of the EU and USA.

The image of a post Soviet Central Asia has declined significantly in the 2000's, as a consequence of Central Asia gaining more agency in foreign relations. Since its independence from the USSR, Central Asia has been developing its own identity. Through a constructivist lens, Western multilateralism aims to capitalise on identity and state building, differing from the Soviet legacy, in Central Asia as a metaphorical crowbar to break it free from Russia and China. As Russian is still the regional lingua franca (although it has been steadily declining), efforts are being made by the USA to replace it with English. According to

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the US Strategy, millions of Central Asians visit the USA yearly to learn English and thousands of students and academics receive funding from the US.(US Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, 2020) The American University of Central Asia has been a key hub for the propagation of Western values and supplantation of the image of an independent Central Asia. This can be observed in the research published by the university; a significant part of the history research is focused on indigenous identity and struggle against communist modernism.(auca.kg, n.d.) Similarly, the EU has been providing training for Central Asian lawyers and other practitioners, as well as expertise on reforms to the legal system, to promote legal and governance systems analogous to European ones.(European Parliamentary Research Service , 2019) In essence, from a constructivist perspective, Western multilateralism is promoting the permeation of its values and culture, while strengthening indigenous identity to combat the neo Soviet legacy. This is done as an investment into the younger generations, who do not possess the same memory of the Soviet past and can be implemented with the "Western école" over the Russian one. The creation and support of cultural institutions and Western values is mirrored in the Western multilateralism discourse and, as evidenced by the funding granted for such ventures, used by Western multilateralism the most aggressively in Central Asia.

Both expectedly and unexpectedly, Western multilateralism takes a rather passive approach towards Central Asia. While the soft power and liberal, rules-based international order approach is expected; the acknowledgement of Russian and Chinese dominance is unexpected. If the NATO and EU enlargement into Eastern Europe can be used as a comparable case study, Western multilateralism has become more cautious. The aggressive expansion in Eastern Europe did not result in direct confrontation(but met with Russian hostility until the war in Ukraine), but the EU partnership operations in the South Caucasus were met with Russian resistance. As a result, EU operations seem to have adopted a passive approach towards permeating closer into traditionally Russian dominated regions. In addition, the geographical distance between Europe and Central Asia, along with Central Asia's proximity to core Russian and Chinese territories, presents an additional obstacle to the maintenance of European presence. Therefore, Western multilateralism presents a more mature and cautious attitude while dealing with Central Asia, as the lessons of Ukraine, Georgia, and Armenia bring temperance to the thrust of EU expansion. The discourse surrounding Western multilateralism is observable in EU and US policy, as policy is shaped for the purpose of gaining the most on the fronts it acts more confident in(economic alternatives and aid) compared to Russia and China.

ASIAN MULTILATERALISM

Groupings in the Asian continent are arguably more difficult than in Europe or the Americas as the vast geographical landscape of Asia offers a complex history of political, economic, and social development. Similarly to Western multilateralism, Asian multilateralism could be split into 2 variants: Russian and Chinese. In contrast to Western multilateralism, however, Russian and Chinese multilateralism does not necessarily come together to create one understanding of Asian multilateralism. They are still grouped together as Asian multilateralism in the context of this essay, as they possess very similar conditions towards Central Asia. Both China and Russia have, both in the past and present, been neighbours or held significant territory in Central Asia. The Russian and Chinese collective neocolonial, political, and economic links to Central Asia place them in a different analytical situation compared to the EU and US. Key policy discourses of Russia and China converge on very similar themes, such as stability, security, and

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sovereignty as previously established. However, does this necessarily translate the same into their approach to Central Asia? To determine the connection between discourse and actions, it is imperative to analyse what constitutes Russian and Chinese multilateralism within the perspectives of realism, liberalism, and constructivism.

Chinese Multilateralism Discourse

Understanding how China views itself and the world around it is key to understanding their motives in foreign policy. To understand the Chinese self and world view, it is important to analyse the historical process in which China has come from. This analysis will create a historical narrative which can then be segmented into what constitutes the realist, liberal, and constructivist aspects of Chinese multilateralism and where they come from. Merriden Varrall in Chinese Worldviews and China's Foreign Policy indicates that there are three branches of the historical narrative of China that need to be understood in relation to foreign policy.(Varrall, 2015) These are: the Century of Humiliation, the view of cultural characteristics as being inherent and unchanging, and the idea of history as destiny.(Varrall, 2015)

The Century of Humiliation is a conceptual understanding of Chinese historical narrative that splits the timeline into 2. Before the Century of Humiliation, China saw itself akin to a world power, with immense wealth and power. The Century of Humiliation destroys this image of China and, in the words of Jiang Zemin (former CCP General Secretary): "Because of the corruption of feudal rulers, in more than 100 years after the Opium War, Chinese people were subjected to bullying and humiliation under foreign powers."(Wang, 2012, pp.98–99) While this narrative has been recited for some time, it only became CCP policy to entrench the Century of Humiliation and the overcoming of that era through the efforts of the CCP in the 1990's.(Wang, 2012, pp.98–99) Presently, the position China sees itself is one that has overcome the Century of Humiliation and now is a leading power that can no longer be bullied by foreign powers.

In contrast to overcoming humiliation, the view that history can be interpreted as destiny and that cultural characteristics being inherent and unchanging are not formal narratives, but are nevertheless crucial to understanding China's worldview. President Xi Jinping's 2014 speech in Germany is a perfect example of this understanding:

"The Chinese nation is a peace-loving nation. And the most profound pursuit of a nation has its origin in the national character formed through generations. The Chinese civilisation, with a history of over 5000 years, has always cherished peace. The pursuit of peace, amity and harmony is an integral part of the Chinese character which runs deep in the blood of the Chinese people." (Varrall, 2015)

This view is also supported by Zhou Fangyin's analysis of Ancient China.(Fangyin, 2023) Fangyin (2023) argues that the existence of a "great unification consciousness" placed Ancient China in a situation in which emphasis was placed much more on the interior than the exterior. It was considered more important to achieve the "cultivation of morality and peace" and maintain harmony, stability, and prosperity in the central part of the country than to annex foreign territory.(Fangyin, 2023) In addition, Ancient Chinese states had established a hierarchical order in East Asia on the premise of tribute, aptly named the Tributary System. The Tributary System, besides detailed rules on rituals and ceremonies, did not have a mechanism for political, economic, and social engagement. Even in this unequal hierarchy of Chinese dominance, China usually did not exercise effective administrative control over its neighbouring

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countries, did not collect taxes, did not control their armed forces, and had limited impact on their foreign relations.(Fangyin, 2023) The ideology behind this organisation was the concept of "giving more and getting less."(Fangyin, 2023) Using this narrative of Ancient China, the CCP is attempting to reconnect to the peaceful, harmonious, and benevolent past it views as its inheritance. The Belt and Road Initiative is perhaps the greatest example in Chinese foreign policy of the concept of giving more and getting less. The Belt and Road Initiative, according to existing infrastructure plans, entails Chinese-led investments in infrastructure and development projects in dozens of countries, worth an estimated 4 trillion dollars – a magnitude unprecedented in the 21st Century, a significant amount based in Central Asia.(Çınar, 2021)(Çelik, 2021) The land-based portion of the BRI is viewed as the Silk Road Economic Belt, a clear reference to the Ancient Silk Road. This grants China tremendous political and economic clout in Central Asia. The use of this clout for political and economic coercion or peaceful development is hotly debated, citing debt trap diplomacy and the opacity of loaning being indications of economic coercion by China.(Gelpern et al., 2021) However, Varrall (2015) accurately remarks that it is not important if China actually is a peaceful state, but to what extent it views itself as peaceful. This self-perception of peacefulness inherently contributes to how China acts abroad. These key themes in China's self understanding, analysed in the context of realism, liberalism, and constructivism, will form the basis of Chinese multilateralism.

While Xi Jinping and the CCP has promulgated the image of a peace loving China, China has not been afraid of confrontation escalating to conflict. Since the CCP won the Chinese Civil War in 1949, it has fought India, Vietnam, USA, and South Korea among others. Even though China was involved in many conflicts, most of these conflicts were in an attempt to maintain control over the traditional spheres of influence of China. Realism theory would suggest that China had more than ample opportunity to dominate the Indochina region. However, China did not aim to expand its borders after the consolidation of the CCP in the aftermath of the Chinese Civil War. The emphasis on sovereignty is the biggest parallel of Chinese multilateralism and realism theory. In all of its diplomatic dealings, China explicitly mentions the need to respect sovereignty and that in all exchanges sovereignty is a permanent condition.(Gungwu, 2007) On the other hand, the lack of expansionist and aggressive conflicts, emphasis on international recognition, and understanding China as the culmination of thousands of years of development means that realism theory is not sufficient to explain Chinese multilateralism. However, what realism theory can say about Chinese multilateralism is that it is not afraid of hard power projection in its perceived area of influence and promotes the development of the Chinese military to be capable of projecting power.

Interpreting Chinese foreign policy through the lens of liberalism yields more tangible results than realism. As Chinese economic power has grown, Chinese foreign policy has shown more liberal tendencies such as Deng Xiaoping's free market reforms, integration into economic multilateral institutions, (WTO, Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, East Asia Summit, BRICS, APEC) and investing into multilateral economic projects (Belt and Road Initiative). Combining the arguments of Gungwu (2007) and Fangyin (2023) with liberalism theory, this could be an indication that China feels that it has established stability, prosperity, and harmony in the interior, its attention has shifted to its direct neighbours and the promotion of those values in them. Therefore, from the perspective of liberalism, Chinese multilateralism manifests liberal tendencies through economic interdependence projects and involvement in economic multilateral organisations.

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Arguably, the greatest reliance of the CCP in formulating Chinese foreign policy is constructivism theory. From Xi Jinping's speeches of a Chinese civilization and its manifestation, to the revival of ancient concepts such as the Silk Road, there are many instances where Chinese foreign policy actively aims to imitate the past. China also places great emphasis on the names and titles. The naming of many wars are different in Western and Chinese sources. For example, the naming of the 1959 Tibetan Uprising is more commonly known as the 1959 Tibetan Riots. The Sino-Vietnamese War is named as the Self-defensive war against Vietnam. While these may seem a matter of semantics, the naming of these conflicts is rooted in the desire to promote a China that acts out of the love of peace. In doing so, China is attempting to construct an understanding of how a post-humiliation, powerful China should be. Constructivism theory is very useful for the CCP in cementing its own identity as the legitimate inheritor and representative of the Chinese civilisation. Therefore, in the context of constructivism, Chinese multilateralism can be understood as the continuation of centuries of Chinese diplomacy culture and relies heavily on promoting the image of peace, prosperity, and harmony in its diplomatic relations.

In essence, the main objective of Chinese multilateralism discourse, once analysed through realism, liberalism, and constructivism, is to create the image of China as a superpower. It seeks to do this through establishing its hard power projection capabilities, economically integrating its neighbouring regions, and establishing its image as a stable, harmonious, and prosperous country.

Chinese Multilateralism in Practice

Xi Jinping's keynote speech at the China-Central Asia on 19 May 2023 represents the application of Chinese multilateralism theory into policy. The speech highlights key goals such as stability, harmony, and prosperity, while detailing the practical methods to achieve these goals. Deconstructing this speech through the perspectives of realism, liberalism, and constructivism distinguishes the application of discourse into policy.

Respecting sovereignty is the first and foremost goal of Xi Jinping's goals in Central Asia. This aspect of the speech is the strongest link to realism theory. "No one has the right to sow discord or stoke confrontation in the region" said Xi Jinping, covertly criticising foreign involvement (EU, US). The rationale many scholars suggest for China's emphasis on Central Asian stability is the precarious situation of Xinjiang. The stability of Xinjiang is a central concern surrounding the security of China, and it constitutes one of the primary factors determining China's policy towards Central Asia.(Niquet, 2006) The indigenous population is characterised, ethnically and culturally, by an identification with all of the populations of Central Asia rather than the rest of the Chinese people. For China, the methodology to provide Xinjiang's security is to break down an evident cultural, linguistic, ethnic, and religious community between Xinjiang and the Central Asian republics in order to construct, in contrast, a community of interests, linked to the nature of the regimes in power.(Niquet, 2006) While reinforcing these strategic links between China and Central Asia, it was necessary for Beijing at the same time to deny or minimise the natural and historical integration of Xinjiang with the whole region of Central Asia.(Niquet, 2006) Therefore, the later phrases of Xi Jinping emphasise that "Ethnic conflicts, religious strife, and cultural estrangement are not the defining feature of the region."(Jinping, 2023) The security concerns surrounding Xinjiang, once combined with the zealous defence of sovereignty and stability in Central Asia, create the necessity for Xi Jinping's insistence on stability. Hence, the discourse of Chinese multilateralism, within the confines of realism, manifests into policy as deterrence via hard power.

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Joseph Nye in Soft Power famously argues that China or other powers do not possess the necessary soft power to break US hegemony. However, his comments regarding interdependence, in the sphere of liberal theory, provide an excellent deconstruction of how current Chinese multilateralism works in the perspective of liberal theory. Nye suggests that contrary to some rhetorical flourishes, interdependence does not mean harmony. Rather, he continues, it often means unevenly balanced mutual dependence. Further, Nye argues that interdependence is often balanced differently in different spheres such as security, trade, and finance. Therefore, Nye suggests that creating and resisting linkages between issues when a state is either less or more vulnerable than another is the result of a political power play. Political leaders use international institutions to discourage or promote such linkages; they shop for the forum that defines the scope of an issue in the manner best suiting their interests.(Nye, 1990) The BRI and its connections to the AIIB, EAEU, and other regional economic organisations demonstrate the interdependent relationship China is building. The emphasis of mutual assistance, common development, and deepening connectivity by Xi Jinping is the outlined methodology that China wishes to pursue. Combining the sheer scale of BRI investments with Nye's arguments of an unbalanced interdependence existing in the realm of soft power, China is utilising multilateral organisations to develop economic connections with Central Asian states that depend on China. Therefore, it can be argued that through a liberal perspective, Chinese multilateral foreign policy aims to create an economically interdependent order of states where China is in a dominating role

"The China-Central Asia relationship is steeped in history, driven by broad actual needs, and built on solid popular support." said Xi Jinping, reiterating once again how important the projection of a peaceful, harmonious, and prosperous China is to the CCP and the discourse of constructivist theory in Chinese multilateralism.(Jinping, 2023) The narrative of the revival of the Ancient Silk Road is the framing that the BRI takes place in. Varrall's interpretation of the Chinese worldviews of the view of cultural characteristics as being inherent and unchanging, and the idea of history as destiny are particularly prominent in this narrative. China revokes a lot of these historical connections to build the legitimacy of its operations in Central Asia. As the BRI has not been well received in some countries and actively viewed as a Chinese neo-colonial, debt-trap diplomacy by the West, it features this legitimacy building initiative to distance the understanding of China's role in Central Asia away from imperialist stereotypes. This is evidenced by Xi Jinping's phrases of millennia-old friendship and prospects for the future bearing important significance for China.(Jinping, 2023) The Cultural Silk Road project, entailing the establishment of cultural centres, joint-academic exchanges and projects, and strengthening civilizational dialogue through tourism and media exchanges are the policy manifestations of constructivist Chinese multilateralism.(Jinping, 2023) In the policy applications, Chinese multilateralism utilises constructivist theory to build legitimacy for itself and its sponsored institutions in foreign relations.

The approach of Chinese multilateralism towards Central Asia is a long term, cultural, and economic plan to further Chinese interests in the region. As the hard power capabilities of China grow, the gargantuan economic investments into Central Asia aims to implement "win-win" opportunities to entice Central Asian states to cooperate with China. Within the status quo, China is standing out from the competition as it's willing to promote economic connectivity at huge expense, while others do not possess the interest or capabilities to do so.

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Russian Multilateralism Discourse

The dissolution of the USSR ushered in a new era for Russian foreign policy. The Russian Federation's inheritance of the Soviet position (United Nations Security Council seat, nuclear stockpile) created two schools of thought for the future of foreign policy. (İsmayilov, 2013)The Gorbachov era had shown signs of this divide, yet it took the dismantling of the Soviet structure for it to come to fruition. The two schools of thought were the Atlanticists, and the Neo-Slavophiles.(Shevel, 2015) The Atlanticists, spearheaded by the Boris Yeltsin administration and then foreign minister Andrei Kozyrev, propagated a policy of integration and transition into the Western World. Practical policy examples of this were the shift to a market economy, and joining the World Trade Organisation (WTO).(İsmayilov, 2013) Initially, Russian foreign policy was shaped by an idea of Russia as a part of Western civilisation, which aimed at closer integration with Europe and the West. However, over the course of the 1990's, economic collapse, political uncertainty, and the Post-Soviet identity crisis, severely weakened the Atlanticists. In the late 1990's and with the rise of Vladimir Putin, the Neo-Slavophile ideology evolved into what is now understood as Eurasianism. From its 19th Century Slavophile origins, Eurasianism perceives Russia as an exceptional civilisation, one that rejects Europe and Asia but embraces its synthesis.(Smith, 1999) This was the rallying standard that was used domestically and internationally to cement Russia as neither imperial nor Soviet; but as a Eurasian global power. With the entrenchment of Vladimir Putin, the idea of "Eurasianism" and Russia as a unique civilisation has become the current impetus of Russian foreign policy.

With the restructuring of the former USSR into independent states, the former Soviet republics were understood by Russian foreign policy as the "Near Abroad". The term Near Abroad comes from the understanding that these newly independent, formerly Soviet states were not really foreign. They reflected the Russian view that a variety of national minorities had split from the greater Soviet identity.(Shevel, 2015) Therefore as a classification, Russian foreign policy regarded these states as Near Abroad, an indication that Russia aimed to retain a resemblance of dominion over these states. Through this reorientation of foreign policy in the understanding of the "Near Abroad" many of Russia's policies have gained a Eurasian focus.

Since the USSR's dissolution, Russia has established a variety of political, economic, and military alliances to remain as an active player in the regions that constitute the Near Abroad. Particularly concerned with Central Asia and retaining influence over the region, Russia has created multilateral organisations such as the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO), and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), which many of these former Soviet states have joined. While not all Central Asian states are members of each organisation (most notably Turkmenistan), there is general reciprocation towards Russian-based organisations. This is due to the military, political, and economic power Russia possesses in Central Asia. In addition, the soft power Russia has through language and culture is significant to warrant analysis. The hard power and soft power components of Russian influence and Eurasianism will be analysed through the perspectives of realism, liberalism, and constructivism to form the basis of Russian multilateralism and understand the extent of Russian involvement in Central Asia.

The fledgling Russian Federation had no means to support the structure of power projection the USSR had set in place in the early 1990's. Economic stagnation and the devolution of the Soviet military

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apparatus amongst the new states had caused a decline in Russia's power projection.(İsmayilov, 2013) This necessitated a reorganisation and strategic retreat to focus on problems in the interior. Once the bureaucratic apparatus had settled into the new post Soviet order and economic conditions were stabilised, Russia once again aimed to reassert itself as a global power. At this stage, Eurasianism became the more attractive and dominant doctrine over Atlanticism. Realism theory would suggest that the Western cooperation era of the early 1990's was to buy time and space for a strategic reorganisation. Once that was accomplished, it was expected that Russia would aim to reassert itself globally, in one way or another. Though this initiative initially started with multilateral institutions(due to the weakness of Russian hard power), Russia's aggressive attitudes towards the Near Abroad (intervention in Georgia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan) demonstrates a resurgence of the Russian desire to project power. Political and security organisations are mere vessels for Russia to pursue its interests and ward off external powers such as the US. From this perspective, Eurasianism is the natural evolution Russia had to take if it preferred to retain a semblance of order it previously had. Therefore, according to realism, Eurasianism is the disguise that resurgent Russian imperialism and neocolonialism takes.

Liberal theory takes a more nuanced approach to Eurasianism than the latest trend of Russian imperialism. The levels of participation and engagement in the CSTO, CIS, and EAEU demonstrate the tangible effects regional organisations have had in increasing economic prosperity and security. The presence of these institutions and Russia have arguably stabilised the transition to statehood for many post Soviet states, most notably in Central Asia. The EAEU in particular has become a multi trillion dollar economic zone that facilitated exports of approximately $1 trillion in 2021.(Eurasian Economic Union, 2017) The economic development of both Russia and the Near Abroad through the EAEU and its precursors throughout the early 2000's has been remarkable. The CSTO provides a peacekeeping force and a joint military command whose primary goals and actions have been towards countering terrorism and drug trafficking.(Collective Security Treaty Organisation, 2023) In essence, the presence of economic, political, and military cooperation demonstrates Russia's fondness of multilateral institutions. Even though the West likes to downplay the actual effectiveness and independence of these organisations to discredit Russia, it is visible that Russian foreign policy utilises multilateral institutions as much as it can. Hence, in the perspective of liberal theory, Russian multilateralism is heavily entrenched in the use of institutions as manifestations of political, economic, and military interdependence.

The end of the Cold War not only shifted states and people, but also caused a post-Soviet identity crisis in Russia. Constructivist theory is essential in understanding the historical timeline and narrative of the post-Soviet identity crisis. This resulted in the Atlanticist and Eurasianist struggle in foreign policy. With the eventual win of Eurasianism, the early 2000's was a critical time in shaping the social understanding of Russia. As a state, it had just managed to contain the chaos of the 1990's and began to look abroad for its position in the world. This period of establishing Eurasianism was critical in projecting the identity of what a post-Soviet Russia would look like. Russia was a state that endured; the memories of the Great Patriotic War are frequently evoked as an instrument of cultural union against a greater enemy. Russia now was a state under "siege"; Russia once again had to remember this historic unity against the Western invaders and imperialists who wished to dismantle Russia. Within this narrative, Russia opted to reject the West and embrace its own ideas of universalism, integration, and scepticism of the West. Throughout the 2000's and 2010's it reinforced these narratives with policies of intervention, integration, and

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consolidation (Georgian, Ukrainian, Kazakh interventions, EAEU, Union State, etc.). Consequently, the image of Russia's "backyard" was cemented in the Near Abroad, which was seen as an attempt at countering Western influence and the preservation of Russian civilisation. Therefore, Russian multilateralism, through the perspective of constructivism, heavily utilises the narratives of the uniqueness of the Russian civilisation and the necessity of protecting it against the "Western siege".

The domination of Eurasianism in Russian multilateralism discourse creates an aggressive, hegemonic, and protectionist image of Russia in Central Asia. The historic affiliations of Russia with Central Asia, alongside its desire to consolidate the Near Abroad amidst fears of Western involvement, heavily guides the discourse towards an imperious, expansionist, and defensive route. Consequently, this imbues Russian multilateralism's approach towards Central Asia with similar qualities.

Russian Multilateralism in Practice

The previous analysis of the components of Russian multilateralism shares significant parallels to The Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation (CFPRF), published 31 March 2023. The CFPRF is a comprehensive outline of Russian foreign policy and provides extensive detail on policy goals in the Near Abroad and the Eurasian space. The policy outlines a concept of Greater Eurasian Partnership (GEPC) which encompasses Central Asia, China, and a variety of other states by combining the potential of these states in a network of partner organisations across Eurasia. Within this concept, regional and multilateral organisations play a critical role. To better understand the policy results of Russian multilateralism, it is crucial to analyse the EAEU as the foundation for the GEPC and how, in the perspectives of realism, liberalism, and constructivism, it translates the discourse of Russian multilateralism into practice.

According to Kortunov (2020), "The "Greater Eurasian Partnership Concept" first introduced by President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin in late 2015 emerges from the premise that the first steps in realising this goal should be taken in the economic architecture of the Eurasian continent, rather than in the political or military spheres." In comparison to political and military interests, economic interests are generally easier to predict, more reliable and less subject to the influence of subjective factors.(Kortunov, 2020) Therefore, in understanding the Greater Eurasian Partnership Concept, it is important to analyse the constituent parts and how they act within the mechanism of Eurasian integration.

The EAEU has become the flagship economic and political institution across Eurasia since its creation in 2014. The EAEU has its roots in a series of Russian-led integration efforts across the post-Soviet landscape spanning more than two decades. In addition to overarching structures like the CIS and the CSTO, Moscow's influence has driven integration attempts in the economic arena. This trajectory includes the initiation of the Customs Union Agreement (1995), succeeded by the Treaty on Increased Integration in the Economic and Humanitarian Fields (1996), the Treaty on the Customs Union and the Single Economic Space (1999), and the establishment of the Eurasian Economic Community (2000). Notably, the Eurasian Customs Union materialised in 2010, followed by the formation of the Eurasian Economic Space and the CIS Free Trade Area in 2012. The overarching objective has been to foster a Russian-dominant trade sphere within Eurasia, promoting the unimpeded flow of goods. These various agreements and entities have progressively laid the foundation for the present-day EAEU, a culmination of these sustained endeavours dating back to the 1990s. Stronski and Sokolsky (2020) contend that the objectives Russia pursues within the EAEU extend beyond mere economic aspects like trade and investment. According to

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their analysis, the EAEU serves as a pivotal instrument for advancing Russian security interests. The authors posit that beyond economic considerations, the EAEU also functions as a strategic mechanism for Russia to counteract the influence of potentially hostile states in the Near Abroad and presents an alternative avenue to Western integration schemes (Stronski and Sokolsky, 2020). This can also be seen in the CFPRF, under the goals of creating a multipolar world, there is an explicit statement against US influence. The outlined goal is to "eliminate the vestiges of domination by the US and other unfriendly states in global affairs, create conditions to enable any state to renounce neo-colonial or hegemonic ambitions."(Russian Federation, 2023)This would suggest that the principle of sovereignty propagated by Russia is aimed at preventing intervention from external actors in regions it deems itself as the hegemon.

While analysing the GEPC and Eurasianism, realism theory' understanding of Eurasianism as a disguise of resurgent Russian imperialism gains significant traction. Through tightening economic and political integration, Russia is countering potential foreign influences and securing its own interests. If left to their own devices, none of the EAEU states could compete with Russia for exports; as the economies of the member countries of the union are homogeneous, there is competition rather than complementation of exports.(Ziguo, 2019) In a sense, this forces states like Kazakhstan, who are heavily reliant on energy and chemical exports for revenue, to comply with economic pressures. The EAEU has not been operating smoothly either. It encountered obstacles stemming from internal disagreements and a lack of trust among its member states. Additionally, Moscow's reservations about relinquishing a portion of its independent authority in trade and economic policymaking to supranational EAEU entities have posed challenges. As other member states acknowledge the significance of preserving their individual sovereignty and recognize a shift in their populations' perception of Moscow from a dominant global hub, they see the EAEU as a framework that can limit Russia through organized structures governed by established rules.(Stronski and Sokolsky, 2020) This analysis by Stronski and Sokolsky posits the EAEU as a platform of restraining Russian aggression. In addition, the scepticism and explicit rejection of Western economic intrusion, arguably indicates that institutions are mere vessels of expressing Russian hegemony over Eurasia and diplomatic battleground of restraining Russian neocolonialism, confirming the overlap of discourse and practice.

The GEPC, according to liberal theory, is seen as a continuation of Russian domestic interest in being the regional hegemon of Central Asia through multilateral organisations. Since the entrenchment of United Russia, Putin's political party in the Russian parliament (Duma), the idea of "the Russian World ' (which in practice denotes Near Abroad) and Russia's responsibility to protect and keep it together through multilateral organisations' has become an important part of the discourse. As previously mentioned, within the discourse of Russian multilateralism, regional institutions play a crucial role. In policy, they are used much more aggressively than mere manifestations of interdependence and domestic interest. The primary objective of the EAEU is not to facilitate the integration of member states into global economic systems that encourage free trade and fuel the worldwide economy. Instead, it inhibits member states' individual pursuits of independent free trade initiatives. This effectively confines them within a trade arrangement dominated by Russia and mandates that members establish trade agreements with other nations within the framework of the Russia-dominated trading bloc. These agreements clearly correspond to Russia's geopolitical objective of enhancing its influence over neighboring nations and expanding a network of affiliations beyond its immediate surroundings.(Stronski and Sokolsky, 2020) The CSTO's most

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recent notable function was to prevent an alleged coup in Kazakhstan in the Bloody January events.(Kazangapov, 2022) The pattern of utilising multilateral organisations as a reflection of domestic interests is explained by liberal theory and translates well from discourse to policy.

Moscow's fondness of historical narrative and emotional connections warrant the use of constructivist theory in understanding the translation of discourse to policy. According to constructivist theory, the central concept that all Russian foreign policy is based upon is the "Russian World". This social and political understanding of the Russian World manifests itself as a geopolitical understanding of the Near Abroad, the GEPC, and on what basis should Russia act in this sphere. According to Laruelle (2015), this association of the Near Abroad "allows Russia to rationalize its perceived entitlement to supervise the developments in the Near Abroad, even endorsing interventionist policies if deemed necessary." Laruelle further continues to suggest that "it also serves as a rationale for re-establishing ties and reconciling with the Russian diaspora, while concurrently functioning as a crucial tool for Russia to establish its identity on the global stage and amplify its influence in international discourse." (Laruelle, 2015) Clear examples of interventionist policies is the Russo-Ukrainian war and use of regional organisations as interventionist platforms (Use of CSTO in Bloody January protests). Even for the EAEU, which represents the economic aspect of the GEPC, the symbolism of uniting the Near Abroad under one economic zone is significant. Most important for Moscow, as Stronski and Sokolsky suggest, is "that the EAEU has demonstrated that Moscow can establish itself at the centre of a regional multilateral organisation and boost its claim to being a pole in a multipolar world. The symbolism of the EAEU is as important to Moscow as the ongoing actual integrative processes, even if they are advancing at a slow pace."(Stronski and Sokolsky, 2020) In essence, under the auspices of Russian multilateralism, Russia sees itself as the guide and mentor who is responsible for Central Asia. Through its integration of these narratives in policy, in the realm of constructivist theory, there is the most direct translation of Russian multilateralism from discourse to policy.

As evidenced above, the Russian multilateralism discourse is greatly imprinted inside the Russian policy approach towards Central Asia. The approach of Russian multilateralism towards Central Asia is geared to bringing the GEPC to fruition. However, the war in Ukraine could besmirch the standing of Russia in the Near Abroad, which is bound to affect its policies' reception in Central Asia.

THE CENTRAL ASIAN IDENTITY CRISIS

As Francis Fukuyama proclaimed "The End of History", a new history had begun in Central Asia. Decades of foreign rule had come to conclusion and Central Asia had regained independence. However, the days of the Kazakh Khanate, Bukhara, and Kokand Khanates were long gone. The time of the steppe nomads and the Silk Road cities of Bukhara, Samarkand, Astana, Tashkent, Bishkek, Ashgabat, and Dushanbe had disappeared into history. As the new Central Asian states gained their independence from the USSR, the question of identity became central to nation building. Although to the external observer Central Asia may seem a homogenous entity, there are significant cultural and linguistic differences. These differences change the outlook of the Central Asian states on nation building practices.

There are two pathways the Central Asian states could have taken in the 1990's as a foundation for their identities: nationalism (primarily Turkic), and religion (Islam). The Soviet inheritance was unanimously discarded by all Central Asian states. Communism was not particularly popular within the region before

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the dissolution of the USSR and would be a poor foundation for building legitimacy. Religion and nationalism were preferred over communism. After the post Soviet leadership disassociated themselves from communism, they required an alternate strategy. Kubicek (1997) reflects this understanding of Central Asian leadership in Nationalism and Realpolitik in Central Asia by establishing the Central Asian need to imbue their states with a distinct national flavour, differentiating themselves from their neighbours and, hopefully, giving birth to a sense of common identity. This requires the revival and re-writing of a national history, myths and symbols, as well as the promotion of regional culture and language. Examples across the region include the reverence of Manas, the legendary warrior and founder of the Kyrgz people, in Kyrgyzstan, Tamerlane being honoured as a founding father in Uzbekistan, and the branding of Saparmurat Niyazov, first president of Turkmenistan, as "Turkmenbasi", father of the Turkmen people.(Kubicek, 1997) In comparison, Kazakhstan does not participate to the extent of Central Asian states in the revitalisation of national myths and historic figures. This is potentially due to the larger Russian minority in Kazakhstan, proximity to Russia, and its demographic legacy of steppe nomadism. Kazakh national and religious identity is considerably weaker than the supranational Turkic identity in addition to smaller regional (primarily clan based) identification. While being a more common identity across the region than pan-Turkism, religion presented practical and political challenges as a foundation for nation building. The practical and political challenges can be categorised by two prominent case studies why Islam was not an ideal choice for Central Asian states as nation building tools.

The first and practical challenge Islam faced in Central Asian state building was the Tajik Civil War and Uzbek origin Islamic fundamentalism. From 1992-1997 Tajikistan suffered a five-year civil war which took an estimated 60,000 to 100,000 lives, and displaced almost 700,000 people.(Tunçer-Kilavuz, 2011) The civil war was fought between the United Tajik Opposition (UTO), which was an umbrella organisation consisting of the Islamic Revival Party (IRP), Rastokhez (Popular Revival Movement), the Democratic Party of Tajikistan (DPT), Lali Badakhshan (Pamiri "Rubies of Badakhshan" party), and the former communist elite.(Tunçer-Kilavuz, 2011) Besides the Islamic opposition in the Tajik Civil War, the late 1990's and early 2000's saw Islamic movements such as Hizb-ut Tahrir al-Islami and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan gain strength. Well armed and financed, highly motivated, and with extensive support from the wider world of Islamic radicalism and drug smuggling mafias based in Afghanistan, these were pan-Islamic and pan-Central Asian movements.(Rashid, 2001) The negative associations with the ongoing War on Terror and close links to Afghanistan were not popular with states who aimed at international recognition and stability. International cooperation with the War on Terror and tensions regarding the possibility of Islamic dissent was more than enough to dissuade Central Asian states to use Islam as a primary nation building tool.

The second and political challenge Islam faced in Central Asian state building was an external concern of a growing Islamic community that could threaten the stability of itself and neighbouring regions. Charles E. Ziegler outlines the status quo in the aftermath of the September 11 Attacks in Central Asia in Central Asia, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and American Foreign Policy as follows:

"The realist security discourses of the United States, Central Asia, Russia, and China converged during the War on Terror, as all these countries were confronted with national security threats from terrorist organisations influenced by radical Islam. Russia, in particular, could effectively argue that Chechen separatists were aligned with Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda. Similarly, China recognized the connections

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between al-Qaeda, the Taliban in Afghanistan, and Uighur separatists in Xinjiang. Central Asian leaders saw an opportunity to strengthen their position against Muslim fundamentalists, who posed a significant opposition to their authoritarian regimes. In this context, the governments of Central Asian countries understood that a U.S. primarily focused on combating terrorists and willing to enact strict measures like the USA Patriot Act would be less inclined to scrutinise human rights abuses committed by its allies. This realisation provided these governments with a degree of latitude to address internal security concerns, even if it involved suppressing dissent and curtailing civil liberties."(Ziegler, 2013)

The fight against terrorism and the concessions gained by cooperation with the USA, Russia, and China provided sufficient room for Central Asian states to consolidate their regimes via nationalism (rooted in paternal autocratism) over religion. For the USA, Russia, and China, the best outcome was the consolidation of regimes to prevent instability that could spill over to similar demographics located in Xinjiang, Afghanistan, and Siberia.

As a consequence of the aforementioned fears of Islamic extremism in Central Asia, additional measures were taken by all external actors in the Central Asian search for identity. The First Gulf War, First Chechen War, and the Urumqi bombings in Xinjiang made the USA, Russia, and China very precautious about militant Islam. Central Asia could become a renewed source of Islamic terrorism which needed to be contained through strong central leadership. This resulted in diplomatic engagement and encouragement towards state-building policies which aimed at decreasing social instability in the process of transition from the old Soviet order. While there is no common agreement on combating terrorism within Central Asia, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation presents the most comprehensive and effective mechanisms towards counter terrorism and drug trafficking than the CSTO or other organisations. This primarily resonates from the Chinese aims to contain and pacify Xinjiang through political and economic cooperation. According to Huasheng (2013), there are two discourses within Chinese academia of China's interests in the SCO. One emphasises the need for security, while suggesting that the direct contribution of the SCO to the Chinese economy to be minimal. On the other hand, the second school of thought disagrees, stating that the economic benefits to the region and China is the most desirable for China, as economic cooperation creates the necessary preconditions to tackle poverty, which is one of the major sources of terrorism and extremism in the region. Huasheng (2013) combines both, stating that they are not mutually exclusive and should constitute the key areas of engagement. Therefore, amidst the fears of resurgent and widespread Islamic extremism and militancy, efforts in economic integration, political cooperation, and the encouragement of paternal autocracy were implemented as a countermeasure to potential threats. These broadly encompass the realist and liberal discourses in Chinese and Western multilateralism.

Following the developments against the Soviet legacy and Islam, the only viable alternative Central Asian states could turn towards as a nation-building tool was nationalism. The immediate embracing of a Turkic identity by Central Asia is seen as soon as 1992, merely months after independence from the Soviet Union. The Summit of the Heads of Turkic Speaking States held in Ankara, Turkey in 1992 was the first step towards the cultivation of "Turkic Diplomacy" by Turkey, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan. For the next 20 years, summits were held regularly which eventually resulted in the formation of the Organization of Turkic States (OTS) in 2021. Over these two decades, reliance on religion and Soviet inheritance have declined and as evidenced by the political investment into the OTS, a

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clearer Turkic identity was embraced by the majority of the Central Asian states. Tajikistan is an exception to these efforts, as Nourzhanov and Bleuer (2013) in Forging Tajik Identity: Ethnic Origins, National–Territorial Delimitation and Nationalism argue that the contemporary understanding of "Tajik" is the historically sedentary, Persian-speaking Sunni Muslims in Central Asia and Afghanistan. Tajikistan is a major source of contention between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan with border clashes and disagreements over identity, the legacy of Soviet administrative zones which have been unresolved for decades. While the formation of the Tajik national consciousness is recent, it has not resulted in a homogenous understanding of belonging. The significant Uzbek minority, along with the division of Shia Farsiwans and Sunni Tajiks, only result in social cleavages and tensions to increase.(Nourzhanov and Bleuer, 2013) Atkin (1993) argues that the broadest traditional social classifications of identity and belonging in Central Asia originate in the divide of nomadic and sedentary populations. As a sedentary population, Tajiks not only considered themselves from the nomadic peoples of Central Asia, but also from the fellow Persian speakers who were Imami Shi'ite. From these deep social divides that still persist in contemporary Tajik society despite the growth of national consciousness, a clear agenda of identity and nation building remains challenging in Tajikistan, hence they are excluded from the understanding of a Turkic Central Asia.(Atkin, 1993) Therefore, Tajikistan is not included in pan-Turkic platforms and diplomacy. Plagued by its internal divisions, Tajikistan remains in relative isolation and struggles with connecting to a supranational identity.

As Central Asian states continue to develop and expand their national identities and consciousness, coupled with the passing of the Soviet old guard, the appeal of the Russian école is in existential threat. While Tajikistan will struggle with finding its cultural place within Central Asia, the Turkic states of Central Asia's paternal autocratism is embracing the supranational Turkic identity over Islam. As the understanding of a Turkic Central Asia becomes entrenched, the constructivist discourse of Chinese multilateralism will receive more traction. Between Russia and China, Central Asia is reciprocating more towards China's liberal and constructivist policies, and Russian cultural and political influence is dwindling in the wake of the war in Ukraine and awakening of Central Asian identity.

CENTRAL ASIAN REACTIONS TO MULTILATERALISMS

Multilateral Engagement in Central Asia

Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan have significant overlap in membership to multilateral organisations, but there is no unanimous membership to all organisations present in the region. Turkmenistan and Tajikistan are the least participatory of regional mechanisms, both for differing reasons. As outlined above, Tajikistan's identity crises and political instability have relatively caused exclusion from pan-Turkic diplomatic engagement but is present in the CIS and SCO. In 1995, Turkmenistan adopted a policy of neutrality and was formally approved by the UN General Assembly by resolution 50/80 A.(UN General Assembly, 1995) Through this policy, Turkmenistan has pursued a policy of non-intervention and peace while committing to its obligations under the UN Charter.(UN General Assembly, 1995) Due to this foreign policy stance, which has remained unchanged and reaffirmed through an additional resolution (69/285) in 2015, Turkmenistan only participates in multilateral economic organisations, while strictly not engaging in multilateral defence organisations.(UN General Assembly, 2015) Consequently, Turkmenistan is only a full member of the Asian Development Bank and Economic Cooperation Organisation, and an observer or associate member to the OTS and CIS.

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Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan have the most participation in multilateral organisations amongst the region. The scale of participation and the extent that Central Asian states actually believe in these regional mechanisms is arguably a recent phenomenon. Collins (2009) argues that the initial drive of economic and security regionalism in the 1990's and 2000's was driven by patrimonial-authoritarian leaders' urge to survive. She argues that the Central Asian leaders that remained in power after the dissolution of the USSR engaged with regional mechanisms to maintain personal control and cater to the informal vested interests (elite cliques who informally hold power) that surround them and bolster their regime.(Collins, 2009) Therefore, the extent of cooperation lies in how multilateralism effected leadership and vested interests. Since the 2010's, the situation has somewhat changed, with the Soviet old guard relaxing its tight grip due to age, coups, or retirement.

Before analysing the Central Asian reactions to Western and Asian Multilateralisms, it is important to acknowledge the role of Iranian and Turkish efforts in the region for multilateral cooperation. While they are not as strong as any of the 4 powers, (politically and economically) Turkey and Iran possess strong cultural links towards the region which provide them a distinct soft power angle in comparison to Russia, China, USA, and EU. The Economic Cooperation Organisation, comprising Iran, Turkey, Pakistan, Azerbaijan, Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan is the only organisation with full Central Asian participation. It represents the economic cooperation initiatives of Turkey and Iran in the region, predating to 1985 and inclusive of Central Asia since 2003.(Economic Cooperation Organisation, 2003) Arguably the Ashgabat Agreement, a multimodal transport agreement for the formation of an international transit corridor between Central Asia and the Persian Gulf, is the most prominent contribution towards economic cooperation within the organisation. However, ECO does not possess significant financial resources to fund infrastructure and connectivity investments, which has hampered its effectiveness in the region. However, the BRI, if successful in building its infrastructure projects, would revitalise the ECO and Turkey and Iran as actors in the region. As participants of the BRI, Turkey and Iran's connections to Central Asia would be stronger than ever and add a new dynamic to the region.(Zorbay, 2019) Increased connectivity could pave the way for new initiatives in the region, although in the current stage of the BRI, this is not certain. Therefore, it shall be noted that while Turkey and Iran do not possess the capital and political power to be dominant in Central Asia, they do possess significant soft power and the sole organisation with full regional participation in the region, which makes them minor actors with potentially larger roles in the future. Depending on their bilateral relations, this could put Russia in contention with Turkey and Iran. Similarly, the spread of Iranian influence can receive enmity from Western multilateralism, if bilateral relations between the US and Iran remain hostile.

Pragmatic Multi Vectorism in Central Asia

While there are deviations in strategic policy concepts (or similar documents) between the Central Asian states, the key theme present in all is pragmatism. Pragmatism and multi-vector diplomacy are the key phrases used across the region, which demonstrate the openness of Central Asian states to cooperation in especially the economic sphere. To understand how this pragmatism and multi-vector diplomacy works in practice, it is imperative to analyse policy through the perspectives of realism, liberalism, and constructivism.

From the perspective of realism, a multi-vector policy and pragmatic foreign policy grants the most agency to Central Asia. Keeping its options open and cooperating in a wide network, grants the space and

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power for Central Asia to play powers against each other. The investments in Russian multilateralism (CIS, EAEU, CSTO) might seem to ward off Western cooperation, but the non-exclusivity concession from the EU and US has allowed for flexibility in this area. Russia is also more confident that it can retain more influence than the West over the region, better than Eastern Europe(geographic proximity and historic affinity being the primary reasons) which puts Russian policy at ease. Hence, this allows for Central Asia to reap the economic benefits of both the West and Russia while not causing additional conflict. However, this does not rule out potential Russian interventions in calamitous situations. The CSTO intervention in Kazakhstan in January 2022 (Bloody January) is the most recent example of Russian interventions in Central Asia. The common denominator of Russia, China, EU, and US is Central Asian stability and security. All parties possess political and economic investments in the region that require security to prosper. China's approach to promoting stability is mainly via economic integration. Western multilateralism shifts the focus towards the containment of Afghanistan. The Russian prerogative manifests much more aggressively, as there is a concern of declining Russian influence in the Near Abroad after the war in Ukraine. The case study of the War on Terror and its consequences in Central Asia allow for more in-depth analysis on deconstructing the reactions of Central Asia to the security dilemma.

The outlook of the West on Central Asia changed dramatically on September 11 2001. With the USA going to war in Iraq and Afghanistan, Central Asia became critical for the war effort in Afghanistan. Following the attacks, there was consensus amongst the Central Asian states to cooperate in the War on Terror. Military access to airports in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan followed shortly after negotiations with the USA. Cooperation was widespread and strategic interests of all parties were aligned to combat the threat of Islamic extremism, as not only the USA but Russia and China would be severely affected by Islamic extremism spreading to their border provinces. However, this came to a halt after the SCO suspected US involvement in the uprisings in Andijan, Uzbekistan and the Kyrgyz Tulip revolution. This perceived violation of Central Asian sovereignty by the US stoked anti-US sentiment and was responded with demands that the USA vacate military bases and logistic hubs in 6 months.(Wright and Tyson, 2005) The short lived US-Uzbek cooperation between 2001-2005 demonstrates the strength of Russian influence in addition to the importance of respecting sovereignty. The liberalist approach of the US caused the breakdown of trust from Central Asia, strengthening Central Asian reciprocity towards the realist approaches of Russia and China.

Since the events of 2005, US-Tajik and US-Uzbek relations continue through the security concerns over Afghanistan. As both Tajikistan and Uzbekistan share the northern border of Afghanistan, after the US withdrawal and Taliban takeover, the US was concerned with the possibility of Islamic terror spillover from Afghanistan into Central Asia. As the events of 2005 became history and the Taliban took over in Afghanistan, cooperation reemerged in the previously strained US-Uzbek relations. The US has been investing in the border security of both countries, outlined in foreign policy papers, reflecting the realist approach of the US towards Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.(US Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, 2022) Reciprocally, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan both state their desire and interest to pursue relations with the US, especially regarding border security with Afghanistan.(Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Tajikistan, 2020)(Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Uzbekistan, 2023) As the common denominator, the stability and security of Afghanistan does not receive backlash from Russia or China, as it is a mutually beneficial investment. Therefore, the US invests freely in border security in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan

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even though both countries were members of the CSTO(Uzbekistan withdrew in 2012). In essence, pragmatism and opportunity superseded the violation of Uzbek sovereignty and demonstrates the separation of ideology and practicality in Central Asian attitudes. Through this case study surrounding the situation in Afghanistan, it can be observed that Western multilateralism can offer little long term engagement in Central Asian security besides the containment of Afghanistan. The answer lies in Russian and Chinese efforts in the region, primarily through economic initiatives. Therefore, from a realist perspective, Central Asia is in a position where they can only interact with the West through the external security concern of Afghanistan. The geographical distance of Central Asia to the West, in addition to the multilateral bonds of Russia and China impede Western multilateralism.

Aligned with a more liberal approach, Chinese multilateralism's restructuring of links between Xinjiang and the rest of Central Asia from community to economic links has proven critical in enhancing Chinese influence and security in the region. Practically, Central Asia is a much poorer and detached economic region compared to its neighbours. Creating wealth for the region not only benefits the states themselves but also China, as not only are regimes that provide wealth to its citizens more popular, but citizens who are wealthier and more connected are less inclined to act against the supply of wealth. As long as the BRI does not interfere in Russia's economic stance in the region, Chinese multilateralism is perhaps the best proponent of regional stability that Central Asian states can capitalise on. The effects are already discernible; the Nurly Zhol in Kazakhstan, Central Asia Regional Economic Corridor(CAREC) infrastructure projects funded by the ADB, Vahdat-Yavan railway in Tajikistan are among the multitude of investments that Central Asia has started to update their logistical capabilities for the BRI. If such projects continue as expected, the pragmatic solution to the security dilemma in Central Asia might be in the hands of China. Central Asia has been responding actively and enthusiastically to overcome geographic isolation and align themselves closer to China over doubt of the Russian security apparatus following the war in Ukraine. Economic ties through institutions and bilateral relations, have done much more for the promotion of security than political efforts. As Central Asia becomes economically more connected, there is less incentive to destabilise these efforts for political gain. While the West frequently describes the BRI as debt-trap diplomacy and Chinese neo imperialism, there is much to gain for the West through BRI investments. Increasing BRI investments for Central Asia breaks the economic hegemony of Russia and levels the playing field for the West. As a compromise, China is willing to concede Russia the mantle of "security provider", acknowledging their role in the region. In essence, adhering to multilateral institutions and respecting sovereignty grants Central Asia the agency to prevent a regional hegemon emerging and gaining leverage over other competitors

For Central Asia, multi-vectorism is the key in shaping the social and political understanding of Central Asia globally. According to constructivism theory, shaping its own identity is the most desirable path for Central Asia to take. Breaking monopolies, engaging in multilateral institutions, and creating a sense of belonging are the mechanisms of forging an independent Central Asia. It is no surprise for constructivism theory that Central Asia is very receptive to Chinese narratives, as these narratives identify Central Asia along civilizational lines parallel to those in Central Asia and respect Central Asian states as sovereign entities. Western multilateralism' attempts to instil Western values and ways of governance has gained limited traction and the Russian view of the Russian World is under threat by Central Asian cultural awakening. Members of the OTS participate in a variety of pan-Turkic cultural organisations such as the

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International Organisation of Turkic Culture (TURKSOY). The nation building processes have been eroding the prevalence of Russian language and culture in Central Asia. In 1989, roughly 80% of the population spoke Russian according to the Soviet census of the same year.(Bekmurzaev, 2019) Thirty years later, in 2019, the Russian language has declined to under 50% in Central Asia.(Bekmurzaev, 2019) By 2025, Kazakhstan will become the third country in the region to switch to the latin alphabet from the cyrillic alphabet following Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Since gaining independence, the narratives of Tsarist and Soviet rule in Central Asia are gaining a colonial and orientalist quality. (Kandiyoti, 2002) As this understanding permeates into Central Asian identity, Russian cultural power can be expected to decline. With narratives of the revival of the Silk Road, decline of Russian cultural influence, and exaltation of Turkic identity, Central Asia has been shaping its own identity. As the region grows in economic and political power, a cultural renaissance in defiance of Russian and Western cultural promotion could be a reality, although much more work needs to be done.

Currently, Asian multilateralism is gaining more traction in Central Asia compared to Western multilateralism, primarily due to the extensive multilateral institutions and economic investments in place. With a growing economic presence, Chinese multilateralism is increasingly gaining momentum. The decline of Russian multilateralism offers Western Multilateralism the opportunity to permeate deeper and expel the vestiges of Russian dominance. By engaging in a long term strategy of economic cooperation and promotion of Western values, Western multilateralism can become a challenger to the status quo. The success of the BRI could catapult trade with the EU and solidify ties with Central Asia. As the situation with Afghanistan remains unresolved, further measures regarding Afghan stability could also be expected of the USA. Russia will surely aim to retain its influence in the face of these challenges. Russia is still the only vector to hold significant political and military ties in Central Asia, which is still decisive in maintaining its presence in the region. The path that Russian multilateralism will take is uncertain in the wake of the war in Ukraine. A conclusion to the war in Ukraine could provide an evolutionary stimulus to decaying Russian influence in the Near Abroad. Through the use of realism, liberalism, and constructivism, it is evident that multilateralism in Central Asia is a complex, growing, and multifaceted concept. In the end, the choice may be up to the Central Asian states themselves. As their capabilities grow and investments in the OTS and ECO yield more over time, Central Asian states could navigate their own pathways with more confidence.

CONCLUSION

As Central Asia continues to grow, it is evident that the region will continue to attract the interest of the West and Asia. In addition, the growing perception of a multi-vector and independent Central Asia will contribute greatly to garnering academic attention. There is a clear distinction between the approach of Western and Asian multilateralism towards Central Asia. It is not surprising that Central Asia reacts differently towards these variations. Western multilateralism, although established globally, is still establishing itself within Central Asia. However, it is not only dependent on the reciprocity of Central Asia but the ground it can cover under the auspices of Russia and China. The realist Western multilateralism discourse is at an impasse with the US withdrawal of Afghanistan, and the liberal and constructivist discourses are hindered with the lack of development in Central Asia. The various Russian multilateral discourses on all fronts is experiencing a struggle against Chinese policy, however it still functions well to dissuade Western multilateralism. As the global and regional norms of multilateralism become

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increasingly integrated within Central Asian development, it is easier to see a clearer outline of the current situation. Essentially, Western multilateralism is approaching Central Asia as a "partnership in development"; Russian multilateralism is approaching Central Asia as the continuation of the "partnership of yesterday"; While Chinese multilateralism is approaching Central Asia as the "inevitable partnership of the future".The promises of all multilateral axes are realistic enough to be pursued but not overwhelmingly greater than of each other, which has created an equilibrium of its own. Reactively, the investments into the OTS and ECO grow as Central Asia gains confidence in its own foreign policy investments. Yet, the situation is still unclear as to which will become the dominant multilateral practice between Western and Asian multilateralism. While as of now the future is unpredictable, there is one thing certain for the future of Central Asia; the battle between Western and Asian multilateralism has yet to reach its crescendo and it will continue to grow in competitiveness and scale. When it has reached its apex, it heavily depends on the agencies of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan to determine the outcome, not only for Central Asia, but for the struggle of Western multilateralism against Asian multilateralism.

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GEMİ İNSANLARINDA İŞ STRESİNİN İŞTEN AYRILMA NİYETİNE ETKİSİNDE, İŞ AİLE ÇATIŞMASININ VE LİDER ÜYE ETKİLEŞİMİNİN ROLÜ[1]

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THE ROLE OF WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT AND LEADER-MEMBER EXCHANGE ON THE EFFECT OF JOB STRESS ON TURNOVER INTENTION AMONG SEAFARERS
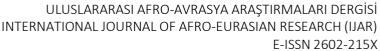
ÖZ *Bu çalışmanın amacı, deniz taşımacılığının önemli aktörlerinden olan gemi insanları yaşadıkları iş stresinin işten ayrılma niyetleri üzerindeki etkisinde iş-aile çatışmasının aracılık rolünün ve lider-üye değişiminin düzenleyici rolünün olup olmadığını incelemektedir. Anket tekniği ile toplanan veriler SPSS (v22) programında Hayes (2019) tarafından geliştirilen Process macro (v3.4) eklentisinde Model 5, Bootstrap tekniği 5000 örneklem seçeneği ve AMOS.22 paket programı kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Gemi insanları gemi işletmelerinin başarısında oynadığı kritik rol ve personel devrinin yarattığı mali kayıplar göz önünde bulundurulduğunda, gemi insanları işten ayrılmalarına neden olan faktörlerin ve bu faktörler arasındaki ilişkilerin incelenmesi önem arz etmektedir. Yapılan analizler, iş stresinin gemi insanları işten ayrılma niyetleri üzerindeki etkisinde iş- aile çatışmasının aracılık rolünün ve lider-üye değişiminin düzenleyici rolünün anlamlı olduğunu göstermiştir. Bu çalışmanın, gemi insanları arasında işten ayrılma niyetini ele alan az sayıdaki çalışmadan biri olması ve araştırma değişkenleri arasındaki ilişkiyi bütünsel olarak ele alan ilk çalışma olması nedeniyle literatüre önemli katkılar sağlayacağı düşünülmektedir.*
Anahtar Kelimeler: *Gemi İnsanları, İş Stresi, İşten Ayrılma Niyeti, İş-Aile Çatışması, Lider- Üye Etkileşimi, Hayes Model 5.*

ABSTRACT *The purpose of this study is to examine whether work-family conflict has a mediating role and leader-member exchange has a moderating role in the effect of job stress experienced by seafarers, who are important actors of maritime transportation, on their turnover intentions. The data collected with the questionnaire technique were analyzed using Model 5, Bootstrap technique 5000 sample option and AMOS.22 package program in the Process macro (v3.4) plug-in developed by Hayes (2019) in SPSS (v22) program. Considering the critical role that seafarers play in the success of shipping companies and the financial losses of personnel turnover, it is important to examine the factors that cause seafarers to leave their jobs and the relationships between these factors. The analyses showed that the mediating role of work-family conflict and the moderating role of leader-member exchange were significant in the effect of job stress on the turnover intentions of seafarers. It is thought that this study will make significant contributions to the literature since it is one of the few studies addressing turnover intention among seafarers and it is the first study to address the relationship between the research variables holistically.*
Keywords: *Seafarers, Job Stress, Turnover Intention, Work-Family Conflict, Leader-Member Exchange, Hayes Model 5.*

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[1] This study is derived from a master's thesis conducted by the first author under the supervision of the second author at Kocaeli University, Institute of Social Sciences, Department of Maritime Business Administration.

INTRODUCTION

Maritime transport is the backbone of world commercial transportation. Today, the vast majority of the world's commercial transportation is carried out by maritime transportation. Ships are the heart of maritime transportation, which is one of the most important actors of global transportation, and the successful realization of maritime transportation is only possible with the success of seafaring activities. Seafarers play the biggest role in the success of shipping activities. Seafarers perform one of the most difficult professions in the world due to the sector-specific conditions of the maritime profession (Yorulmaz, 2023). Seafarers work on ships under con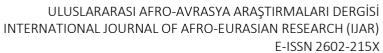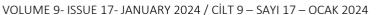tracts that can last for months under the limited conditions of ship and sea life. Due to the fact that the seafaring profession requires constant distance from land, seafarers are away from their families and relatives for long voyages and suffer from intense family longing under the limited communication opportunities of the ships. Seafarers, who spend most of their time working, cannot rest sufficiently in their free time due to reasons such as the shared use of private areas such as cabins with other crew members, inadequate cabin facilities, lack of light sealing, exposure to extremely hot or extremely cold weather, noise and vibration caused by ship machinery. This situation causes seafarers to be in a state of constant fatigue and distraction, which poses a great risk for the maritime profession, which is a dangerous profession that requires great attention.

The objectives of organizations are to achieve the goals of existence and to make a profit. In today's increasingly competitive world, recruiting and retaining talented employees provides a competitive advantage for organizations. Organizations that want to gain a competitive advantage over their competitors should be aware of the important impact of human resources on organizational performanceand act accordingly. Otherwise, the job satisfaction of employees who are dissatisfied with their jobs will decrease and their intention to leave their current jobs will increase. In order to prevent this, it is very important to examine the variables affecting employees' turnover intentions and the relationships between these variables. Job stress is one of the most important factors affecting employees' organizational behaviours. If stress sources cannot be eliminated, job satisfaction and organizational commitment of employees who have difficulty in coping with stress decreases due to increased levels of burnout, fatigue and pessimism. Another factor that has an impact on employees' organizational behaviours is work-family conflict. Work-family conflict, together with work stress, negatively affects bothwork and family life. The quality of leader-member exchange between employees and their leaders affects the strength of employees' organizational behaviours. Employees who have a high level of exchange with their leaders are more successful in coping with difficulties, while employees who have a low level of exchange with their leaders can give up more easily in the face of the difficulties they face in their business life. When the literature is examined, the effect of job stress on turnover intention (Chen etal., 2011; Arshadi & Damiri, 2013; Yenihan et al., 2014; Tongchaiprasit & Ariyabuddhiphongs, 2016; Lo et al., 2018; Şahverdioğlu, 2019), the effect of job stress on work-family conflict (Tekingündüz et al., 2015; Armstrong et al, 2015; Erdilek Karabay, 2015; Viegas & Henriques, 2021), the effect of work-family conflict on turnover intention (Çarıkçı & Çelikkol, 2009; Nohe & Sonntag, 2014; Seçilmiş & Kılıç, 2017; Aboobaker & Edward, 2020), the mediating role of work-family conflict (Judge & Colquitt, 2004; Çelik & Turunç, 2010; Akkoç et al, 2011; Okan & Özbek, 2016; Riglea et al., 2021) and the moderating role of leader-member exchange (Martinaityte & Sacramento, 2013; Buch, 2015; Gürsoy & Köksal, 2018; Çiçek & Türkmenoğlu, 2020; Yorulmaz, 2022).

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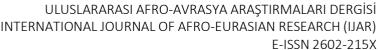
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In the literature review, it is seen that the job stress experienced by seafarers, who experience intense job stress under the challenging conditions of the maritime profession, has an effect on their turnover intentions. Moreover, considering the negative effects of conflicts between work and family roles on both the work and private lives of seafarers, it is suggested that work-family conflict may have a mediating role in the effect of job stress on the turnover intentions of seafarers. Based on the studies showing the moderating effect of the level of leader-member exchange on employees' organizational behaviours, it can be said that the quality of leader-member exchange will play a moderating role in the effect of job stress on turnover intention in seafarers. Accordingly, the purpose of this study is to examinethe mediating role of work-family conflict and the moderating role of leader-member exchange in the effect of job stress experienced by seafarers, who are important actors of maritime transportation, on their turnover intention. When the literature is examined, there is no study that holistically examines the relationship between the research variables of job stress, leader-member exchange, work-family conflict and turnover intention. Since this study is the first study to examine the relationship between these variables holistically, it is thought that it will bring a new perspective to the literature. In addition, the results obtained in the study regarding the relationships between the variables support the results of previous studies that partially examined the relationships between the variables in question. When the literature on maritime studies is examined, it is seen that the number of studies on seafarers' turnover intentions is quite limited. Considering the critical role that retaining seafarers working under challenging conditions plays in the success of maritime activities, it is considered to be very important to investigate the turnover intentions of seafarers and the factors affecting this intention. This study holistically examines the relationship between job stress, work-family conflict, leader-member exchange and turnover intention among seafarers. The study is expected to contribute significantly to maritime transportation literature and assist managers in shipping companies by comprehensively exploring the relationships between these variables. It aims to enhance understanding of seafarers' organizational attitudes and behaviours, shedding light on the impact of these factors on turnover intentions and their interconnections.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Job Stress

Stress is a conscious/unconscious physical or psychological reaction to a threat or an unwanted event (Cranwell-Ward, 1998). Job stress is the reaction of an employee when his/her knowledge and abilities are not sufficient to fulfill the tasks demanded of him/her in his/her job, to provide the desired level of professionalism and to overcome work-related pressures (Williams & Cooper, 2002). Stress, which is frequently encountered in business life and has a very important place, especially for human resources management and creates serious effects, has been the subject of many researchers' studies.

Researchers have developed many models to identify the causes and effects of stress. These job stress models can be listed as role stress model, demand-control model, effort-reward imbalance model, general model of stress, person-environment fit model, job demand-control and support model and organizational model of stress.

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Job stress can cause harmful effects on employees' health as well as personal attitudes such as absenteeism, job dissatisfaction and alienation (Karasek & Theorell, 1990; Güney, 2011; Aksoy & Kutluca, 2010). In addition, stress negatively affects the business in terms of organizational outputs (Yılmaz & Ekici,2006). However, moderate and controlled stress can also lead to positive outcomes such as increased motivation, ambition for success, increased self-confidence, improved coping skills, job satisfaction, empathy, and optimism in social relations (Aytaç, 2002; Holahan & Moos,1994).
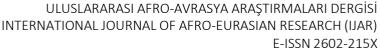
Turnover Intention

In its most basic definition, intention can be defined as the desire to achieve a goal. In other words, intention is the desire to take steps to achieve a determined goal by making the necessary planning. Mobley (1982) defines turnover intention as an employee's tendency to voluntarily leave the workplace where he/she is actively working. Uğural (2016) interprets turnover intention as a step back taken by the employee when the conditions offered by the organization do not satisfy the employee. Turnover intention is explained by Fong and Mahfar (2013) as the employee's having the idea of leaving the job andplanning to leave the job until leaving the current job. Seyrek and İnal (2017) define turnover intention as the employee's intention to quit his/her job and state that this intention is the decision stage of leaving the job before it is put into action.

In the literature, the turnover intention is evaluated within the scope of Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs Theory, Herzberg et al.'s (1959) Two-Factor Theory, Mobley et al.'s (1978) Turnover Theory, Becker's (1993) Human Capital Theory, Adams' (1965) Equity Theory and Homans' (1961) Social Exchange Theory. When the literature is examined, it is seen that the factors affecting turnover intention are generally categorized under three headings. Şahverdioğlu (2019) classifies them as individual factors, organizational factors and environmental factors; Cotton and Tuttle (1986) classify them as external factors, work-related factors and individual factors. Turnover intention is an intention that does not always result in an act of quitting, but sometimes employees show their unhappiness with the job and their desire for development. In the process of bringing a new person to the position of the employee who has left the job, while it may lead to positive results such as re-career planning within the organization and reviewing the skills, it may also cause negativities such as the loss of talented employeesreducing the competitiveness of the organization and requiring extra effort for the training to be given to the personnel to be brought to the vacant position (Chambers et al., 1998; Bulutlar & Öz, 2010).

Work–Family Conflict

Conflict is a situation in which more than one person or group with social relations between them experience disagreements in line with their goals and demands (Schermerhorn et al., 1994: 592). The environments where individuals spend the most time are work and family environments, and individuals' lives are most affected by these environments. Conflicts between roles during the fulfilment of responsibilities according to determined priorities cause conflicts between individuals' work and family lives.

When the literature is examined, it is seen that work-family conflict is basically associated with five different theories. According to the Rational Perspective Theory, work-family conflict arises from the

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limited time of individuals who have various roles in their family and work lives (Duxbury et al., 1994; Greenhaus et al., 1987). The Conflict Theory developed by Khan et al. (1964) argues that one role alone cannot create conflict, that an individual should have more than one role in order for conflict to arise, a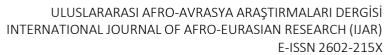nd that these roles should affect each other negatively. According to the Compensation Theory, individuals who fail to fulfill all of their roles in work and family life try to compensate for their deficiency in one role by showing superior success in the other role by turning to either only family life or only work life (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000). Contribution Theory argues that the development of individuals in their roles related to work and family life come together to increase life satisfaction (Duxbury & Higgins, 1991). The Spillover Theory, developed by Staines (1980), argues that a positive or negative situation in an individual's work or family roles will affect other roles in the same direction.
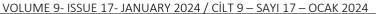
When past studies are examined, it is seen that the factors that cause work-family conflict are generally evaluated under three headings. The first of these are personal factors that cause work-family conflict and affect the physical and mental state of the individual, which is completely related to the individual (Baykal, 2014). Organizational factors refer to factors such as excessive working hours, shift work system, demands of the organization from the employee and leader-member exchange, while familial factors refer to factors such as the number of children, being obliged to care for the elderly, and the working order of the spouse (Vaydanoff, 1988). According to Greenhaus (1985), work-family conflict due to these factors is considered as a source of stress that causes unhappiness in individuals' lives.

Leader-Member Exchange

The exchange between leader and member was first discussed in the literature by Dansereau et al. (1973). Dansereau et al. (1973) explained the relationship between leader and member and introduced it to the literature under the name of "vertical connection theory". In time, this theory was developed by Graen et al. (1982) and renamed as "leader-member exchange" (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Leader- member exchange argues that leaders cannot treat all subordinates equally, in contrast to the Average Leadership Style, which argues that leaders treat all members of a group in an average manner without discriminating between them (Dansereau et al., 1975). According to leader-member exchange, leaders with limited resources and time do not communicate equally with all of their subordinates, and leaders' communication with their subordinates may differ from subordinate to subordinate (Sparrowe & Liden, 1997; Arslantaş; 2007). At this point, organizational members are divided into two groups "in-group members" and "out-group members" according to the level of exchange between them and their leaders. In-group members are those whose relationship with their leaders is of high quality and who have sincere relationships with their leaders, while out-group members are those whose relationship with their leaders is distant.

Liden et al. (1997) categorize the factors (antecedents) affecting the level of leader-member exchange into three as member characteristics, leader characteristics and exchangeal variables. Again, Liden et al. (1997) divide the results (successors) that emerge according to the level of leader-member exchange into three as results related to attitudes and perceptions, behavioural results and results provided by the organization. Positive leader-member exchanges lead to positive outcomes such as increased job satisfaction and organizational commitment, decreased turnover intentions, and improved communication and innovation skills. In terms of organizational outcomes, positive leader-member

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exchange results in increased wages, promotions, bonuses, and career development support for members. A low level of leader-member exchange will lead to negative outcomes.
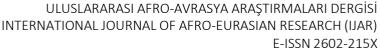
LITERATURE REVIEW and RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The Relationship Between Job Stress And Turnover Intention

Job stress is a situation that occurs when the characteristics of the employee and the characteristicsrequired by the job do not match. High job stress causes employees to experience various psychological and physical disorders (Beehr & Newman, 1978). In case of persistent job stress, employees' negative attitudes towards their jobs and the organization they work for increase and these negative attitudes mayresult in turnover (Imran et al., 2020). When the literature is examined, there are many studies investigating the effect of perceived job stress on turnover intention. Tongchaiprasit and Ariyabuddhiphongs (2016) conducted a survey study with the participation of 145 chefs working in international chain hotels to examine the relationships between creativity, job satisfaction, job stress and turnover intention. The findings of the study revealed that job stress due to lack of resources and excessive workload increased the turnover intention of chefs. Arshadi and Damiri (2013) examined the relationship between job stress and turnover intention and job performance under the moderating effectof organizational self-perception through 286 participants working in a drilling company operating in Iran and concluded that there is a significant positive relationship between job stress and turnover intention. Lo et al. (2018) conducted a survey study with the participation of 26,945 and 19,386 nurses in 2011 and 2014, respectively, and concluded that job stress experienced by nurses has a significant effect on their turnover intentions. Yenihan et al. (2014) conducted a study with the participation of 329 employees to examine the effect of job stress on turnover intentions of white and blue collar employees working in an automotive company operating in Sakarya, is another study that reveals the effect of job stress on turnover intention. Similarly, the study conducted by Chen et al. (2011) with the participation of 255 employees working in banks operating in Taiwan and the study conducted by Şahverdioğlu (2019) withthe participation of 236 female employees are studies that reveal the effect of job stress on turnover intention. This information obtained from the literature suggests that the job stress experienced by seafarers, who have a very stressful profession, may have an impact on their turnover intentions, and Hypothesis 1 was formed in line with this idea:

Hypothesis 1: Seafarers' job stress positively affects their turnover intentions.

The Relationship Between Job Stress And Work-Family Conflict

Job stress is the mental depression and tension caused by the stress factors that employees are exposed to due to their jobs (Cullen et al., 1985). If job stress is high and continuous, it affects not only the work life of employees but also their family life. Employees who experience intense work stress under the stressors of work life cannot fulfil their roles in the family sufficiently because they devote most of their time and energy to their work (Triplett, 1999). When the literature is examined, it is seen that there are many studies examining the relationship between work stress and work-family conflict. Tekingündüz et al.(2015) conducted a survey study with the participation of 201 employees working in a training and

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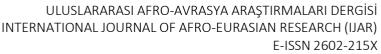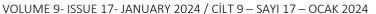
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research hospital in Ankara to examine the relationships between work-family conflict, job stress and job satisfaction. The results of the study revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between job stress and turnover intention. Armstrong et al. (2015) conducted a study with the participation of 441 prison officers working in 13 different prisons to examine the relationships between job stress, job satisfaction and work-family conflict and found that there is a high degree of relationship between job stress and work-family conflict. In the study, the authors stated that a bad day at work significantly affected the family life of prison officers. Similarly, a study conducted by Erdilek Karabay (2015) with 206 healthcare employees of private hospitals operating in Istanbul to investigate the effects of job stress, work-family conflict and work-family-life satisfaction on turnover intention showed that job stress experienced by healthcare workers positively affected their turnover intention. Viegas and Henriques (2021) conducted a study with the participation of 100 police officers to examine the relationship between job stress, work-family conflict and job satisfaction experienced by police officers, who have a highly stressful job, is another study that revealed that job stress has a high positive effect on work-family conflict. In line with this information obtained from the literature, it comes to mind that the job stress experienced by seafarers, who have one of the most stressful professions in the world and cannot devote enough time and energy to their families due to their working life away from their families, may have an effect on work-family conflicts. Hypothesis 2 was formed in line with this idea:

Hypothesis 2: Seafarers' job stress positively affects their work-family conflicts.

The Relationship Between Work-Family Conflict And Turnover Intention

Businesses that want to achieve their goals in an increasingly competitive environment expect their employees to exhibit the highest possible performance. Under the pressure of performance, employees, who have to work for longer periods with increasing work intensity, may experience conflicts between their work and family roles, which are increasingly becoming opposite poles (Aboobaker & Edward, 2020).When the literature is examined, there are many studies investigating the effect of work-family conflict on turnover intention. Çarıkçı and Çelikkol (2009) conducted a survey study with the participation of 100 white-collar employees of a business operating in Denizli to examine the effect of conflicts between work and family roles on organizational commitment and turnover intentions. The results of the study showed that the work-family conflict experienced by white-collar employees had a significant positive effect on their turnover intentions. In their study, Nohe and Sonntag (2014) examined the exchange between work-family conflict, social support, and turnover intention through 665 participants and found that a change in work-family conflict predicts an increase in turnover intention. The survey study conducted by Seçilmiş and Kılıç (2017) with the participation of 162 travel agency employees operating in Eskişehir is another study showing that work-family conflict experienced by travel agency employees has a significant effect on turnover intentions with all its sub-factors. Similarly, the study by Aboobaker and Edward (2020), which examines the relationship between work-family conflict, work-family enrichment, and turnover intentions of bank employees in India, is another study that reveals the significant effect of work-family conflict level on turnover intention. This information obtained from the literature suggests that work-family conflict may have an effect on turnover intentions of seafarers who belong to the maritime profession, a profession where conflicts between work and family life are frequently experienced due to sectoral conditions, and Hypothesis 3 was formed in line with this idea:

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Hypothesis 3: Seafarers's work-family conflict positively affects their turnover intentions.

Mediating Role Of Work-Family Conflict

When the literature is examined, various studies are showing that work-family conflict has a mediating role in the relationship between employees' organizational behaviours. Judge and Colquitt (2004) conducted a survey study with the participation of 174 faculty members of 23 different universities in the USA to examine the mediating role of work-family conflict in the relationship between organizational justice and stress. The results of the study showed that work-family conflict has a significant mediating role in the relationship between faculty members' perceived organizational justice and stress levels. Çelik and Turunç (2010) examined the effect of leader support on job performance through work-family conflict and conducted a questionnaire study with 232 employees of small businesses operating in the field of defence in Ankara. The findings of the study revealed that leader support has a significant effect on job performance and that work-family conflict plays a high mediating role in this effect. Akkoç et al. (2011) examined the mediating role of work-family conflict in the effect of developmental culture and leader support on innovative behaviour and job performance with the participation of 265 defence sector employees and concluded that work-family conflict mediated the effect of developmental culture and leader support on innovative behaviour. Similarly, Okan and Özbek (2016) examined the mediating role of work-family conflict in the relationship between workload, job dissatisfaction and turnover intention and Riglea et al. (2021) examined the mediating role of work-family conflict in the relationship between technostress and psychological well-being. This information obtained from the literature suggests that work-family conflict may have a mediating effect on the effect of job stress on turnover intention in seafarers, and Hypothesis 4 was formed in line with this idea:

Hypothesis 4: There is a mediating role of work-family conflict in the relationship between job stress and turnover intentions of seafarers.

The Regulatory Role Of Leader Member Exchange

When the literature is examined, various studies are showing that leader-member exchange plays a regulatory role in the relationships related to employees' organizational behaviours. The first example is the survey study conducted by Martinaityte and Sacramento (2013) on a sample of 26 auditors and 151 sales representatives working in pharmaceutical and insurance companies to examine the role of leader- member exchange in the relationship between creativity and sales effectiveness. In the said study, the authors concluded that leader-member exchange has a significant moderating effect on the relationship between creativity and sales effectiveness. According to the study, the effect of creativity on the sales effectiveness of employees with high levels of leader-member exchange is higher than that of employees with low levels of leader-member exchange. Buch (2015) examined the moderating role of leader- member exchange in the relationship between employee-organization exchange and affective commitment in a sample of 341 employees of financial companies operating in Norway and found that leader-member exchange had a significant effect on the relationship between these variables. Another study revealing the significant moderating effect of leader-member exchange is Gürsoy and Köksal's

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(2018) study in which they examined the moderating role of leader-member exchange in the effect of obligatory citizenship behaviour on psychological contract perception with the participation of 192 employees working in the private sector. The results of the study showed that the effect of private sector employees' perceptions of obligatory citizenship behaviour on their psychological contract perceptions differed according to their level of leader-member exchange. Similarly, Çiçek and Türkmenoğlu's (2020) study on the moderating role of leader-member exchange on the effect of authentic leadership on job alienation and Demirbağ and Küçük's (2021) study on the moderating role of leader-member exchangeon the effect of leader-member exchange on task and contextual performance are other studies that reveal the moderating effect of leader-member exchange. This information obtained from the literature suggests that the effect of job stress on turnover intention may differ according to the quality of leader- member exchange and Hypothesis 5 was formed in line with this idea:

Hypothesis 5: The effect of seafarers' job stress on their turnover intention differs according to the level of leader-member exchange. Namely, the positive effect of job stress on the turnover intention of seafarers is low when the leader-member exchange is high, and high when the leader-member exchange is low.

In the study, the research model in Figure 1 was designed to test the mediating and moderating effects ofwork-family conflict and leader-member exchange on the effect of the level of job stress perceived by seafarers on their turnover intention. According to the designed model, job stress is considered as independent variable, turnover intention as the dependent variable, work-family conflict as the mediator and leader-member exchange as the moderator variable.

Figure 1. Research Model

Source: Authors.

RESEARCH METHOD

While analyzing the data collected with the survey technique in the study, frequency analysis was used to determine demographic characteristics, descriptive analysis to reveal descriptive information about the

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scales, Cronbach's Alpha coefficients to measure the reliability of the scales used in the research, explanatory and confirmatory factor analysis to determine the structural validity of the scales, correlation analysis to measure the relationships between variables, and regression analysis to test hypotheses. The Process macro (v3.4) plug-in developed by Hayes (2019), the Bootstrap technique with 5000 sample options, and the AMOS.22 package program were used in SPSS (v22) to conduct these analyses.

Population, Sample And Data Collection

The data of this study were obtained by questionnaire technique after the decision and approval of Kocaeli University Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee at its meeting dated 29/03/2022 and numbered 2022/04. The questionnaires were sent to the shipping companies operating in Turkey and thesocial platforms where the seafarers are members and collected through Google form with 339 seafarers who voluntarily participated in the survey between February and May 2022. Considering that there are a total of 136,000 Turkish citizen seafarers (104,000 crew class and 32,000 officer class seafarers) registered in Turkey, it can be said that the sample is sufficient.

Scales Used In The Study

Participants' answers to all questions were collected on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "StronglyDisagree (1)" to "Strongly Agree (5)". In the study, the 4-question scale developed by Cohen, Kamarck andMermelstein (1983) was used to measure the job stress perceived by the seafarers. A 3-question scale developed by Wayne et al. (1997) was used to measure turnover intention. To measure the levels of work-family conflict, the unidimensional 5-question work-family conflict scale developed by Netemeyer et al. (1996) was used. The 5-question scale developed by Graen et al. (1982) was used to measure the level of leader-member exchange.

FINDINGS

Descriptive Statistics

In the study, the demographic characteristics of the seafarers participating in the research were analyzed by frequency analysis and the descriptive statistics of the research scales were analyzed by descriptive analysis. As a result of the frequency analysis, the findings regarding the demographic characteristics of the seafarers are presented in Table 1.

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Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Seafarers.

Variables	Groups	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Woman	15	4,4
	Male	324	95,6
Age	18-24	70	20,6
	25-34	99	29,2
	35-44	96	28,3
	45-54	60	17,7
	55 and above	14	4,1
Education	Primary School	30	8,8
	Middle School	53	15,6
	High School	143	42,2
	University	113	33,3
Department Worked in	Deck	245	72.3
	Engine	61	18.0
	Auxiliary Class	33	9.7
Total Experience	3 years and below	86	25.4
	4-7 years	100	29.5
	8-11 years	56	16.5
	12-15 years	38	11.2
	16-19 years	22	6.5
	20 years and above	37	10.9
Ratings	Deck Crew	148	43.7
	Engine Crew	32	9.4
	Galey Crew	14	4.1
	Deck Officer	45	13.3
	Engine Officer	27	8.0
	Chief Engineer	6	1.8
	Ship Master	67	19.8
Total		339	100.0

Source: Authors

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When the findings obtained as a result of the frequency analysis in Table 1 are analyzed, it is seen that 15 of the 339 seafarers participating in the research are female and 324 are male. When the ages of the seafarers are analyzed; 70 of the participants are between 18-24, 99 of them are between 25-34, 96 of them are between 35-44, 60 of them are between 45-54 and 14 of them are between 55 and above. Among the seafarers who participated in the research, 30 were primary school graduates, 53 were

middle school graduates, 143 were high school graduates and 113 were university graduates. When analyzed according to the departments they work in the ships, it is seen that 245 of the seafarers work in the deck department, and 61 of them work in the engine department, while 33 of the participants work as auxiliary class seafarers in the ships. When the findings related to the duration of experience of seafarers in their professions are analyzed; 86 of the participants have 3 years or less, 100 of them have 4-7 years of experience, 56 of them have 8-11 years of experience, 38 of them have 12-15 years of experience, 22 of them have 16-19 years of experience and 37 of them have 20 years or more of experience. The findings related to the duties of the seafarers on board the ships show that 148 of the participant's worked as deck crew, 32 as engine crew, 14 as galley crew, 45 as deck officer, 27 as engine officer, 6 as chief engineer and 67 as ship master.

Correlation Analysis

Table 2 presents the correlation analysis findings of the relationship between leader-member exchange (LMX), work-family conflict (WFC), job stress (JS) and turnover intention (TOI) variables.

Table 2. Correlation Analysis Results

		LMX	WFC	JS	TOI
LMX	Pearson Correlation	1	,128[*]	-.163[**]	-.345[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.018	.003	.000
	N	339	339	339	339
WFC	Pearson Correlation	.128[*]	1	.279[**]	.223[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.018		.000	.000
	N	339	339	339	339
JS	Pearson Correlation	-.163[**]	.279[**]	1	.612[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.000		.000
	N	339	339	339	339
TOI	Pearson Correlation	-.345[**]	.223[**]	.612[**]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	339	339	339	339

Source: Authors.

When Table 2 is examined, it is seen that the correlation coefficient of job stress and work-family conflict variables is 0.279 (r=0.279). The fact that this value is between +1 and -1 and has a positive sign (r=0.279, -1< r=0.279< +1) indicates that there is a positive and significant relationship between job stressand work-family conflict variables.

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Validity and Reliability Analyses

Table 3 presents the factor loadings, variance explained by each scale and total variance explained ratios, Cronbach's Alpha coefficients, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Barlett Test values obtained as a result of exploratory (EFA) and confirmatory factor (CFA) analyses.

Table 3. Explanatory (EFA) and Confirmatory (CFA) Factor Analysis Results for the Scales.

Scale	Code	Number of Items	Factor Loadings		Explained Variance Ratio		Reliability (Cronbach's Alpha)	KMO	Barlett Test
			EFA	CFA	Scale	Total			
WFC	WFC1		.849	.842					
	WFC2		.907	.942					
	WFC3	5	.888	.902	23.275		.931		
	WFC4		.864	.767					
	WFC5		.854	.756					
LMX	LMX1		.807	.730					
	LMX2		.861	.861					
	LMX3	5	.859	.845	21.194		.893		
	LMX4		.823	.794					
	LMX5		.786	.741		77.592		.878	4333.1
JS	JS1		.846	.829					
	JS2	4	.864	.879	20.283		.921		
	JS3		.870	.884					
	JS4		.857	.863					
TOI	TOI1		.778	.878					
	TOI2	3	.826	.845	12.840		.876		
	TOI3		.783	.886					

Source: Authors.

The suitability of the data for EFA can be examined by KMO coefficient and Barlett's test of sphericity (Büyüköztürk, 2004). Table 3 shows that the KMO coefficient of the scales is 0.878 and the Barlett's test of sphericity is 4333.105. The fact that the KMO coefficient takes a value between 0.80-0.90 indicates that the distribution of the scale data is quite good (Akgül & Çevik, 2003). In this direction, with the value of 0.878, it can be said that the distribution of the data belonging to the study scales is perfectly suitable for factor analysis. Another condition to say that the data belonging to the scales are suitable for factor analysis is that the result of Barlett's test of sphericity is significant (p<0.05) (Büyüköztürk, 2007). As Barlett's test of sphericity value of the research scales was found to be within the accepted value range

($x2$ =4333,105, p=0.000, p<0.005), it was determined that the scales were suitable for factor analysis. Acceptable

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values for the interpretation of Cronbach's Alpha coefficients (α) are values in the range of 0.6≤α<0.7. A coefficient in the range of 0.7≤α<0.9 indicates that the reliability of the scale is good and α

≥0.9 indicates that the reliability of the scale is excellent (George & Mallery, 2003). In this context, when the Cronbach's alpha coefficient values obtained for the scales in Table 3 are analyzed, it is found that the work-family conflict and work-stress scales are excellent, while the leader-member exchange and turnover intention scales are good.

Looking at the explained variance values determined as a result of factor analysis in Table 4, it is seen that the work-family conflict scale explains 23.275% of the total variance, the leader-member exchange scale explains 21.194% of the total variance, the job stress scale explains 20.283% of the total variance and the turnover intention scale explains 12.840% of the total variance. Considering the total variance explained, it is seen that the scale expressions explain 77.592% of the variables to be measured in total. CFA was applied to the factor structure obtained by EFA analysis and as a result of the analysis, it was determined that the factor loadings of all variables belonging to the measurement model were greater than the threshold value of 0.50. The fit indices of the measurement model are also shown in Table 4.

Table 4. CFA Fit Index Values.

ComplianceIndexes	Acceptable Values	Perfect Fit Values	Values Obtained
CMIN / DF (x^2 /sd)	$3<x^2$ /sd<5	x^2 /sd <3	1.816
RMR	0.05<RMR<0.10	0<RMR<0.05	0.049
GFI	0.90<GFI<0.95	0.95<GFI<1	0.934
TLI	0.95<TLI<0.97	0.97<TLI<1.00	0.974
CFI	0.95<CFI<0.97	0.97<CFI<1.00	0.979
RMSEA	0.05<RMSEA<0.08	0<RMSEA<0.05	0.049

Source: Bentler and Bonett (1980); Kline (2011).

The CMIN/DF, RMR, TLI, CFI and RMSEA indices of the fit indices obtained as a result of CFA analysis show excellent fit and GFI index shows good fit. When the skewness and kurtosis coefficients of the items in the scale were examined, it was seen that they were within the range of +/- 1.5 (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2013), which is accepted as the threshold value. Accordingly, it was accepted that the data showed a normal distribution.

Testing Hypotheses

In this study, the mediating and moderating relationships between the variables and the testing of hypotheses were carried out by using the Process macro (v3.4) plug-in developed by Hayes (2019) in SPSS(v22) program, Bootstrap technique, 5000 sample options and Model 5. Since the regression relationship

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between job stress, which is the independent variable of the study, and work-family conflict, which is the mediating variable, could not be examined within the scope of Model 5, the relationship between these two variables is discussed separately. Table 6 shows the mediator and moderator model analyses and the regression analysis results of the relationship between job stress and work-family conflict.

In the mediating and moderating effect analyses conducted with the Bootstrap technique, the significance levels of the analyses are examined by considering the values in the 95% confidence interval (CI). In the analyses performed with this technique, both BootLLCI and BootULCI effects, which can take negative and positive values, are expected to be in the same direction. In order to say that the findings obtained in the mediating and moderating effect analyses conducted with the Bootstrap technique are significant, both BootLLCI and BootULCI effects should be positive or negative. If there is a value of 0 between these values, the findings obtained are not significant (Hayes, 2019; MacKinnon et al., 2004).

When Table 6 is examined, it is seen that job stress has a significant positive effect on the turnover intention variable (B=0.6044, t=13.0636, p<0.05, 95% CI [0.5134 - 0.6954]). According to this finding, the increase in the job stress experienced by the seafarers leads to an increase in their turnover intentions and the decrease in the job stress experienced by the seafarers leads to a decrease in their turnover intentions. In line with this finding, Hypothesis 1 of the research hypotheses is accepted.

In order to test Hypothesis 2, the relationship between the independent variable job stress and the dependent variable work-family conflict was analyzed by regression analysis. Table 5 shows that job stresshas a significant positive effect on work-family conflict (B=0.3055, t=5.3403, p<0.05, 95% CI [0.1929 - 0.4180]). Accordingly, the increase in the work stress experienced by the seafarers leads to an increase in the level of work-family conflict and the decrease in the work stress experienced by the seafarers leads toa decrease in the level of work-family conflict. According to the regression analysis results, job stress experienced by seafarers explains 0.08% (R2 = 0.078) of their turnover intention. In line with these findings, Hypothesis 2 of the research hypotheses is accepted.

Table 5. Research Model Analysis Results.

Variables	B	SE	t	p	95% CI LL	UL
Fixed	3.1375	.0577	54.3715	.0000	3.0240	3.2510
JS	.3055	.0572	5.3403[***]	.0000	.1929	.4180
Model Summary	R^2 =0.078 ; F= 28.518 (1.337); p < 0.001;					
Variables	B	SE	t	p	95% CI LL	UL
Fixed	1.8559	.1383	13.4232	.0000	1.5839	2.1278
JS	.6044	.0463	13.0636	.0000	.5134	.6954
WFC	.1216	.0420	2.8965	.0040	.0390	.2041
LMX	-.3492	.0577	-6.0520	.0000	-.4627	-.2357

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JS*LMX		.2005	.0512	3.9185	.0001	.0998	.3011
Moderating Effecet	Low -.7850	.7618	.0576	7.7670	.0000	.3338	.5602
	Medium .0000	.6044	.0463	13.0636	.0000	.5134	.6954
	High .7850	.4470	.0648	11.7617	.0000	.6344	.8892
Bootstrap IndirectEffect	Effect=0.0371; BootSE=0.0151; p< 0.05; 95% BCA CI [0.0099; 0.0695]						
Model Summary	R^2 =0.4707; F=74.268 (4.337); p<0.001; (WFC*LMX) ΔR^2 =0.024; F= 15.3546 (1-334); p<0.001						

*p< 0.05; ***p< 0.001; Dependent Variable= TOI

Source: Authors.

The findings in Table 5 similarly show that the work-family conflict variable has a significant positive effect on the turnover intention variable (B=0.1216; t=2.8965; p<0.05; 95% CI [0.0390 - 0.2041]). An increase in work-family conflict experienced by seafarers increases their turnover intentions and a decrease in the level of work-family conflict leads to a decrease in turnover intentions. With this finding, Hypothesis 3 of the research hypotheses is accepted.

Looking at the results of the Bootstrap indirect effect analysis for the mediating role of work-family conflict in Table 5, it is seen that there is a significant mediating effect of work-family conflict in the relationship between job stress variable and turnover intention variables (Effect=0.0371; BootSE=0.0151; p< 0.05; 95% BCA CI [0.0099; 0.0695]). According to this finding, the positive significant effect of job stress on turnover intention is strengthened through work-family conflict. With this finding, Hypothesis 4 of the research hypotheses is accepted.

Table 5 shows that the moderating role of leader-member exchange in the relationship betweenjob stress and turnover intention is significant (B= 0. 2005; t=3.9185; p < 0.05; 95% [0.0998 - 0.3011]). When Table 5 is analyzed, it is seen that when leader-member exchange is high, the effect of job stresson turnover intention is low, and when leader-member exchange is low, the effect of job stress on turnover intention is high. In line with these findings regarding the moderating effect of leader-member exchange, Hypothesis 5 is accepted.

As a result of the analysis of the research model, it was seen that the model was significant as a whole (F=74.268 (4.337), p<0.05) and all of the hypotheses put forward in the study were accepted.

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According to the findings, the research model created with the variables of job stress, work-family conflictand leader-member exchange explains approximately 48% (R^2 =0.4707) of the turnover intentions of seafarers.

DISCUSSION and CONCLUSION

Under increasing competitive conditions, organizations' competitive advantage over their competitors and their achievement of organizational goals depend on their high performance. The total performance of the organization consists of the sum of the individual performance of each employee working in the organization. Although the opportunities for organizations to access the resources they need have increased with globalization and developing technology, the important thing is to obtain and retain talented employees who will use these resources effectively and contribute to organizational performance with their individual performance. Considering that recruiting a new employee is morecostly and tedious than retaining an existing employee in processes such as recruitment, training and adaptation, it is very important to identify and eliminate the factors that may cause talented and value- creating employees to leave their jobs as much as possible.

Seafarers, who play a critical role in the success of maritime transportation, which is the most important mode of transportation in the world's commercial transportation, work under challenging conditions specific to the maritime profession arising from sea and ship conditions. Challenging physical conditions, long working hours, excessive workload, inadequate nutrition and rest, lack of social opportunities, long voyage times and distance from family life are all factors that may cause seafarers to leave their current jobs in the long run and seek new job opportunities on land. Considering that the processes of leaving and joining the ship are much more costly and difficult compared to the processes of leaving and recruitment of land-based professions, the retention of talented employees who can fulfill such a challenging profession by adapting to ship conditions has a great impact on the performance of shipping companies. Accordingly, the purpose of this study is to examine the mediating roles of work- family conflict and the moderating roles of leader-member exchange in the effect of job stress experienced by seafarers, who are important actors of maritime transportation, on their turnover intentions.

The population of the study consists of Turkish seafarers who are actively working on merchant ships. The sample of the study consists of 339 seafarers who participated in the survey by simple random sampling method from this universe. The data collected through the Google form between February and May 2022 with the survey technique were analyzed using Model 5 in the Process macro (v3.4) plug-in developed by Hayes (2019) in the SPSS (v22) program, 5000 sampling options with Bootstrap technique and AMOS.22 package program.

The first of the findings obtained by testing the research hypotheses showed that there is asignificant positive effect of job stress on turnover intention among seafarers. In line with this finding, Hypothesis 1 of the research hypotheses is accepted. Considering the working conditions of seafarers andthe numerous sources of stress they are exposed to, if the working conditions cannot be improved and the sources of stress cannot be eliminated, the job stress experienced by seafarers causes an increase in their intention to quit their jobs. The commitment of seafarers who feel exhausted by constantly experiencing intense job stress decreases and their desire to evaluate job opportunities on land that will

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make their lives easier increases over time. This finding obtained in the study is similar to the findings of previous studies in the literature examining the effect of job stress on turnover intentions (Chen et al., 2011; Arshadi & Damiri, 2013; Yenihan et al., 2014).
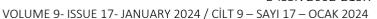
The second finding of the study showed that there was a significant positive effect of job stress on work-family conflict in seafarers and Hypothesis 2 was accepted with this finding. This finding supports the findings of previous studies examining the effect of perceived job stress on the level of work-family conflict through seafarers and employees of various sectors (Armstrong, 2015; Tekingündüz et al., 2015; Ismail & Gali, 2017; Liu et al., 2021). Seafarers, whose psychological resilience decreases due to the intense work stress they experience, have less tolerance for their family responsibilities and have difficulty in fulfilling these responsibilities. At the same time, the negative mood caused by work stress is reflected in the quality of seafarers' communication with their family members. These situations arising from the intense work stress experienced by seafarers damage the relationship between seafarers and their families, who are in a constant state of separation due to the nature of the maritime profession, andincrease the level of work-family conflict.

The third finding obtained through hypothesis tests showed that the level of work-family conflict has a significant positive effect on the turnover intention of seafarers and Hypothesis 3 was accepted in line with this finding. This finding is similar to the findings of previous studies investigating the effect of work-family conflict level on turnover intention (Çarıkçı & Çelikkol, 2009; Turunç & Çelik, 2010; Aboobaker, 2017; Seçilmiş & Kılıç, 2017; Aboobaker, 2020). The sector-specific challenging conditions of the maritime profession affect not only the seafarers themselves and their work lives but also their family members and family lives. When the increase in conflicts between work and family roles becomes unbearable, seafarers who feel obliged to choose between their current jobs and their families tend to leave their current jobs and search for a new job that will make their lives easier.

The fourth finding obtained as a result of testing the research hypotheses showed that there is a significant mediating effect of work-family conflict level on the effect of perceived job stress on turnover intentions of seafarers and accordingly, Hypothesis 4 is accepted. This finding is in line with the findings ofprevious studies in the literature that reveal the mediating effect of work-family conflict level (Judge & Colquitt, 2004; Boyar & Mosley Jr, 2007; Çelik & Turunç, 2010; Akkoç et al., 2011; Riglea et al., 2021). The increase in job stress perceived by seafarers leads to an increase in work-family conflict levels, and high levels of work-family conflict increase seafarers' turnover intentions.

The fifth and final finding of the study showed that there is a significant moderating variable effect of leader-member exchange on the effect of job stress experienced by seafarers on their turnover intentions, and thus, the final hypothesis of the study, Hypothesis 5, is accepted. The level of exchange that seafarers have with their captains and officers, who are the leaders on board the ships, shapes their perspectives towards the maritime profession. As the level and quality of the relationship between them and their leaders increases, seafarers become more resilient against difficulties, and they are more optimistic about their work and sea life thanks to the support they receive from their leaders. In this direction, it is an acceptable finding that if the quality of leader-member exchange of seafarers is high,the effect of job stress on turnover intention is weak, and if the quality of leader-member exchange is low, the effect of job stress on turnover intention is strong. The last finding of the study is similar to the

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findings of the studies in the literature showing the role of the leader-member exchange level as a moderating variable (Buch, 2015; Gürsoy & Köksal, 2018; Çiçek & Türkmenoğlu, 2020).

As a result, all of the research hypotheses were accepted and the research model showing the mediating role of work-family conflict and the moderating role of leader-member exchange in the effect of job stress experienced by seafarers on their turnover intentions was confirmed. The high staff turnoverrate experienced in the maritime profession is a significant cost for ship operators. Even when the costs of transportation of a new seafarer to the port where the ship is located due to the insufficiency in the number of crew members are considered, it is understood that staff turnover in the maritime profession is incomparably more costly than in other professions. In addition, the departure of colleagues with whom they have worked together for a long time has negative effects on the mental state of seafarers, while it takes time for them to adapt to their new colleagues who will join the ship. Another negative consequence of increased turnover intention is the decrease in the individual performance of seafarers. In order to protect themselves from these tangible and intangible negativities caused by turnover and to achieve maximum efficiency, ship operators need to take various measures to increase the organizational commitment of seafarers.

In the future, researchers who want to research similar topics can be recommended to include seafarers from all over the world in the research sample. The sample of this study consists of Turkish seafarers working on merchant ships and the results obtained in this study are representative of Turkish seafarers. Considering that the maritime sector is one of the global sectors in the world, it would be useful to include seafarers from different ethnic origins and cultures in the research sample in future studies in order to generalize the results to be obtained. Another important recommendation that can be offered to researchers is to customize the research according to ship types. The conditions of ships differ according to their types and these differentiated conditions can shape the organizational behaviors of seafarers. For this reason, it would be beneficial for the maritime literature to investigate the turnover intentions of seafarers working on different types of ships and the relationships between the factors affecting this intention in terms of ship types.

As a result of the study, various recommendations have also been developed for the managers of the shipping companies operating in practice. In order to reduce the turnover intention of seafarers and the related poor performance as much as possible, it is firstly recommended to shorten the contract duration of seafarers. As seafarers become more distant from social life during long contract periods, they experience serious adaptation problems when they return to shore life. Shorter contract periods would facilitate the adaptation process of both the seafarers and their families. In order to ensure that shorter contract periods do not reduce the organizational commitment of seafarers, seafarers should be offered a guaranteed career opportunity with the same crew members by the ship management. Thus, with the shortening of transition periods between land and sea life, the level of alienation of seafarers from ship life and crew members will decrease.

During the recruitment process, shipping companies should conduct detailed interviews with seafarers about their family and private lives. By having important information about the private lives of each employee, the companies will be able to help them and their families more effectively with the problems that the seafarers may experience during their time away from land. Shipping companies should pay attention not only to the organization-employee relationship that improves the exchange

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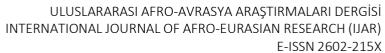
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between the organization and the employee but also to the organization-family relationship that supportstheir families when the seafarers are away from land. In this way, the stress experienced by seafarers who trust that the organization they work for can support them in times of need of their family will decrease and their organizational commitment will increase.
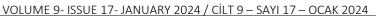
In order to reduce the turnover intentions of seafarers by ensuring high-quality leader-member exchanges, subordinate-superior relationships on ships should be based on mutual empathy. Intimate relationships between leaders and subordinates on board ships by maintaining the boundaries of respect will increase the motivation of seafarers and their ability to cope with challenges. In addition, in order to strengthen the quality of leader-member exchange by making the seafarers feel valued, it would be beneficial for the captains and officers to consider the opinions of the crew members when making important decisions. Another issue that plays an important role in the seafarers's exchanges with their leaders is the perception of justice. According to the leader-member exchange theory, although leaders cannot be expected to treat all crew members equally, captains and officers should treat all crew members equally in terms of fairness and provide all crew members with the opportunity to communicate effectively. At the same time, the fact that each ship's people's justice system operates according to their own national rules is a major obstacle to the perception of justice on board ships. A common justice system for all crew members on board ships would make a significant contribution to strengthening the perception of justice.

Improving social opportunities on board ships is an issue that should be emphasized in order to reduce work stress by ensuring the work-life balance of seafarers. In order for seafarers to get away from work stress on board, more frequent onboard social activities should be organized and opportunities for activities such as gym, television, various games, etc. should be increased on board. At the same time, the participation of seafarers in land life should be encouraged during the time the ships are in port, and activity areas for seafarers should be established in or around ports around the world to ensure global equality in this regard. Communication is a vital issue for seafarers, as the means of connecting them with their families and land life on board ships are limited to communication tools such as telephone, internet and e-mail. For this reason, communication facilities on ships should be improved and the cost of access to these communication facilities should be reduced.

In addition to the above-mentioned recommendations, in order to increase the resilience of seafarers and reduce turnover, it is recommended to increase the comfort of cabins and living spaces, to pay special attention to food and beverage, which is the biggest source of motivation on board, to have a professional health officer regularly on all types of ships so that seafarers feel safe, to have regular check-ups for seafarers by ship operators and to increase the motivation of seafarers by making various rewards.

The first limitation of the research is that the research population is limited to Turkish seafarers. In research related to the maritime sector, which is a global sector, it will increase the quality of the results to be obtained if the universe includes seafarers from all over the world. In addition, the population of the study consists of Turkish seafarers working on all merchant ships regardless of ship type. Considering that the working and living conditions of the ships vary significantly according to the ship types, applying the research to each ship type separately will provide more customized results in understanding the turnover intentions of seafarers and the variables that cause this intention.

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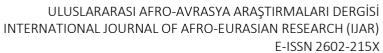
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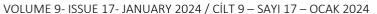
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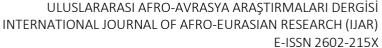
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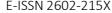
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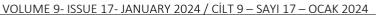
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