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Editorial

It's very enthusiastic for us to present the first issue of the sixth volume of IJPS. It includes six essays about international politics and security issues. In the first row, you may find research about terrorist organizations in Nigeria. The author takes your attention to Boko Haram which caused devastating conflict in terms of loss of lives, and property, and the downfall of economic activity in Nigeria. The author says that Indeed, the Boko Haram Conflict has not only adversely affected the most populous country in Africa but also affected all countries in the Chad Basin. Besides, this research presents a nexus between the activities of Boko Haram insurgents in Nigeria to religious extremism, as well as some remote social and political factors that have contributed to the rise of the sect.

The second essay one of the three pieces of research about China in this issue stresses that the South China Sea problems are the subject of global security discussions due to the increasing weight of the regional countries in the international system and the importance of the region in world trade. According to the author, The tension arising within the framework of conflicting sovereignty claims in the South China Sea has led to competition among Southeast Asian countries as well as global actors. The PRC's claims based on the map titled Position of the Islands in the South China Sea, which first consisted of 11 lines and later became nine lines, declared in 1947, led to the potential for conflict with other countries in the region.

The third essay is about the rivalry between China and the USA in Africa. Africa has been known as the long-term projection of the leading global interest of China for a long time. Indeed Africa is very important for China to rise as a global competitor in a confrontation with the USA. But this time the author turns his face to China to criticize some arguments about China. Leading claims are racism and misuse of soft power by China. Hence, this essay focuses on the confrontation of the soft powers of two superpowers in international politics by using Africa as a study area.

The fourth essay is also compatible with the third essay. The author examines the geoeconomic and geostrategic motives driving China's establishment of a military base in Djibouti in Africa.

So, this essay focuses on the geoeconomic perspective and explores economic interests and opportunities in the Horn of Africa. Geographically, it addresses implications for global power dynamics, militarization of China-Africa partnerships, oil resource security, peacekeeping, counterterrorism, piracy, and the Maritime Silk Road. It also delves into China's Maritime Security Strategy within the Belt and Road Initiative, focusing on marine environmental protection, cooperative development, security alliances, knowledge promotion, and governance. Therefore fourth essay is a comprehensive evaluation of Africa in the case of Djibouti.

The next research is about ontological insecurity. The purpose of this study is to demonstrate the significant role of ontological security (in)stability in shaping voter behavior in Türkiye and understanding Turkish politics. In this context, the study argues that ontological security (in)stability can be both a positive and negative force in shaping political behavior in Türkiye. The fundamental argument that ontological security (in)stability is an influential factor in shaping the political behavior of Turkish voters will be analyzed through the lens of how the ongoing concerns of national survival since the formation of the nation-state, coupled with the ontological anxieties that have evolved in harmony with social traumas, problems, and dilemmas following the military coups, have directed the behavior of Turkish voters towards the preservation of the current regime.

The last essay on this issue is about OPEC and its role in the global oil market. OPEC is one of the prominent IOs in the international area because of primarily controls the world's energy supply and price regulations. The journey of the organization as an energy cartel to the regional geopolitics and to face climate change challenges has been difficult. Although OPEC has undergone various changes in the coming time, its role in the energy market and process cannot be ignored. Despite the shifting energy market, OPEC will remain the dominant force in the coming year, even with the ongoing situation in the current global world order. This research paper intends to understand the various aspects within and outside OPEC, how its role plays a vital role in the current status of OPEC, and how much climate change will impact the organization as a whole.

Editor-in-Chief

Editörden,

IJPS'in altıncı cildinin ilk sayısını sunmanın heyecanı içindeyiz. Bu sayı uluslararası politika ve güvenlik konularıyla ilgili altı makale içermektedir. İlk sırada Nijerya'daki terör örgütleriyle ilgili araştırmaları bulabilirsiniz. Yazar dikkatinizi Nijerya'da yıkıcı çatışmalara, can ve mal kayıplarına ve ekonomik faaliyetlerin çöküşüne neden olan Boko Haram örgütünü inceliyor. Yazar, Boko Haram sorununun sadece Afrika'nın en kalabalık ülkesini değil, Çad Havzası'ndaki tüm ülkeleri de olumsuz etkilediğini söylüyor. Ayrıca bu araştırma, Boko Haram isyancılarının Nijerya'daki faaliyetleri ile dini aşırıcılık arasındaki bağlantıyı ve bu örgütün yükselişine neden olan bazı uzak sosyal ve politik faktörler arasındaki bağlantıyı ortaya koyuyor.

Bu sayımızda Çin ile ilgili üç araştırmadan biri olan ikinci makale, bölge ülkelerinin uluslararası sistemdeki ağırlığının artması ve bölgenin dünya çapındaki önemi nedeniyle Güney Çin Denizi sorunlarının küresel güvenlik tartışmalarının konusu haline geldiğini vurguluyor. Yazara göre, Güney Çin Denizi'nde çatışan egemenlik iddiaları çerçevesinde ortaya çıkan gerilim, küresel aktörlerin yanı sıra Güneydoğu Asya ülkeleri arasında da rekabete yol açmıştır. ÇHC'nin, 1947'de ilan ettiği, önce on bir hattan oluşan, daha sonra dokuz hattan oluşan Güney Çin Denizi'ndeki Adaların Konumu başlıklı haritaya dayandırdığı iddialar, bölgedeki diğer ülkelerle çatışma potansiyelini açıklıyor.

Üçüncü makale ise Çin ile ABD'nin Afrika'daki rekabetini konu alıyor. Afrika, uzun süredir Çin'in önde gelen küresel çıkarlarının uzun vadeli projeksiyonu olarak biliniyor. Gerçekten de Afrika, Çin'in ABD ile karşı karşıya gelmede küresel bir rakip olarak yükselbilmesi için çok önemli. Ancak yazar bu sefer Çin'e yönelik bazı argümanları eleştirmek için yüzünü Çin'e çeviriyor. Öne çıkan iddialar arasında ırkçılık ve Çin'in yumuşak gücünü kötüye kullanması yer alıyor. Dolayısıyla bu makale, Afrika'yı bir çalışma alanı olarak kullanarak, iki süper gücün uluslararası politikadaki yumuşak güçlerinin karşı karşıya gelmesine odaklanmaktadır.

Dördüncü yazı da üçüncü yazıyla uyumludur. Yazar, Çin'in Afrika'daki Cibuti'de askeri üs kurmasına neden olan jeoekonomik ve jeostratejik nedenleri inceliyor. Dolayısıyla bu makale jeoekonomik perspektife odaklanmakta ve Afrika Boynuzu'ndaki ekonomik çıkarları ve fırsatları araştırmaktadır. Coğrafi olarak, küresel güç dinamikleri, Çin-Afrika ortaklıklarının militarizasyonu, petrol kaynaklarının güvenliği, barışı koruma, terörle mücadele, korsanlık ve Deniz İpek Yolu üzerindeki etkileri ele alıyor. Aynı zamanda, deniz çevresinin korunması, işbirlikçi gelişim, güvenlik ittifakları, bilginin desteklenmesi ve yönetişime odaklanan Kuşak ve Yol Girişimi kapsamında Çin'in Deniz Güvenliği Stratejisini de ele alıyor. Bu nedenle dördüncü makale, Cibuti örneğinde Afrika'nın kapsamlı bir değerlendirilmesini içermektedir.

Bir sonraki araştırma ontolojik güvensizlikle ilgilidir. Bu çalışmanın amacı, Türkiye'de seçmen davranışının şekillenmesinde ve Türk siyasetinin anlaşılmasında ontolojik güvenlik/istikrarsızlığın önemli rolünü ortaya koymaktır. Bu bağlamda çalışma, ontolojik güvenlik istikrarsızlığının Türkiye'de siyasi davranışın şekillenmesinde hem olumlu hem de olumsuz bir güç olabileceğini savunmaktadır. Ontolojik güvenlik/istikrarsızlığın Türk seçmenin siyasi davranışlarını şekillendirmede etkili bir faktör olduğu yönündeki temel argüman, ulus devletinin oluşumundan bu yana devam eden ulusal beka kaygılarının ontolojik kaygılarla nasıl birleştiği perspektifinden analiz edilecektir. Askeri darbelerin ardından yaşanan toplumsal travmalar, sorunlar ve ikilemlerle uyumlu olarak gelişen bu durum, Türk seçmenin davranışlarını mevcut rejimin korunması yönünde yönlendirmiştir.

Bu sayıyla ilgili son makale OPEC ve onun küresel petrol piyasasındaki rolü hakkındadır. OPEC, öncelikle dünyanın enerji arzını ve fiyat düzenlemelerini kontrol etmesi nedeniyle uluslararası alanda öne çıkan uluslararası kuruluşlardan biridir. Yazarlara göre Örgütün bir enerji karteli olarak bölgesel jeopolitiğe ve iklim değişikliği sorunlarıyla yüzleşme yolculuğu zorlu oldu. OPEC önümüzdeki dönemde çeşitli değişikliklere uğrasa da enerji piyasasında ve sürecindeki rolü göz ardı edilemez. Değişen enerji piyasasına rağmen, OPEC önümüzdeki yıllarda da baskın güç olmaya devam edecek. Bu araştırma makalesi, OPEC içindeki ve dışındaki çeşitli hususları, OPEC'in mevcut durumunda OPEC'in rolünün nasıl hayati bir rol oynadığını ve iklim değişikliğinin organizasyonu bir bütün olarak ne kadar etkileyeceğini anlamayı amaçlamaktadır.

Editör



Insurgency in Nigeria, Boko Haram's Operations and the Future Outlook

Osagwereme Martins Akowe*

Abstract

The Boko Haram insurgency has been a devastating conflict in terms of loss of lives, property, and the downfall of economic activity in Nigeria. Indeed, the Boko Haram Conflict has not only adversely affected the most populous country in Africa but also affected all countries in the Chad Basin. This research has drawn a nexus between the activities of Boko Haram insurgents in Nigeria to religious extremism, as well as some remote social and political factors that have contributed to the rise of the sect.

The research explores the different conceptions of terrorism, insurgency, and religious extremism and how they can be used to explain the nature of Boko Haram's operations. Besides, assesses the future outlook of the Boko Haram insurgency, considering the coalition of the armed terrorist group with the Islamic State West African Province and what this means for the fight against insurgency in the Chad Basin region.

Keywords: Boko Haram, ISWAP, Insurgency, Chad, Extremism

1. Introduction

Insurgencies have happened in various manners across the world. The Boko Haram insurgency has been a bloody socio-political clash that has unfavorably influenced Nigeria. Some principal ideas have been utilized in previous studies by scholars and security specialists to underscore the insurrection issue. It is imperative to appreciate the premise of a portion of these ideas that will be completely examined in this research.

A study¹ characterized insurgency as a revolt against an established position when those participating are not perceived as belligerents. Morris² seems to vary marginally on that by calling attention to the fact that not all revolts are insurgencies. The utilization of the term "insurgency" perceives the socio-political inspiration of the individuals that take an interest in it, while the expression "brigandry" involves no political force.³ On the off chance that an uprising has minor support, taking the individuals who keep on opposing towards the finish of an armed clash when the majority of their partners have surrendered for instance, at that point

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¹ Rogerson, J. (2010). The Creation Stories: Their Ecological Potential and Problems in Horrell, D. (ed), *Ecological Hermeneutics*, (21-31). London: T&T Clark.

² Morris, M. (2005). Al Qaeda as Insurgency. U.S.A: United States Army College.

³ Goldstein, E. (2003). *Power and Stability: British Foreign Policy*. London: Routledge.



such an obstruction might be portrayed as brigandry, and the individuals who partake as scoundrels/brigands.⁴

There are numerous international laws and principles of war that impact describing an event as an insurgency. However, as Nagl⁵ noted, unlike other areas covered by international law, there is no proper codification on the distinction between “insurgency” and “belligerency”. Nagl ventured two reasons for this lack of proper codification. Firstly, it is elementary knowledge that international law ordinarily does not intrude on matters that are entirely within the internal affairs of a sovereign state (though it must be noted that contemporary developments such as the “responsibility to protect” have continuously subverted this traditional method). Secondly, there was a controversy between the Great Power in the Hague meeting of 1899, who regarded francstireur as unlawful fighting for capture, and smaller states which claimed that they must be considered as lawful fighters.⁶

The U.S. Defense Department⁷ describes insurgency as "an orchestrated effort to overthrow the constitutional government by using subversive and armed conflicts". A structure including both insurgency and counterinsurgency is provided in the US Counter-insurgency Field Manual.

According to Anderson⁸, every insurgency includes terrorism; he notes that there is no common concept of terrorism. However, its definition is not in international law, the United Nations (UN) has many working definitions, and these include one drafted by the United Nations Policy Working Group on Terrorism and the United Nations. In its 2002 Report to the United Nation’s Secretary-General, the operational group stated that:

*“It is intended to cause emotional and deadly harm to citizens and to conceive of an environment of fear towards a political or ideological purpose (whether irreligious or religious); it is an unlawful act, but it is more than just criminality and without asking for a detailed description of terrorism, it would be helpful to outline some of the vast features of the singularity. Terrorism is, in most cases, supported by the political elite. We need to consider its political dynamics to understand the issue of terrorism and its fundamental crime and psychology, and the United Nations needs to discuss all sides of this equation”.*⁹

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Nagl, J. (2006). US counter insurgency. New York: 24 Press.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Aremu, I. (2003). Development and Political Stability in Kwanashie, A (Ed), Politics and Political Power Relations in Nigeria (pp.248-260). Lagos: Dat and Partners Logistic Ltd.

⁹ Ibid.



Apart from the earlier discussed conflict between the depiction of “insurgency” and “belligerency”, there is another set of conflicting terms often used interchangeably – “insurgency” and “terrorism”. Michael F. Morris in his winning essay at the 24th Annual United States Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Strategic Essay Contest, put it as follows:

“[Pure terrorist group] can follow political, even revolutionary agendas, but their violence replaces rather than complements the political agenda. Their convert wing is carrying out assaults on military forces with techniques such as airstrikes and ambushes, as well as acts of terror such as attacks that cause intentional civilian casualties”¹⁰

It is submitted that the usage or non-use of terror does not describe insurgency, but that the organizational features have historically provided the means to conflate the two terms. Insurgencies usually field military powers in magnitudes greater than those of terrorist organizations.¹¹ As Morris postulated, an insurgent group can have political intent and can even be organized in a manner that enables them to provide social services. Often, these insurgent groups have an open and sometimes legal political wing.

Bringing this background into the Nigerian context, the case of insurgency by the Boko Haram terrorist group has largely morphed into a claim for Nigerian territory and other chunks of West African countries around the Chad region.

2. Boko Haram Operations in Nigeria

Nigeria, as a country with a population of over 180 million people across 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) divided into 774 (seven hundred and seventy-four) local government areas, is made up of people from different ethnic and religious persuasions.¹² Nigeria's political, economic, social, and religious tendencies all add to the country's complexity as a nation-state.

Since its independence, Nigeria has experienced several religious and ethnic crises of varying degrees and intensity.¹³

¹⁰ Morris, M. (2005). Al Qaeda as Insurgency. U.S.A: United States Army College.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Oyeniyi, B. (2012). Political Narratives as Historical Realities: is Jos conflict an Ethno-Religions conflict? In Albert, I. (ed), A History of Social conflict and conflict Management in Nigeria, (35-51). Ibadan: John Archers.

¹³ Gilbert, L. (2014). The Prolongation of Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria: The International Dimensions. Research on Humanities and Social Science, 4 (11) 150-156.



Previous insurgencies in Nigeria have varied in scale, complexity, and severity, but Boko Haram stands out because they are a faceless community with contradictory ideologies.

In 2009, the government cracked down on its members, but this has not stopped its subsequent evolution, its increasing frequency, and the geographical scope of its attack, indicating that the group has now grown past its original spheres of activity and religious composition and now includes criminal elements, vagabonds, discontented politicians and not just the Islamic extremists who made up its fold at inception.¹⁴

Boko Haram intends to create an Islamic state in the sovereign state of Nigeria. It opposes Nigerian society's westernization and the accumulation of the country's resources among associates of a tiny political elite, primarily in the southern part of the country predominated by Christians¹⁵. Local authorities' imposition of sharia law, which began in Zamfara in January 2000 and spread to 12 northern states in Nigeria by late 2002, may have facilitated relations between Boko Haram and political leaders, but the community considers it to be corrupted¹⁶. Boko Haram is ideologically isolated and lacks mainstream support from the general population and the majority of Muslim leaders in the country¹⁷. It is critical to comprehend Boko Haram's organization and function to properly assess the community.

Despite having a hierarchical and graded structure with a single overall leader, Boko Haram often acts as a covert cell system with a network of structures. The organization's limits are hazy; in many situations, leadership is directive, and in others, it is more inspiring. The organization acts as an insurgent and guerrilla army, with units ranging in size from 300 to 500 fighters¹⁸. The total number of fighters is estimated to be between 5,000 and 9,000.

Mailafia¹⁹ highlighted that Abubakar Shekau is the overall religious leader of Boko Haram and he preaches to his followers daily in addition to his operational leadership. Under Executive Order 13224, the US Department of State named Abubakar Shekau as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist in 2012... Boko Haram's organizational capabilities have improved under Shekau's leadership. Momodu Bama, who was appointed second in command when

¹⁴ Okemi, M. (2013). Boko Haram: A Religious Sect or Terrorist Organization. *Global Journal of Politics and Law Research*, 3 (9) 237-241.

¹⁵ Ottuh, P. and Idjakpo, O. (2010). The Boko Haram Praxis: A Critical Appraisal of the Nigerian Experience. *The Humanities and Dilemma of Contemporary Africa*, November 24th-26th, 91-100.

¹⁶ The Nation, Thursday, August 16, 2012: p.23

¹⁷ Vanguard, Lagos Thursday, September 1, 2011:4-5

¹⁸ Suleiman, T. (2012). The wages of evil. *TELL*, May 14, pp 44-45, 48, 50-51.

¹⁹ Mailafia, O. (2013). Conflict and Insurgency in Nigeria. Available at <http://ureports.com>, accessed on 20/07/2015



Abubakar Shekau took over as the overall leader, is another notable leader. In 2013, Bama was assassinated. Abba was another regional leader who was assassinated. Aminu Sadiq Ogwechue is most likely a regional leader who has been arrested in connection with the 2014 Chibok girls kidnapping and as an alleged mastermind of the April 2014 Abuja bombing.

If various reports from the Nigerian Defense Ministry are to be believed, Abubakar Shekau may have been killed in combat since 2014, enabling the name to act as a title to mislead Nigerian military forces. In 2015, Chad's President, Idris Derby, said that Boko Haram has a new leader who is not Shekau, but the group quickly refuted this claim in a video²⁰ Both of these allegations, however, are unverifiable; Boko Haram has always released videos and statements to refute these claims, claiming that Abubakar Shekau is still alive and well.²¹ Whether this is true or not is difficult to state with certainty.

In all this, it is critical to investigate how Boko Haram is financed to understand how the sect has risen to such importance over the years; funding is critical to the terrorist group's continued existence. While it is difficult to say with certainty how the insurgency is funded, one thing is certain: it does not come from a single source.

Kidnappings, robbery, and extortion provide support for Boko Haram²². It was reported that Boko Haram terrorists abducted a family of seven French terrorists on vacation in Cameroon in early 2013. The kidnappers freed the captured hostages, along with 16 other hostages, two months later in exchange for a \$3.15 million ransom. According to newspaper reports in Nigeria, Boko Haram receives as much “as a \$1 million ransom for each wealthy Nigerian or foreigner kidnapped”.²³ Couriers transport cash, ensuring that it is difficult to monitor, and contact is done physically. They work in such a way that little money is needed to carry out attacks, and it is argued that this includes paying local youths to monitor army movements.²⁴ Furthermore, the party is still well-supplied thanks to supplies confiscated from fleeing soldiers. Boko Haram also extorts local governments; according to a Boko Haram

²⁰ Channels News @ 10 May 4th, 2012.

²¹ See Note 20.

²² Isakpa, P. (2011). Bomb Blast, Boko Haram and Democrats at the gate. *Business Day*, August 29, pp.159-200.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Alozieuwa, S. (2011). Contending Theories on Nigeria's Security Challenges in the Era of Politics. *The Peace and Conflict Review*, nd, 1-20.



spokesperson, some former northern governors paid the party monthly to stop attacks on their states.²⁵

Boko Haram has also been linked with cocaine trafficking.²⁶ However, according to some studies, there seems to be insufficient evidence to support this funding method. In 2012, Cockayne, a senior fellow at the International Peace Institute and a former Co-Director of the Centre on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation wrote:

Carrier and Klantsching (2012, 16) vigorously downplay the effect of cocaine trafficking on West African governance, which is surprising given their understanding of the contested existence of most African governments. Just three case studies were used: Guinea–Bissau, Lesotho, and Nigeria. "Governmental complicity in the African drug trade is rare," the authors conclude, and "repression is the dominant paradigm."²⁷

Boko Haram raises funds by importing drugs from Latin American drug cartels, according to Carson,²⁸ a terrorist finance specialist. However, it appears that nobody wants to admit that cocaine reaches Europe through West Africa and that it is a lucrative venture for Islamic terrorist organizations. Boko Haram also employs other smuggling methods. According to an Annual Defense Institute report, the Boko Haram group has joined other criminal organizations in Africa in the billion-dollar elephant and rhino poaching industry.²⁹

Donations from Islamist sympathizers are another source of funding for Boko Haram. Boko Haram obtained the majority of its funding after its formation from residents and donors who backed its goals of enforcing Islamic rule and ridding Nigeria of any form of Western influence.³⁰ Boko Haram has recently expanded its funding sources by enlisting the help of international donors as well as other business projects such as bogus charity organizations. In February 2012, recently arrested officials revealed that while the organization initially relied on member donations, its links to Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb allowed it to obtain funding from donors in the United Kingdom and Saudi Arabia.³¹ Surprisingly, Boko Haram hides its

²⁵ Sahara Reporters, 16 and 1 May, 2014: 20.

²⁶ Crenshaw, M. (2008). *Terrorism as an international problem*, in Norwitz, H (Ed), *The History, influence, and Future of Armed group around the world*. New York: Oxford Press.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Carson, J. (2012). *Nigeria, one year After Elections: US on Boko Haram*, prepared for Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Washington DC. April 9, pp. 15.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Okemi, M. (2013). *Boko Haram: A Religious Sect or Terrorist Organization*. *Global Journal of Politics and Law Research*, 3 (9) 237-241.



financial sources by using a highly decentralized distribution network. The organization uses the *Hawala* model of Islamic money transfer, which is predicated on an honor system and a global chain of agents, and this makes it extremely difficult to monitor the group's finances.³² The Boko Haram insurgency is likely to be funded from these and other sources.

It was tough to determine if Boko Haram had any links to other foreign terrorist networks such as Al Qaeda at the start of the insurgency, it seems to be more of a bandwagon effect to raise publicity.³³ Boko Haram, on the other hand, has recently been linked to other foreign terrorist organizations, according to new evidence. Boko Haram has been linked to al-Qaeda and its regional affiliates since at least 2002. According to "A Study on Boko Haram for the International Crisis Group",³⁴ the late Osama bin Laden donated \$3 million to terrorist organizations in Nigeria as seed money to finance the propagation of his philosophies, and some of this fund was used to help promote the Boko Haram group's earlier operations. Due to a lack of evidence, the credibility of a statement published by the Nigerian daily newspaper Vanguard in which Boko Haram's then "acting leader," Sanni Umaru, declares that "Boko Haram is just a variant of Al-Qaeda" and that the sect has "started a jihad in Nigeria" and will soon carry out bomb attacks in major Nigerian cities were thrown out³⁵ is not sufficient to justify that link. However, correspondences between Osama bin Laden and the Boko Haram terrorist group were said to have been found in Bin Laden's compound after the raid that killed him in 2011.

When the Nigerian government attacked Boko Haram in July 2009, al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) issued a declaration of support for the organization, and its members dispersed to different Al-Qaeda factions. Abubakar Shekau, the leader of Boko Haram, praised and publicly commended Al-Qaeda and also expressed condolences on the "martyrdom" of two top Iraqi al-Qaeda leaders in July 2010.³⁶ The US State Department classified Khahd al-Barnawi and Abubakar Adam Kamar as lead terrorists with "links to Boko Haram and solid ties to al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb" in June 2012, at the same time when Abubakar Shekau, the Boko Haram leader was designated as a terrorist. Similar incentives were given to leaders

³² Rogerson, J. (2010). The Creation Stories: Their Ecological Potential and Problems in Horrell, D. (ed), Ecological Hermeneutics, (21-31). London: T&T Clark.

³³ See note 16.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Bartolotta, C. (2011). Terrorism in Nigeria: The Rise of Boko Haram. The Whitehead Journal of Diplomacy and International Relations, 5 (1), 44-57.

³⁶ Aro, O. (2013). Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria: Its Implication and way forward toward avoidance of Future Insurgency. International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications, 3 (11) 1-8).



in AQIM and its offshoots in June 2013, when the “Rewards for Justice” initiative offered to give out a \$7 million bounty for knowledge leading to the arrest of Shekau.³⁷ Shekau was charged with "expressing solidarity with al-Qaeda and threatening the United States," and there are reported communications, training programs, weapons, and other links between Boko Haram, on one hand, the al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), the al-Shabaab, and the al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), that could improve and enhance Boko Haram's capacity to carry out terrorist attacks, and that these three organizations are interconnected.³⁸

The United Nations Security Council also holds the position that Boko Haram has strong links with al-Qaeda. In May 2014, when the UNSC listed Boko Haram under the al-Qaeda sanctions that it imposed, the UNSC noted that Boko Haram has sustained a relationship with AQIM for training support and material needs, as well as gaining useful expertise on improvised explosive device construction from AQIM. Abu Musab Abdel Wadoud, the leader of AQIM, one of al-regional Qaeda's branches, is reported to have sworn an oath of allegiance to the senior leadership of al-Qaeda.³⁹

Nevertheless, it is critical to note that the al-Qaeda central unit has never formally recognized Boko Haram as its affiliate, and al-Qaeda did not praise the group after the Chibok schoolgirls were kidnapped, leading some observers to believe that the group was too brutal and violent in its operations for Al-Qaeda.⁴⁰ The exact current status of relations between Boko Haram and al-Qaeda is unknown, and the form and function of al-Qaeda's relationship with affiliates is still a subject of discussion within the US intelligence and counterintelligence community. It is noteworthy that should AQIM and Boko Haram join efforts and coordinate their operations and attacks, the West African subregion that is already marked by insecurity and instability would face additional threats from these terrorist organizations. Not just because of the continuous violence of Boko Haram within the Nigeria space, but also as a result of the group's possible networks and relationship with AQIM, the North African al-Qaeda offshoot.

Abubakar Shekau, the Boko Haram leader released a 16-minute video in July 2014, in which he expressed support for ISIL's Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, al-Ayman Qaeda's Al-Zawahiri,

³⁷ Omankhanlen, O. And Babajide, J. (2012) Boko Haram Finding: Nigeria may face International Sanctions. <http://www.nncpo.netindex.com>, accessed on 06/07/2015

³⁸ Gilbert, L. (2014). The Prolongation of Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria: The International Dimensions. *Research on Humanities and Social Science*, 4 (11) 150-156.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Walker A. (2012). What is Boko Haram, US institute of Peace (VSIP) 3, February, 2014.



and Afghan Taliban leaders Mullah Omar. Later on, in March 2015, Shekau officially announced and pledged Boko Haram's allegiance to ISIL, and the same was accepted by ISIL's spokesman some days later. Although establishing those relations and their exact nature may be difficult, Nigerians appear to be secure in their presence. The involvement of highly educated former University lecturers among the sect's members, as well as the sect's heavy and sophisticated weapons, and how they carry out sophisticated attacks, all support those claims.

The most well-known position of Boko Haram is its outright rejection of Western education. However, the term "*Boko Haram*" refers to a wider criticism of Nigerian culture that targets the alleged fruits of such colleges. Notably, Boko Haram is not a solitary group that resents Nigeria's highly educated elites for failing to provide prosperity for the country's population. Many Nigerians also decry the government's pervasive corruption.

Some Muslims in the Northern part of the country, where classical Quranic and Islamic education is a strong social force, have diverse thoughts about Western-style learning institutions. However, secondary and tertiary education are valued qualifications, and Northerners are proud of their universities and colleges. Some Northern Muslims, on the other hand, claim that Western schools fail to instill Islamic orientations and values in their students. Boko Haram is an especially extreme example of this latter mindset. It opposes compromises like "Islamiyya" colleges, which combine both Western-style government education and Islamic religious education.

Mohammed Yusuf, the founder of the sect was dissatisfied with the quality and outcomes of Western education. Darwinism, he said, was incompatible with the Quran. Muslim children were taught to imitate the mannerisms of Jews and Christians in schools. At school, children of various genders interacted, encouraging "fornication, lesbianism, homosexuality, and other [corruptions]".⁴¹ Yusuf argued that British colonialism's "Christianizing" schools were not in any way different from the postcolonial government-established schools, but that the promise of material benefits has blinded Muslims to the extent that they cannot stick to the truth "Because of love for this world, many people's hearts have been saturated with the love of these schools until they do not see in them that which contradicts [Islam's] law". "Our movement rejects work under any government that rules by something other than what God has

⁴¹ Ibid.



revealed”.⁴² Yusuf’s views on intra-Muslim solidarity, democracy, and Western-style education were all bundled together in one package.

In the background of Northern Nigeria, Yusuf’s Islamist vision was serious. There are many Northern Muslims who claim that Islam offers policy-making agendas that can affect the general life of citizens in a variety of ways. Despite this, only a few influential Nigerians advocate for a Sharia Islamic state. The enforcement of sharia was led by politicians from large, non-Islamist political parties, with support from a wide range of groups, including Salafis, Sufis, and unaffiliated Muslims. Many Sharia supporters believed it was consistent with a federal, representative government (Brandon Kendhammer)—rather than a theocracy ruled by unelected clerics, they advocated for elected officials to enact Islamic law.

In Nigeria today, some Muslim activists argue that at the federal and state level, there should be a co-existence of "Islamic" banks, courts, state-sponsored or subsidized pilgrimages, and other formal institutions. Non-jihadi Salafis, on the other hand, sometimes hold government positions or provide public “advice” to leaders, suggesting that they support electoral politics and a secular system for government.

For Boko Haram, a complete dedication to the concept of Islam is a social blueprint required for participation in politics. “The shari‘a of Islam is a fine and full shari‘a,” Yusuf wrote. It is acceptable at all times and in all places around the world. He lamented,

We see a state in which Muslims are living, but they refuse the Islamic shari‘a in its totality and put in its place the system of democracy. And we see people with the name ‘ulama’ [scholars] calling for democracy and defending it and making ugly refutations against the people who call others to follow the law of Allah.

According to Yusuf, democracy pits the people against God as a source of authority. He warned that majority rule in the form of democracy allows agreement and mistakes to be made, while Islam is predicated on total obedience and submission to the Quran and Sunna. For example, he argued that "freedom of belief" provided for a situation of apostasy from Islam. Condemning democracy was not enough; a real Muslim had to condemn it. Democracy is "the school of the infidels," according to Yusuf, and "following it, engaging with it, or using its structure is unbelief".⁴³ Shekau, like Yusuf, ignores an entire set of concepts. He questioned

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ See note 18.



President Goodluck Jonathan's portrayal of Boko Haram as a "cancer" in a 2012 video and proposed a counter-epidemiological metaphor:

The disease is unbelief, and as Allah says, "Disorder is worse than killing" (Qur'an 2:191)... Everyone knows democracy is unbelief, and everyone knows the Constitution is unbelief, and everyone knows that there are things Allah has forbidden in the Qur'an, and that is forbidden in countless hadiths of the Prophet, that is going on in Western schools... We haven't forbidden anything, we haven't told the Muslim community to abandon anything, we simply stand on the path of truth.

Shekau considered Western-style schooling to be sinful not only because of its academic matter but also because of its political implications. Shekau compared his confidence in God with the National Pledge recited in government schools in one post, telling listeners, "You are worshipping the nation". The "*disorder*" that the Quran opposes has taken the form of a heretical scheme for Shekau.

Jinkai and the Indigenous of Numa in Adamawa state say that Boko Haram is currently led by Abubakar Shekau and estimates that there are between 7,000 and 10,000 fighters in the group.⁴⁴ According to Morgan (2015; 22), the group originally had ties to al-Qaeda, but in 2014, Boko Haram voiced its support for ISIL - the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (popularly known today as ISIS) and eventually declared its formal allegiance to ISIS in March 2015.

In reviewing the success of Boko Haram, it is noteworthy that, following its formation in 2002, Boko Haram's increasing radicalism led to a major ferocious and violent rebellion in July 2009. This ultimately led to the arrest, detention, and eventual execution of Mohammed Yusuf, the Boko Haram leader.

After Yusuf's death, Boko Haram announced its sudden revival by organizing a mass jailbreak in September 2010. This was quickly followed by increasing coordinated destructions and attacks primarily on indulgent targets. In 2011, these attacks advanced 2011 to suicide bombings of federal offices and government buildings such as the Police Headquarters and the United Nations Office in FCT, Abuja.

The spate of these attacks especially in 2012, led the Government to declare a state of emergency over some Northern States, this was eventually expanded to include the entire

⁴⁴ Isakpa, P. (2011). Bomb Blast, Boko Haram and Democrats at the gate. Business Day, August 29, pp.159-200.



northeast of Nigeria in the following year. This also led to a marked rise in violations of human rights by both security forces and militant terror groups. According to Newman,⁴⁵ Boko Haram killed over 13,000 civilians between 2009 and 2015, including about 10,000 civilians in 2014, mostly in north-eastern Nigeria. Michelle and Haruna⁴⁶ argue profoundly that over 1.5 million Nigerians have been displaced from their homes and locations by the resulting violence.

Gilbert⁴⁷ has argued that the ongoing Boko Haram insurgencies in Nigeria's North-East geopolitical region, which started as sectary religious activity, have developed into unrest with worldwide links and connections, making it difficult for the government of Nigeria to quell. The rise of a fundamentalist Islamic sect continues to lead to the flight of the safety and protection of the majority of Nigerians living in the North East, particularly Christians.⁴⁸

Since the beginning of the terrorist actions of the sect, they have used several methods to terrorize the public. Most northern Nigerian states have been affected, but Borno, Adamawa, Kaduna, Bauchi, FCT (Abuja), Kano, Yobe, and Plateau states have been the hardest hit.⁴⁹ Okami⁵⁰ argues that in Nigeria, the group is often viewed as a religious sect, partly because of the ambiguity of its classification or designation or the fear that the group has generated. Farouk⁵¹ argues that Boko Haram was founded as an Islamic group, but has over time become a sect because of its own beliefs or practices that distinguished it from pure Islam. Okami⁵² is often associated with the fact that the group was birthed around 2002 as a religious sect but has gradually developed into a full-blown terrorist organization, especially through its implementation and deployment of terror tactics. The question as to when it developed into a terror organization and whether there is a consensus among academics as to when the members descended into extremism remains a question.

The dynamics of the emergence of the Boko Haram sect can also be said to have been strongly influenced by institutional vulnerabilities and factionalized political elitism in some

⁴⁵ Newman, P. (2003). *The Encyclopaedia of Etymology*. London: Mega Chad Research Network.

⁴⁶ McFate, M. (2009). *The Memory of War: Tribes and the Legitimate Use of Force in the Fight against Pirates, Terrorists and War Lords*. New York: Skyhorse Publishing.

⁴⁷ Gilbert, L. (2014). *The Prolongation of Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria: The International Dimensions*. *Research on Humanities and Social Science*, 4 (11) 150-156.

⁴⁸ Nwakaudu, M. (2012). *Boko Haram and National Development*. [http:// www. vanguard. com](http://www.vanguard.com), accessed on 25/05/2015.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Okemi, M. (2013). *Boko Haram: A Religious Sect or Terrorist Organization*. *Global Journal of Politics and Law Research*, 3 (9) 237-241.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.



states. In his work on the rise of the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria and the political elites, he attributed the rise of the sect to four conjunctive but gradual proposals; the defense of sect identity at the sub-national level as an implication of factional politics at the national level; an increase in the relevance of sect identity due to the importance attributed to them by political groups; identity groups, upon gaining political relevance, makes extremist demands sparking antagonism among the ruling political elites; and a partial democracy is installed which cannot adequately stem the rise of fundamentalist insurgencies leading to fractionalization along identity lines.

3. Contributory Factors of Insurgency in Nigeria

Terrorism, or insurgency as may be described in the Nigerian instance, is thought to originate from a variety of sources, according to several scholars. As a result, it's critical to investigate this on an individual and community level. Experts have differentiated rational, psychological, and cultural roots of terrorism at the personal level. According to Simonsen and Jeremy,⁵³ realistic terrorists consider their objectives and choices, weighing the pros and cons. Terrorism is motivated psychologically by the terrorist's discontent with his or her life and achievements. Terrorism can emerge from a climate of political activism when a group aims to attract the attention of a government or community to the protests of an activist social movement. Other causes would include:

a. Religious motivation: According to Hoffman,⁵⁴ religion has been a major motivator for several terrorist groups in Africa. Those who advocate and champion some radical view or opinion of Islam are disproportionately targeted among the organizations and individuals who have used religion as their inspiration to commit terrorist violence. The importance of extreme-right Christian organizations, on the other hand, is emphasized. The prevalence and importance of religiously inspired terrorist organizations are noteworthy during the timeframe generally attributed to the rise of new terrorism. There has been an increase in the trend of religiously motivated terrorist groups in comparison to the total number of terrorist organizations in the world. As research shows, the numbers increased from less than 4% in 1980 to 42% by the mid-1990s. In support of this, the study⁵⁵ claimed that religious fanaticism produces hostile environments for terrorism. Arms of war proliferation: Terrorism has been fueled by the

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.



availability and use of weapons of mass destruction and/or damage, such as chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) weapons. Some claim that media developments have driven terrorists to become more aggressive and spectacular as a result of viewer desensitization.⁵⁶ Another study,⁵⁷ which disagrees with the aforementioned thesis, believes that terrorist acts are motivated by social and political inequality. When people are seeking to correct what they consider to be a social, political, or historical wrong, such as when their land or rights have been taken away from them or denied to them, they turn to terrorism.

b. Corruption: Nigerian society is rife with corruption, which can be seen in any area of the economy (both private and public). The ruling government has struggled to carry out its responsibilities because officials are preoccupied with amassing money at the expense of society. The pervasiveness of corruption in Nigeria led Transparency International to rank Nigeria as one of the world's most corrupt countries in 2012, ranking 139th out of 176 countries assessed.

c. Unemployment: As a result of unemployment, terrorist attacks have sprung up. This has become a serious problem in the country, resulting in long-term joblessness for our graduates, discontent, and a desire to engage in activities that are harmful to society. In 2014, Nigeria's high unemployment rate resulted in the deaths of 16 job seekers who died in a stampede as 500,000 unemployed youths rushed to apply for 5000 vacancies at the Nigeria Immigration Service. The World Bank estimated in 2014 that about 80% of people under 24 were unemployed.

d. Weak institutional structure: The institutional framework in place at all three levels of government in Nigeria is so pathetic that policies are haphazardly implemented; as a result, the government is unable to provide society with public goods, and Nigeria is listed as a weak state. A "weak state" is a country whose government has collapsed to the point that it is unable to provide basic public goods to its citizens, such as defense, health care, and legal in situ. Nigeria's poor state structure has made it impossible for the government to deal with natural disasters and violent outbursts.

e. Poverty: The vicious cycle of poverty is still ravaging Nigerian society, with the majority of people unable to afford three square meals a day. According to Campbell and

⁵⁶ Newman, P. (2003). *The Encyclopaedia of Etymology*. London: Mega Chad Research Network.

⁵⁷ 35



Bunche (2011; 23), the majority of Nigerians' living conditions have only marginally improved since 1970. According to the National Bureau of Statistics, 25 percent of Nigerians lived in poverty in 1980, and this number has risen to 72 percent in 2010.

Nigeria's poverty rate rose from “54.7 percent in 2004 to 60.9 percent in 2010”, according to estimates released by the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics (NBS) in early 2013. In 2011, 100 million Nigerians were in absolute poverty, with another 12.6 million Nigerians in a relatively poor situation. Young people, especially those living in northern Nigeria, are the worst affected by these maladies.⁵⁸ Considering the level of poverty in the north, it seems that the Boko Haram insurgency is being used as a means of protest to draw local and foreign attention to the dire situation of the region, as well as a bait to attract the poorest into joining the sect. Elegbe noted “In the north, unemployment is higher than in the south. When you combine this situation with radical Islam's pledge of a better life for martyrs, it's easy to see why the north is becoming increasingly violent”. Komolafe also claims that, even if poverty and unemployment aren't the primary causes of radicalization in Nigeria, “the propensity to produce suicide bombers is greater in a society characterized by mass deprivation and joblessness than in a community where the majority of people's basic needs of food, education, health, housing, and sanitation are met”.⁵⁹ Although there is a common feeling of alienation from mainstream society that has become common among youths in the society, this rarely leads to an individual adopting the identity of a terrorist or taking to suicide bombing. However, as argued,⁶⁰ “when feelings of disenfranchisement are combined with fervent adherence to traditional, dichotomous “us versus them” religious principles justifying violence against those perceived to threaten one's religious or cultural group, a strong prioritization of the group over the person, and a belief that one's group is morally superior to the group being at odds, justify violence against those perceived to threaten one's religious or cultural”.

Boko Haram supporters, on the other hand, want to ‘return’ to a community in which Western/Modern knowledge and education are banned. These adherents believe that a world that has been “cleansed” would better serve all their needs (especially spiritual and material needs). This echoes the views expressed that “groups trying to fulfill their identity and security

⁵⁸ Onuaha, F. (2012). The Audacity of the Boko Haram: Background, Analysis and the Emerging Trend. *Security Journal*, 2(25), 134-151.

⁵⁹ Onuaha, F. (2012). The Audacity of the Boko Haram: Background, Analysis and the Emerging Trend. *Security Journal*, 2(25), 134-151.

⁶⁰ Ibid.



needs through confrontation are seeking reform in the framework of their society." While poverty and unemployment aren't always linked to youth abuse and radicalization, as the findings have shown, Onuoha's argument⁶¹ that "privation and other frustrating conditions of life make youth highly susceptible to exploitation by extremist ideologues" is important to remember. Expatriating on the situation in Palestine noted that the average suicide terrorist was just a "young, insecure individual with strong religious affiliations... (who) had been skillfully exploited to persuade him into participating in the terrorist attack."

Apart from these explanations, Boko Haram's sudden violent turn can be retraced to the unlawful and extrajudicial killings of its Ustaz Mohammed Yusuf, the group's founder, and many of his supporters. An understanding of "the psychology of revenge" is one of the most critical aspects of comprehending why people sometimes become ultra-radical. Catalyst incidents (violent actions considered to be unjust) elicit intense feelings of anger as well as a strong psychological urge for vengeance and retaliation. Using the Boko Haram situation as a case in point, the unlawful killing of their founder acted as a trigger for pre-existing hostilities stemming from arbitrary and unjustifiable arrests, torture of arrested suspects, and sometimes execution of group members by state enforcement agents and security forces.

Despite the above assaults, the Nigerian military and the Multinational Joint Force have launched a counter-insurgency campaign against Boko Haram. The army appears to have regained its steam after a slow start due to a shortage of resources and corruption in the ranks and files of the Nigerian military. For example in March 2015, Boko Haram lost control of some of its captured territories in Northern Nigeria such as the towns Gwoza (thought to be its headquarters) and Bama to the Nigerian army. The Military announced that they had reclaimed all 14 districts earlier held by Boko Haram. In April 2015, the Nigerian military overran four Boko Haram camps in the Sambisa forest, freeing nearly 300 women. Boko Haram is thought to have fled to the Mandara mountains on the Nigerian-Cameroonian frontier. Furthermore, the Nigerian military's six-week bombardment of Boko Haram before the 2015 general elections, which was continued after the elections, is thought to have weakened Boko Haram's control.

President Muhammadu Buhari addressed in his inaugural that the Army command will be relocated to Maiduguri. Since then, the Nigerian army has had several victories. The

⁶¹ Onuaha, F. (2012). The Audacity of the Boko Haram: Background, Analysis and the Emerging Trend. *Security Journal*, 2(25), 134-151.



Nigerian army was confirmed to have demolished over 20 fortified Boko Haram camps in Borno State on October 25, 2015. If the current pace is maintained, local vigilante organizations, also known as Civilian JTF, will likely be able to put an end to Boko Haram's attacks soon. On the 12th of September 2015, for example, scores of Boko Haram members were confirmed to have surrounded the Nigerian military.

The Boko Haram insurgency has carried out several attacks in Nigeria, claiming many lives and destroying many properties. Nigeria is gradually becoming a dangerous terrorist-infested country just like Afghanistan and others where it has become almost normal for people to wake up every day to hear or see terrorist attacks.

In the study and analysis of terrorism, it is factual that most contemporary terrorism exhibits an international bent, this has necessitated the formulation of mechanisms to prevent terrorism on an international scale. With specific regard to Boko Haram, these international mechanisms have taken the form of foreign governments and organizations aiding the Nigerian government in its efforts to fight terrorism. Often, the assistance comes either as money, intelligence, manpower, arms, ammunition, or a combination of some of the above-listed resources.⁶² One of how terrorism can be thwarted is by identifying their sources of weapons and necessities and also cutting off the terrorists' lines of communication. A government's counter-terrorism performance is defined by its effective use of resources at its disposal. These resources include finance, military, land reforms, external alliances, power, and organizational hierarchy. At the international, regional, and bilateral levels, there are several international policies and legal initiatives targeted at promoting and strengthening international cooperation against practices such as attacks on open-source software, aircraft hijacking, and so on.

4. The Future Outlook

In Nigeria today, some Muslim activists argue that at the federal and state level, there should be a co-existence of "Islamic" banks, courts, state-sponsored or subsidized pilgrimages, and other formal institutions. Non-jihadi Salafis, on the other hand, sometimes hold government positions or provide public "advice" to leaders, suggesting that they support electoral politics and a secular system for government.

⁶² Ibid.



For Boko Haram, a complete dedication to the concept of Islam is a social blueprint required for participation in politics. “The shari‘a of Islam is a fine and full shari‘a,” Yusuf wrote. It is acceptable at all times and in all places around the world. He lamented;

“We see a state in which Muslims are living, but they refuse the Islamic shari‘a in its totality, and put in its place the system of democracy. And we see people with the name ‘ulama’ [scholars] calling for democracy and defending it and making ugly refutations against the people who call others to follow the law of Allah”.

The disease is unbelief, and as Allah says, “Disorder is worse than killing” (Qur’an 2:191)... Everyone knows democracy is unbelief, and everyone knows the Constitution is unbelief, and everyone knows that there are things Allah has forbidden in the Qur’an, and that is forbidden in countless hadiths of the Prophet, that is going on in Western schools... We haven’t forbidden anything, we haven’t told the Muslim community to abandon anything, we simply stand on the path of truth.

Shekau considered Western-style schooling to be sinful not only because of its academic matter but also because of its political implications. Shekau compared his confidence in God with the National Pledge recited in government schools in one post, telling listeners, “You are worshipping the nation”. The “*disorder*” that the Quran opposes has taken the form of a heretical scheme for Shekau.

The United States' policy toward Nigeria has aimed to strengthen political stability in the region. Nigerian elites and US legislators who backed electoral reform were urged to hold elections peacefully and transparently during the 2011–2015 political periods. As Boko Haram grew in intensity, the US urged Jonathan to encourage socioeconomic growth in the Northeast and stop security forces from abusing civilians and detainees. Given Nigeria's oil reserves and arguable perception of itself as an African superpower, Washington, on the other hand, wields little influence in the region. The United States supported Nigeria to ensure that the conduct of the 2015 general elections was relatively, however, the U.S. encouragement for security sector reforms did not have any major impact. This has also largely been the case since General Muhammadu Buhari took the reins in 2015.

Among Nigeria's neighbors, the US wields more power. American military forces and drones have bases in Niger. The US has provided military training in the region and has given border protection assistance to West African countries such as Nigeria and its neighbors. Countries like Niger and Nigeria were part of President Barack Obama's Security Governance



Initiative, which was set up to strengthen Africa's civilian and military institutions. Both of these efforts are beneficial, but policymakers in the United States should not compromise the integrity in the name of cooperation: if a situation occurs when Nigerian, Nigerian, Chadian, or Cameroonian authorities restrict political space, the US should respond openly, and change assistance as required. More so, the fact that attention is being paid to the insecurity created by Boko Haram's activities should not, however, overshadow attempts to counter Niger and Chad's other, more insidious challenges, such as food insecurity and climate change.

The US should continue to impress on the Nigerian government to reform its security forces in the long run. Furthermore, the US can adopt the use of legal and policy instruments, such as the revocation of visas, to indicate a zero-tolerance policy in Nigeria for bad governance and corruption. Finally, the US should refrain from taking a position or interfering if dialogues ensue between Lake Chad states and any Boko Haram terrorists that are willing to speak.

5. Conclusion & Recommendations

In Nigeria, the insurgency is not a new phenomenon, and it has had far-reaching effects on the nation and its citizens. The government was unconcerned about the Boko Haram uprising, they were treating it as though it were a minor problem that would fade away easily. The government's response to the threat has been poor, alternating between lethal action, appeasement, amnesty, and negotiation. The government has not been able to use its military to fight the Boko Haram insurgency for nearly a decade, prompting logistical support from neighboring countries and a joint multinational task force. A shift toward the restorative and collective justice approaches as part of a counter-terrorism strategy may be vital to a long-term solution. Restorative justice is all about making amends.

In addition, there are new dimensions to the Boko Haram insurgency with the announced partnership with the Islamic State West African Province, (ISWAP) which demonstrates the objective of the Boko Haram group to pursue a caliphate system in the West African region. More studies need to be conducted into how these changing dynamics can be explained theoretically and the impact they will have on the region.



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Güney Çin Denizi Sorunlarının Bölgesel ve Uluslararası Güvenliğe Etkileri

Kamer KASIM*

Öz

Güney Çin Denizi sorunları bölge ülkelerinin uluslararası sistemde artan ağırlıkları ve bölgenin dünya ticaretindeki önemi nedeniyle küresel güvenlik tartışmalarına konu olmaktadır. Güney Çin Denizi'ndeki çatışan egemenlik iddiaları çerçevesinde ortaya çıkan gerginlik bölgesel ve küresel aktörlerin dâhil olduğu rekabete yol açmıştır. Çin'in Güney Çin Denizi'ndeki adaların pozisyonu başlıklı 1947'de ilan ettiği önce 11 çizgili hattan oluşan, daha sonra dokuz çizgili hat haline gelen harita temelindeki iddiaları diğer bölge ülkeleriyle çatışma potansiyeline yol açmaktadır. Bu durum ise bölge ülkelerinin uluslararası ekonomideki ağırlıkları dikkate alındığında küresel alanda endişeye yol açmaktadır. Konunun bir de Tayvan boyutu vardır. Tek Çin politikasını izleyen ABD, ÇHC'nin Tayvan'a yönelik askeri güç kullanmasını kabul etmeyeceğini ilan etmiştir.

Bu çalışmada Güney Çin Denizi sorunlarının bölgesel ve uluslararası güvenliğe etkisi sorunun muhatabı olan aktörlerin politikaları ve uluslararası sistemin geldiği nokta çerçevesinde analiz edilecektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Güney Çin Denizi, ABD, Çin, Tayvan, Doğal Kaynaklar

South China Sea Problem's Impacts on Regional and International Security

Abstract

South China Sea problems are the subject of global security discussions due to the increasing weight of the regional countries in the international system and the importance of the region in world trade. The tension arising within the framework of conflicting sovereignty claims in the South China Sea has led to competition among Southeast Asian countries as well as global actors. The PRC's claims based on the map titled Position of the Islands in the South China Sea, which first consisted of 11 lines and later became nine lines, declared in 1947, led to the potential for conflict with other countries in the region. This situation causes concern in the global arena, considering the weight of the countries in the region in the international economy. The issue also has a Taiwan dimension. the USA, which follows the one-China policy, has declared that it will not accept the PRC's use of military force against Taiwan. The tension between the PRC and Taiwan increases the security risk in the region.

In this study, the impact of the South China Sea problems on regional and international security will be analyzed within the framework of the policies of the actors.

Keywords: South China Sea, the US, China, Taiwan, Natural Resources

1. Giriş

Güney Çin Denizi dünya ticaretinin % 21'den fazlasının yapıldığı, 3,5 milyon kilometre karenin üzerinde bir alanı kaplayan bir bölgedir. Uluslararası sistemde Güneydoğu Asya ülkelerinin artan önemi ve Güney Çin Denizi'nde çakışan egemenlik iddiaları, konunun

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bölgesel güvenlik yanında uluslararası güvenlik bakımından da tartışılmasına yol açmıştır. Çin Halk Cumhuriyeti (ÇHC), Brunei, Endonezya, Filipinler, Malezya, Singapur, Tayvan ve Vietnam'ın dâhil olduğu tartışmalar ağırlıklı olarak Spratly (Nansha) ve Paracel (Shisha) adalarının yanı sıra Pratas (Tungsha) adaları, Natuna Adaları ve Scarborough Resifi etrafında sürmektedir. ÇHC 1947'de Güney Çin Denizi'ndeki adaların pozisyonunu açıklayan 11 çizgili bir haritayı temel alarak ilgili deniz alanının büyük kısmı üzerinde hak iddia etmektedir. Bu haritadan iki çizgi 1952'de o dönemdeki Vietnam hükümetine jest olarak Çin tarafından kaldırıldı ve ÇHC Tonkin Körfezinde hak iddiasından vazgeçti. Böylece ÇHC'nin hak iddiasına temel olan harita 9 çizgili ve U şeklinde bir alana dönüştü.¹ Bölgedeki ülkelerin çakışan egemenlik iddiaları değişen uluslararası ve bölgesel koşullarla birlikte Güney Çin Denizi sorunları çatışmalı bir atmosfer ortaya çıkardı. Paracel (Shisha) adalarında ÇHC ile Vietnam arasındaki çakışan iddialar sebebiyle 1974'te çıkan çatışmada 70 ve 1984'teki çatışmada 60 Vietnam askeri öldü.² Soğuk Savaş dönemi sonrasında dünya ticaretinin Güneydoğu Asya'ya kayması, ÇHC'nin Güneydoğu Asya'ya daha fazla ağırlık vermesi ve sistem içindeki yükselişle Güney Çin Denizi sorunları uluslararası boyut kazandı. ÇHC'nin tarihsel temellere dayandırdığı iddialarını ısrarla ortaya koyması ve inşa ettiği yapay adaların da münhasır ekonomik bölgesi olduğunu belirtmesi diğer ülkelerle tartışmalara yol açtı. ÇHC ile Vietnam arasındaki Paracel (Shisha) adaları sorunu yanında ÇHC ile Filipinler arasında Spratly (Nansha) adaları sorunu vardır ve Filipinler tarafından yargıya taşındı. Uluslararası Daimî Hakemlik Mahkemesi 12 Temmuz 2016'da Filipinler lehine karar verdi.

ÇHC ve Japonya arasında da Senkoku (Dialoyu) adaları sorunu vardır. Bu tartışmalı alanların tamamı Tayvan ile ilgili ülke arasında da ihtilafa konudur. Çünkü Tayvan da ÇHC gibi bu alanlarda egemenlik talebinde bulunmaktadır. Nitekim Tayvan ile Filipinler arasında Spratly (Nansha) adalarından birisi olan Taiping (Itu Aba) adası ile ilgili anlaşmazlık bulunmaktadır. Malezya ve Endonezya da ÇHC'nin 9 çizgili harita ile ifade ettiği iddialara karşı durmaktadır. Bu bakımdan 2016 yılındaki Uluslararası Daimî Hakemlik Mahkemesi kararı

¹ Hannah Beech, "Just Where Exactly Did China Get the South China Sea Nine-Dash Line From?", *Time*, 19 Temmuz 2016, <https://time.com/4412191/nine-dash-line-9-south-china-sea/> (22.07.2023).

² Kemer Kasım, "The Impact of the US Rebalancing Policy toward Asia Pacific on International Relations in the Region", İçinde, ed. Tomasz Kaminski, *Overcoming Controversies in East Asia*, (Lodz: Lodz University Press, 2017): 184-185.



Malezya ve Endonezya açısından da Güney Çin Denizi'nde ÇHC'ne karşı kullanabilecekleri bir argüman sundu.³

Bölge ülkelerinin yanında ABD'nin de ÇHC'ni dengeleme ve müttefik veya yakın ilişki içinde olduğu ülkeleri destekleme politikası çerçevesinde Güney Çin Deniz sorunlarına müdahil olduğu görülmektedir. ABD, ÇHC'nin 9 çizgili haritaya dayanan iddialarını tanımadığı gibi seyri sefer serbestisini savunmaktadır. ABD ÇHC'nin münhasır ekonomik bölge ilan ettiği alanlarda keşif uçuşları yapmakta ve Çin bunlara müdahale etmektedir. ABD bölgedeki müttefikleriyle askeri angajmanlara da girerek ÇHC'ni dengelemeye çalışmaktadır.⁴

Bu makalede Güney Çin Denizi sorunlarına müdahil olan aktörlerin politikaları çerçevesinde Güney Çin Denizi'ndeki çakışan egemenlik iddialarının bölgesel ve uluslararası güvenliğe etkisi incelenmektedir. Çalışmanın amacı Güney Çin Denizi sorunlarına taraf olan ülkelerin pozisyonlarının ortaya konularak bölgesel ve uluslararası güvenlik riskinin boyutunun değerlendirilmesidir. Çakışan egemenlik iddialarının ve bunlara yönelik ülkelerin politikalarının incelenmesi yöntemiyle oluşan ittifakların durumu analiz edilmektedir.

2. Güney Çin Denizi'nin Önemi ve Çakışan Egemenlik İddiaları

Dünya deniz taşımacılığının üçte birinin Güney Çin Denizi'nden geçmesi yanında bölgenin zengin enerji kaynaklarına sahip olması çakışan egemenlik iddialarıyla birleşince çatışmalı bir atmosferi ortaya çıkarmaktadır. Dünyadaki balıkçı gemilerinin yarısından fazlasının Güney Çin Denizi'nde olması ve aşırı avlanmadan dolayı balık stoklarının sürekli erimesi, bölgenin nüfusu dikkate alındığında balıkçı gemilerinin çakışan egemenlik sahalarında avlanmalarının artarak sorun olmaya devam edeceği gerçeğini ortaya koymaktadır.⁵ Güney Çin Denizi'nde 11 milyar varil petrol rezervi ile 190 trilyon fit küp doğal gaz rezervi bulunmaktadır. Bölge ülkeleri açısından deniz ticaretinden, gıda ve enerji güvenliğine kadar pek çok konuda önemli olan Güney Çin Denizi'ne yönelik olarak ÇHC'nin 9 çizgili harita ile temellendirdiği iddialarıdır. Çin, ana karasından 2000 km uzağa uzanan bir hatta egemenlik iddiasında bulunmaktadır. ÇHC'nin egemenlik iddiasında bulunduğu bazı alanlar bölge ülkelerinin

³ Bakınız, "The South China Sea Arbitration (The Republic of Philippines v. The People's Republic of China)", 12 Temmuz 2016, *Permanent Court of Arbitration*, <https://pca-cpa.org/en/cases/7/> (11.08.2023).

⁴ Bakınız, Kamer Kasım, "The Impact of the US Rebalancing Policy toward Asia Pacific on International Relations in the Region", İçinde, ed. Tomasz Kaminski, *Overcoming Controversies in East Asia*, (Lodz: Lodz University Press, 2017): 175-190.

⁵ Leigh Hartman, "The Importance of the South China Sea", 11 Temmuz 2019, <https://uk.usembassy.gov/the-importance-of-the-south-china-sea/> (11.08.2023).



Münhasır Ekonomik Bölgeleriyle çakışmaktadır. Huangyan Adası olarak da bilinen Scarborough Resifi ÇHC ile Filipinler arasında tartışmalara konu olmaktadır. Spratly (Nansha) adaları sorunu da ÇHC ile Filipinler'in çakışan egemenlik iddialarına konu olmaktadır. Çin tarihsel sahiplik argümanını egemenlik iddiaları için kullanmaktadır. Çinli denizcilerin Huangyan Adasını 2000 yıl önce keşfettiği ve Song Hanedanlığından itibaren adanın haritalandırılması ve yerleşimin Çinliler tarafından gerçekleştirildiği ileri sürülmektedir.⁶ ÇHC'nin Güney Çin Denizi'nde Filipinler ile çakışan ve 9 çizgili haritaya dayandırdığı iddialar Filipinler tarafından Lahey'deki Daimi Hakemlik Mahkemesi'ne götürüldü ve Mahkeme 2016'da Çin'in iddiaları aleyhine karar verdi. Çin'in 9 çizgili haritasının Güney Çin Denizi'ndeki egemenlik iddialarında kullanılmasının yasal bir temeli olmadığı belirtildi. Kararda BM Deniz Hukuku Sözleşmesinde iddia edilen tarihsel haklara yer olmadığı vurgulandı.⁷ ÇHC kararı içi boş ve geçersiz olarak niteleyip Güney Çin Denizi'ndeki politikasına devam etti. Yapay adaların inşası ve askerileştirilmesi ile münhasır ekonomik bölge iddialarını gerçekleştirme girişimlerini Çin sürdürdü. Çin'in iddialarını destekleyen bir düşünce kuruluşu (*National Institute for South China Sea Studies*) ile bir uluslararası hukuk firmasının (*FIETTA LLP*) hazırladığı *Hakemlik Mahkemesinin Güney Çin Denizi Kararının Yasal bir Eleştirisi* başlığıyla çalışma *Asian Yearbook of International Law*'da yayınlandı. Bu çalışmada Mahkemenin Çin'in dokuz çizgili haritasının yasal etkisi ve ilgili tarihsel hakları değerlendirmede yeterli olmadığı ve kararı destekleyici yeterli nedenler sunulmadığı ifade edildi.⁸ Filipinler'in 2022 yılına kadar ÇHC ile gerginlik devam etse de bazı adımları atmakta tereddüt ettiği ve bunun nedeninin ÇHC'den ekonomik anlamda beklentileri olduğu yorumları da yapıldı.⁹ Filipinler 2022'den itibaren ABD ile temaslarını artırarak 2014'te imzalanmasına rağmen tam olarak uygulanamayan Genişletilmiş Savunma İşbirliği Anlaşmasını Şubat 2023'de canlandırdı. Bu anlaşma ile ABD Filipinler'de 9 askeri üsse tam erişim hakkı kazandı. Bu üslerden özellikle 4 tanesinin Çin ile ihtilafli noktalara yakın olması Filipinler açısından önemli bir hamle oldu. Balabac adasındaki üs Çin ile ihtilafın merkezinde yer alan Spratly (Nansha)

⁶ Alind Chauhan, "China-Philippines tussle: Everything you need to know about the South China Sea dispute", 28 Eylül 2023, <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-global/south-china-sea-dispute-8957602/>, (11.10.2023).

⁷ Bakınız, "The South China Sea Arbitration (The Republic of Philippines v. The People's Republic of China)", 12 Temmuz 2016, *Permanent Court of Arbitration*, <https://pca-cpa.org/en/cases/7/> (11.08.2023).

⁸ National Institute of South China Sea Studies, "A Legal Critique of the Award of the Arbitral Tribunal in the Matter of the South China Sea Arbitration", *Asian Yearbook of International Law*, Vol. 24, (2018): 151-293.

⁹ Pratik Jakhar, "Whatever Happened to the South China Sea Ruling", *The Interpreter*, 12 Temmuz 2021, https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/whatever-happened-south-china-sea-ruling_ (22.09.2023).



adasına 330 km uzaklıktadır.¹⁰ Bu anlaşmadan iki ay sonra Filipinler ve ABD Silahlı kuvvetleri ortak bir tatbikat yaptı. Bu tatbikata 12 bin ABD askerinin katılmış olması dikkat çekiciydi.¹¹ Böylece ABD bölgede Çin'in çevrelenmesi noktasında adım atarken Filipinler de ABD ile askeri işbirliğini açık bir şekilde ortaya koymuş oldu. ÇHC ile Filipinler arasında tartışmalı egemenlik iddialarından kaynaklanan gerilim artarak devam etmektedir. Nitekim Çin'in Filipinli balıkçıların girmesini engellemek için kurduğu yüzen bariyer Filipinli bir dalgıç tarafından kesildi. Scarborough Resifi (Huanyang adası) çevresinde gerçekleşen bu olaydan sonra Çin Dışişleri Bakanlığı Filipinler'i uyardı. Filipinler ise ÇHC Sahil Güvenlik ekipleri tarafından döşenen yüzen bariyerlerin uluslararası hukukun ihlali olduğunu belirtti.¹²

Her ne kadar Tayvan Güney Çin Denizi sorunlarında çakışan egemenlik iddialarının olduğu alanlarda barışçıl yararlanma hakkını savunsa da 1947'de ortaya konan 11 çizgili haritayı temel aldığından Filipinler ile özellikle Spratly (Nansha) adalarından birisi olan Taiping (Itu Aba) adasıyla ilgili anlaşmazlık olmaktadır. Taiping (Itu Aba) Filipinler tarafından üzerinde bir yerleşim olmadığı, su kaynağı ve verimli toprağı olmadığı için ada olarak nitelendirilmemektedir. Tayvan ise Taiping (Itu Aba)'nın BMDHS'nin 121. Maddesine göre ada olduğunu suyu ve ekonomik bir yapısının olup, insan yaşamına da uygun olduğunu ileri sürmektedir. Tayvan adadaki askeri varlığını da 1956'dan beri sürdürmektedir. Filipinler'in başvurusu üzerine alınan 2016'da Uluslararası Daimi Hakemlik Mahkemesi kararı ise Tayvan tarafından kendisine danışılmadığı gerekçesiyle dikkate alınmamaktadır.¹³

Çin ile Vietnam arasında da Paracel (Shisha) ile Spratly (Nansha) adaları sorunları çatışmaya kadar giden sonuçlara yol açtı. 1974'te yaşanan çatışmada 70, 1984'teki çatışmada

¹⁰ Felix K. Chang, "US-Philippines Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement Revived", *Foreign Policy Research Institute*, 14 Haziran 2023, <https://www.fpri.org/article/2023/06/us-philippines-enhanced-defense-cooperation-agreement-revived/>, (11.07.2023).

¹¹ "US and Philippines Begin Largest Ever Drills After China Exercises", *BBC*, 11 Nisan 2023, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-65236459> (11.09.2023).

¹² "Philippines Removes Floating Barrier in South China Sea", *The Japan Times*, 26 Eylül 2023, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2023/09/26/asia-pacific/politics/philippines-south-china-sea-barrier/> (27.09.2023).

¹³ Kamer Kasım, "Tayvan-ABD İlişkileri ve Güneydoğu Asya'da Güvenliğe Yansımaları", İçinde ed.A. Merthan Dündar, *Türkiye'de Tayvan Çalışmaları I*, (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Basımevi, 2018): 173. Kamer Kasım, "Asya Pasifik'te Güç Mücadeleleri Odağında Tayvan-Çin İlişkileri", İçinde ed., A. Merthan Dündar, *Türkiye'de Tayvan Çalışmaları III*, (Ankara, Ankara Üniversitesi Asya-Pasifik Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi Yayınları, 2022): 63. Yann Hueiu Song, "Taiwan's Response to the Philippines- PRC South China Sea Arbitration", 2015, http://www.mofa.gov.tw/en/News_Content.aspx?n=1EADDCFD4C6EC567&s=EDEBCA08C7F51C98 (11.08.2023).



ise 60 Vietnam askeri öldü.¹⁴ Çin Paracel (Shisha) ile Spratly (Nansha) adalarının yüzyıllardır Çin ulusunun parçası olduğunu ileri sürmektedir. Vietnam ise 17. Yüzyıldan beri bu adalar üzerinde kontrolü olduğunu açıkladı. Çin ile Vietnam arasındaki egemenlik iddiaları tarafları karşı karşıya getirmektedir. 2011 ve 2012’de Vietnam’ın münhasır ekonomik bölge olarak kabul ettiği alanda haritalandırma çalışması yapan araştırma gemisi Çin savaş gemileriyle karşılaştı. Çin botu 2012’de Vietnam tarafından enerji kaynakları araştırması için kullanılan kabloları kesti.¹⁵ Vietnam Çin ile olan ihtilafından dolayı ABD’nin seyri-sefer serbestisi politikasını desteklerken, kendi karasuları olarak nitelendirdiği alanlardan geçişte önceden bilgilendirme yapılmasını istedi.¹⁶ Çin’in 2014’ten itibaren hızlandırdığı resif ve mercanlar üzerinde yapay adalar inşa etme ve bunlara askeri tesisler kurarak hak iddiasında bulunma politikasına yöneldi. Bu politika ÇHC ile diğer tüm Güney Çin Denizi’nde hak iddiasında bulunan ülkeleri karşı karşıya getirdi. Doğrudan Güney Çin Denizi sorunlarına muhatap olmayan Endonezya da 2016’dan itibaren Çin ile sorunlar yaşamaya başladı. Çinli balıkçı gemileri Kuzey Natuna Denizi’nde Endonezya münhasır ekonomik bölgesine girdiğinde Endonezya donanmasıyla karşı karşıya geldi. Çinli balıkçı gemilerine eşlik eden Çin Sahil Koruma gemileriyle Endonezya donanması arasında bir gerginlik de Ocak 2020’de yaşandı. Bölgede Çin’le olan bu karşılaşmalar Endonezya’nın diplomatik protestosuna neden oldu. Endonezya’nın ASEAN içindeki başat konumu konuyu ASEAN bağlamında da daha fazla gündeme taşıma potansiyelini göstermektedir.¹⁷ Malezya’nın hak iddia ettiği Spratly (Nansha) adalarının belirli bölümlerinin tamamında Vietnam ve Çin de hak iddia etmektedir. Filipinler’in de benzer iddiaları bulunmaktadır. Swallow kayalığında Malezya’nın 1983’ten itibaren tam kontrolü varken, Lousia kayalıklarında Malezya’nın yanı sıra Brunei de hak iddialarında bulunmaktadır. Malezya’nın kıta sahanlığında bulunduğunu ifade ettiği The James resifi ve Luconia resifinde Çin de hak iddia etmektedir. Malezya ASEAN’ın Güney Çin Denizi’nde tek ses olması gerektiğini münhasır ekonomik bölge ve kıta sahanlığına ilişkin uluslararası hukuka

¹⁴ Kasım, “The Impact of the US Rebalancing Policy toward Asia Pacific on International Relations in the Region”, içinde ed.Tomasz Kaminski, 183-184. Kasım, “Asya Pasifik’te Güç Mücadeleleri Odağında Tayvan-Çin İlişkileri”, 62.

¹⁵ Marvin Ott, “China and the South China Sea”, *Wilson Center*, 21 Ocak 2020, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/china-and-south-china-sea> (11.08.2023).

¹⁶ Do Viet Cuong, “Vietnam’s South China Sea Approach After National Congress”, 26 Şubat 2016, <http://amti.csis.org/vietnam-scs-approach/> (20.08.2023).

¹⁷ Aristyo Rizka Darmawan and Arie Afriansyah, “Gauging Indonesia’s interests in the South China Sea”, *East Asia Forum*, 26 Haziran 2020, <https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2020/06/26/gauging-indonesias-interests-in-the-south-china-sea/>(12.08.2023).



uymayan durumlarda ortak hareket etmesi gerektiğini belirtmiştir.¹⁸ Malezya özellikle ÇHC ile çakışan deniz alanlarında karşı karşıya gelmektedir. Çin'in yayınladığı 9 çizgili haritaya dayanan iddiaları temelindeki haritasının 2023 yılındaki baskısı da Malezya tarafından reddedildi ve Malezya Dışişleri Bakanlığı haritanın kendileri açısından bağlayıcı olmadığını söyledi. Malezya Güney Çin Denizinde egemenlik konusunun hassas ve karışık olduğunu ve BM Deniz Hukuku Sözleşmesi dâhil uluslararası hukuka uygun olarak görüşmelerle çözülmesi gerektiğini ifade etmektedir. Malezya Borneo açıklarında petrol ve gaz aramaya devam edeceğini belirterek Malezya münhasır ekonomik bölgesine giren Çin gemilerini protesto etmektedir.¹⁹ Malezya ASEAN üyesi ülkeler ile Çin arasında 2022'de imzalanan tarafların davranışlarına ilişkin bildiriye uygun olarak anlaşmazlıkların barışçıl yollarla çözülmesi ve tehdit veya güç kullanımından kaçınılması gerektiğini ifade etmektedir.²⁰

3. Güney Çin Denizi'nde Büyük Güç Rekabeti ve Artan Güvenlik Tehditleri

ÇHC'nin 9 çizgili haritaya dayandırdığı egemenlik iddiaları Güney Çin Denizi'nde hak iddia eden diğer ülkeleri buna karşı strateji belirlemeye ve müttefikler bulmaya yöneltmektedir. Bu noktada ABD'nin Çin ile olan rekabeti ve kendisini de bir Pasifik ülkesi olarak tanımlayarak Güney Çin Denizi'nde askeri olarak yer alması, Çin ile egemenlik çatışması yaşayan ülkeleri ABD ile işbirliğine yöneltti. ABD'nin bölge politikasına yönelik Soğuk Savaş dönemi sonrası Çin ile artan rekabete yönelik kapsamlı bir değerlendirme ve stratejinin ortaya konması ise Obama döneminde açıklanan Asya'yı merkeze alan politika (*Asia Pivot*) ve yeniden dengeleme (*rebalancing*) stratejisi ile oldu.

ABD ve ÇHC Soğuk Savaş dönemi boyunca ideolojik rekabet çerçevesinde bölge politikalarını şekillendirdiler. Ancak 1971'de Henry Kissenger'ın girişimiyle pinpon diplomasisi adı verilen süreçle ABD tek Çin politikasını benimseyip ÇHC ile ilişkileri normalleştirilmesiyle farklı bir çizgiye yöneldi. Bu politikada ABD'nin amacı Sovyetler Birliği ile ÇHC arasındaki ayrışmanın derinleşmesini sağlayarak iki kutuplu sisteminde avantaj sağlamaktı. ABD her ne kadar tek Çin politikasıyla bölge politikasında temel bir değişikliğe gitse de Tayvan'a yönelik ÇHC'nin askeri güç kullanmasını kabul etmeyeceğini ve Tayvan'a

¹⁸ "Malaysia", *the National Bureau of Asian Research*, 29 Eylül 2023, <https://www.nbr.org/publication/malaysia/>, (10.10.2023).

¹⁹ "Malaysia rejects new China map claiming entire South China Sea", *Aljazeera*, 31 Ağustos 2023, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/8/31/malaysia-rejects-new-china-map-claiming-entire-south-china-sea>, (14.09.2023).

²⁰ "Malaysia's Position on the South China Sea", *Malaysia Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, 8 Nisan 2023, <https://www.kln.gov.my/web/guest/-/malaysia-s-position-on-the-south-china-sea>, (14.09.2023).



silah satışına devam edeceğini açıkladı. Tayvan'la İlişkiler Yasası (*Taiwan Relations Act*) çerçevesinde yürütülen politika zaman zaman gerilime yol açsa da mevcut statüko devam etti. ÇHC-ABD ilişkilerinde Tayvan faktörü ABD üst düzey yetkililerin Tayvan seyahatleri veya ÇHC'nin Tayvan Boğazındaki tatbikatları sırasında güvenlik riski olarak gündeme getirildi. Ancak Güney Çin Denizi sorunlarında Tayvan'ın da ÇHC ile benzer egemenlik iddialarının olması ABD'nin Güney Çin Denizi'ndeki müttefikleriyle Tayvan'ı da karşı karşıya getiren durumlara yol açtı. Esasen Çin'de 1947'de ortaya konan 11 çizgili harita Tayvan tarafından bölgedeki hakları noktasında temel referans kaynağı olarak hep kullanıldı. Bu ise Tayvan ile Filipinler ve Japonya gibi ülkeleri çakışan egemenlik iddiaları nedeniyle karşı karşıya getirdi. ABD meydana gelen tartışmalarda müttefiklerini uzlaştırma politikası izledi. Tayvan ve Japonya Senkuku (Diaoyu) adalarında Tayvanlı balıkçıların faaliyet göstermelerini izin veren bir anlaşmayı ABD'nin teşvikiyle 2013'te imzaladı. Tayvan ile Filipinler de 2015'te balıkçılık konusundaki iki ülke arasındaki gerilimi azaltmak için anlaşma imzaladılar.²¹ Filipinler ile Japonya arasında 2016'da imzalanan savunma anlaşması da ABD'nin girişimiyle oldu ve bu anlaşmanın Güney Çin Denizi'ndeki sahipsiz adaların diğer güçler tarafından işgal edilmesinin önlenmesi amacı taşıdığı ifade edildi. Anlaşma Filipinler ve Japonya'nın ortak araştırma yapmasını ve savunma ekipmanlarının ortak üretimi gibi hususları kapsamaktadır.²²

ÇHC ve ABD'nin Güney Çin Denizi'ndeki rekabetinde Çin'in 9 çizgili haritası temelinde ilan ettiği egemenlik iddiaları ve bunu gerçekleştirmek için izlediği politikaların ABD ve bölgesel müttefiklerinin çıkarlarını etkilemesi yanında Tayvan sorunu da bir diğer güvenlik riski potansiyeli taşımaktadır. ABD'nin seyri sefer serbestisi temelindeki görüşü doğrultusunda Güney Çin Denizi'nden geçen savaş gemileri Çin'in egemenlik iddia ettiği alanlardan geçerken gerginliklere neden oldu. ÇHC münhasır ekonomik bölgesinden ABD askeri gemilerinin geçmesine karşı çıkarken, ABD Kongresi BM Deniz Hukuku Sözleşmesini onaylamamasına rağmen, ABD argümanını ilgili sözleşmenin ve devletlerin uygulamalarının, sahil devletlerinin rızası olmadan münhasır ekonomik bölgeden geçişi engellemediği görüşüne dayandırmaktadır. ABD'nin Çin münhasır ekonomik bölgesinde yaptığı keşif uçuşları da Çin

²¹ Kasım, "The Impact of the US Rebalancing Policy toward Asia Pacific on International Relations in the Region", 185.

²² Renato Cruz de Castro, "The Philippines and Japan Sign New Defense Agreement", 15 Mart 2016, <http://amti.csis.org/the-philippines-and-japan-sign-new-defense-agreement/> (08.09.2023).



tarafından engellenmeye çalışılmaktadır. Bu noktada yapılacak bir yanlış hesaplama politik krize veya askeri tırmanmaya yol açabilir.²³

ABD, ÇHC'nin askeri kapasitesini artırma politikasını da dengelemek amaçlı bir strateji izlemeye başladı. Askeri ittifakların yanı sıra ekonomik ayağı da olan bir strateji izleyen ABD, 2011'de Avustralya ile askeri üs antlaşması yaparak bu ülkede 2500 askere kadar kuvvet buldurma hakkı kazandı. ABD böylece Vietnam Savaşından bu yana ilk defa bölgede bu düzeyde askeri genişleme gerçekleştirmiş oldu.²⁴ Yukarıda belirtildiği gibi ABD 2014'te Filipinler'le de Genişletilmiş Savunma İşbirliği Antlaşması imzalamıştı.²⁵ İki ülke arasında 2023'te varılan anlaşmayla bu anlaşma yeniden canlandırılarak ABD'ye Filipinler'deki 9 askeri üssü kullanma hakkı verildi.²⁶

ABD askeri anlamda Çin'i bölgede dengelemeye çalışmaktadır. ÇHC'nin askeri kapasitesini ve Güney Çin Denizi'nde askeri varlığını artırmasıyla birlikte ABD'nin de donanmasını büyük çaplı gemileriyle bölgede daha fazla görülmeye başladığı bir süreç başlamıştır. ÇHC ise ABD'nin girişimlerini protesto etmektedir. ABD'nin USS Milius destroyerinin Paracel Adalarından Mart 2023'te geçişi sırasında, Çin deniz kuvvetleri ve hava kuvvetleriyle destroyeri geri püskürttüğünü ifade etti. ABD aynı bölgede seyri serbestisi argümanı ile ısrarlı bir şekilde geçiş yapmayı sürdürdü. ABD 7. Filosu sözcüsü ABD'nin iddiada bulunanın kimliğine bakılmaksızın deniz alanlarında aşırı taleplerde bulunanlara meydan okumaya devam edeceğini söyledi. Çin Savunma Bakanlığı ise ABD'nin Güney Çin Denizi'nde barış ve istikrarı tehdit ettiğini ifade ederek, ABD askeri hareketlerinin uluslararası hukukun sınırlarını zorlayarak Çin'in egemenlik ve güvenliğini ihlal ettiğini belirtti.²⁷

Güney Çin Denizi'nde ÇHC ile ABD arasındaki rekabet ve gerilimlerin bölge ülkelerinin güvenliklerini olduğu kadar uluslararası güvenliğe de oldukça temel etkilerinin olması son dönemde konunun daha fazla gündeme gelmesine yol açmıştır. ABD'den yapılan

²³ Bonnie S. Glaser, "Armed Clash in the South China Sea", Council on Foreign Relations Center for Preventive Action, Contingency Planning Memorandum No. 14, (2012): 1-2. David B. Larer, "After U.S. Show of Force, China Takes Hard Line on South China Sea", *Navy Times*, 9 Mart, 2016, <http://www.navytimes.com/story/military/2016/03/08/chinahard-line-south-china-sea-stennis-patrol/81481860/> (11.09.2023). Aaron L. Connelly, *Congress and Asia-Pacific Policy: Dysfunction and Neglect*, Lowy Institute for International Policy, (2015): 11.

²⁴ Jackie Calmes, "A US Marine Base for Australia Irritates China", *The New York Times*, 16 November 2011.

²⁵ "Document: Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement between the Philippines and the United States", 29 Nisan 2014, <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/downloads/2014/04apr/20140428-EDCA.pdf>, (27.09.2023).

²⁶ "U.S.-Philippines agree to larger American military presence", *CNBC*, 2 Şubat 2023, <https://www.cnbc.com/2023/02/02/us-philippines-agree-to-larger-american-military-presence.html>, (12.09.2023)

²⁷ "China Threatens Consequences Over US Warship's Actions", *Voice of America*, 24 Mart 2023, <https://www.voanews.com/a/china-threatens-consequences-over-us-warship-s-actions-/7020631.html> (29.09.2023).



açıklamalar ve ÇHC'nin de Güney Çin Denizi'ndeki çizgisinin kararlı bir şekilde devam etmesi, bölgeyi sürekli sıcak tutmaktadır. Güney Çin Denizi'nde ÇHC ile çakışan egemenlik iddiaları bulunan ülkeler ABD desteğini isterken, Çin'le de çok fazla sürtüşmemeye çalışmaktadırlar. ÇHC'nin sahil güvenlik gemilerine düşmanca davrandığını düşündükleri yabancı gemileri vurma yetkisini vermesi gerilimi artırırken, ABD'nin 2015-2018 yıllarında Pasifik Komutanlığını yapan Amiral Harry Harris Jr, Çin'in Güney Çin Denizi'nde uluslararası ticareti engelleyebilecek durumda olduğunu ifade etti ve bu durumda ABD'nin Çin ile savaşp savaşmayacağına karar vermek zorunda olduğunu söyledi. ABD Savunma Bakanlığı Sözcüsü ise "*Çin'in geniş çaplı toprak kazanma, karakol inşa etme ve tartışmalı bölgeleri silahlandırma kararı Güney Çin Denizi'ni derin şekilde istikrarsızlaştırıyor. Bu yaklaşım, Çin'in artan şekilde baskıya başvurma ve sahadaki gerçekleri değiştirmek için aldatmacalara girişme politikasını bizim için daha ciddi bir odak noktası haline getiriyor*" dedi.²⁸ Güney Çin Denizi'nde Çin'e karşı ABD askeri varlığını destekleyen bölge ülkeleri Obama döneminde ortaya konan yeniden dengeleme stratejisini olumlu bulsalar da, ABD'nin kararlılığı noktasında gerek Obama döneminde gerekse sonraki başkanlar döneminde çelişkili açıklamalar ve hareketler de bulunması ABD desteği konusunda soru işaretlerine yol açtı. Obama'nın bölgeye ziyaretlerine ilginin az olması yanında, örneğin 2013'te yapılan Asya-Pasifik Ekonomik İşbirliği Forumuna iç politik nedenlerle katılmaması, ABD'nin desteği üzerinde kuşkular uyandırdı.²⁹ Obama sonrası dönemde Trump'ın ÇHC'ni eleştiren açıklamaları ve özellikle Çin'in ekonomik politikalarının ABD'de işsizliğe yol açtığı açıklamalarına rağmen, bölgedeki müttefiklerinin kendi savunmaları sağlamaları ve ABD'ye yük olmamalarını ifade etmesi çelişkili bulundu.³⁰

ABD'de Obama döneminde açıklanan yeniden dengeleme stratejisinde Tayvan'la ilişkilerin de önemi vardı. Obama yönetiminde ABD tek Çin politikasına vurgu yapıp, statükonun kuvvet kullanılarak değiştirilmesine karşı olduğu argümanını tekrarladı. Obama döneminde Tayvan'da KMT iktidarının olması ve ÇHC ile ilişkilerin iyi olması Tayvan sorunu

²⁸ "Pekin, ABD'yi Güney Çin Denizi'nden nasıl attı?", *Independent Türkçe*, 12 Mart 2023, <https://www.indyturk.com/node/616371/d%C3%BCnya/pekin-abdyi-g%C3%BCney-%C3%A7in-denizinden-nas%C4%B1l-att%C4%B1> (22.09.2023). "Çin'den Gerilimi Artıracak Adım: Yabancı Gemileri Vurma İzni Verildi.", *Independent Türkçe*, 23 Ocak 2021, <https://www.indyturk.com/node/304691/d%C3%BCnya/%C3%A7inden-gerilimi-t%C4%B1rmand%C4%B1racak-ad%C4%B1m-yabanc%C4%B1-gemileri-vurma-izni-verildi> (20.09.2023).

²⁹ Kasım, "The Impact of the US Rebalancing Policy toward Asia Pacific on International Relations in the Region", 185.

³⁰ Kasım, "Asya Pasifik'te Güç Mücadeleleri Odağında Tayvan-Çin İlişkileri", 59.



anlamında gerginliği minimum düzeyde tuttu. Hatta Tayvan lideri Ma'nın Şi Jiping'le Kasım 2015'te Singapur'da görüştüğü bir ortam da oluşmuştu.³¹ ABD'de 2016'da Trump'ın Başkan seçilmesi ve Tayvan'da da DİP'in seçimi kazanması ve Tsai Ing-wen'in seçilmesiyle yeni bir tablo ortaya çıktı. DİP'i ayrılıkçı bulan ÇHC yönetimi Tayvan İlişkiler Ofisi ile Tayvan'daki Kıta ile İlişkiler Konseyi'nin bağını kesti ve Tayvan'la ticaret ve turizmi aksatacak adımlar atmaya başladı.³² ABD Tayvan'daki iktidar değişimini demokratik sistemin işlemesi olarak değerlendirip Tsai Ing-Wen'i kutladı.³³ ABD'de 2016 seçimlerini Trump'ın kazanmasından sonra Tsai-Ing-wen seçim başarısından dolayı Trump'ı kutladı. Bu lider düzeyinde 1979'dan beri ilk telefon konuşması olarak tarihe geçti.³⁴ Her ne kadar Trump *The Wall Street Journal*'da yayınlanan mülakatında tek Çin politikasına bağlı kalmayabileceğini ifade etse de bu ABD'nin Çin politikasında değişim anlamına gelmedi.³⁵

ABD'de de 2020'de Biden'ın Başkan seçilmesiyle de Tayvan politikasında değişim olmadı. Trump döneminde yönetimin atadığı kişiler tarafından yapılan ziyaretlerin yerini seçilmiş temsilcilerin yaptığı Tayvan ziyaretleri aldı.³⁶ Bu dönemde önemli bir olay Temsilciler Meclisi Başkanı Nancy Pelosi'nin Tayvan'ı ziyareti oldu. ÇHC ziyarete tepki göstererek Tayvan Boğazında tatbikatlar yaptı. ABD'nin aralarında USS Ronald Reagan'ın da olduğu 4 uçak gemisi Tavan'ın doğusunda konuşlandı. ABD bunu rutin bir hareket olarak nitelendirdi.³⁷ Aslında Güney Çin Denizi'nde çatışan egemenlik iddiaları nedeniyle ABD müttefiklerine destek vererek, ÇHC ile rekabetin bir parçası olarak bölgede askeri faaliyetlerini artırmıştı.

³¹ https://www.mofa.gov.tw/en/News_Content.aspx?n=8157691CA2AA32F8&sms=4F8ED_5441E33EA7B&s=62497C482F97DF15, 7 Kasım 2015 (22.09.2023). <http://asia.nikkei.com/Politics-Economy/International-Relations/China-s-Xi-Taiwan-s-Mabegin-historic-talks-in-Singapore>, 7 Kasım 2015 (22.09.2023).

³² Zeng, W. "Tsai Ing-wen and the Need to balance Cross-Strait Relations," *Foreign Policy Association*, 11 Ekim 2016, <https://foreignpolicyblogs.com/2016/10/11/tsai-ing-wen-cross-strait-relations/> (08.09.2023).

³³, "Tsai Ing-wen Wins 2016 ROC Presidential Elections," *Taiwan Today*, 17 Ocak 2016, <http://taiwantoday.tw/news.php?unit=179&post=3819> (24.09.2023).

³⁴ "Trump's Phone Call with Taiwan President Risks China's Wrath," *The Guardian*, 3 Aralık 2016; <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/dec/03/trump-angers-beijing-with-provocative-phone-call-to-taiwan-president> (22.09.2023).

³⁵ Kamer Kasım, "Power Shift in Taiwan and Its Implications on Cross-Strait Relations", İçinde ed. Karol Zakowski ve Bartosz Kowalski, *Power Shifts in East Asia and Their Implications for Asia-Europe Relations*, (Lodz: Lodz University Press, 2019): 64. Liu Zhen, "For Trump, One China, Like Everything, Is Negotiable," *South China Morning Post*, 14 Ocak 2017, <http://www.scmp.com/news/world/united-states-canada/article/2062180/trump-will-not-commit-one-china-policy-if-beijing> (10.08.2023).

³⁶ Kasım, "Asya Pasifik'te Güç Mücadeleleri Odağında Tayvan-Çin İlişkileri", 60.

³⁷ Yimou Lee ve Sarah Wu, "Pelosi arrives in Taiwan vowing U.S. commitment; China enraged", *Reuters*, 3 Ağustos 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/pelosi-expected-arrive-taiwan-tuesday-sources-say-2022-08-02/>, (02.09.2023).



ABD Başkanı Biden 2022’de 7,1 milyar dolarlık Pasifik Caydırıcılık Girişimine yönelik Kongre açıklamasında Tayvan’ın savunmasından bahsetti.³⁸

ABD’nin tek Çin politikası temelinde ancak ÇHC’nin kuvvet kullanarak statükoyu değiştirmesine karşı çıkan Tayvan politikası sürmektedir. ABD Tayvan’a savunma anlamında destek verirken, Güney Çin Denizi sorunlarında da ABD’nin müttefiki olan diğer ülkelerle olan ihtilaflarda Tayvan’ın uzlaşmacı olmasını istemektedir. Tayvan’da 1947’deki haritayı temel almakla birlikte bölge ülkeleri arasında anlaşma yoluyla doğal kaynakların değerlendirilmesini savunmaktadır.

4. Sonuç

Güney Çin Denizi sorunlarındaki çatışma potansiyeli, hem bölge ülkelerinin uluslararası sistemde artan ağırlıkları hem de Güney Çin Denizi’ndeki doğal kaynaklar ve bölgenin dünya deniz ticaretindeki önemi nedeniyle giderek daha fazla uluslararası sistemin konusu olmaktadır. Sorununun muhatabı olan ülkelerin çakışan egemenlik iddialarının silahlı bir çatışmaya dönüşüp bunun dünya ticaretini aksatmasının yanında, uzun süreli küresel bir ekonomik krize yol açması endişesi bölge dışı ülkelerin de konu ile ilgilenmelerine yol açmaktadır. Bölge ülkelerinin gelişen askeri potansiyelleri de olası bir çatışmanın oldukça yıkıcı olacağına işaret etmektedir. Soğuk Savaş dönemi sonrasında artan ABD-ÇHC rekabeti, iki ülkenin Güney Çin Denizi’nde de karşı karşıya gelmesine yol açtı. ABD’nin Filipinler gibi müttefiklerine destek vermek için attığı askeri adımlar ve ABD donanmasının önemli gemilerinin Güney Çin Denizi’ndeki sürekli varlığı ABD’yi bölgedeki çakışan egemenlik iddialarında taraf yapmıştır. Çin’in 9 çizgili haritaya dayandırdığı tarihsel temelli iddiaları ve bunları gerçekleştirmek ve savunmak için yapay adalar inşa etme politikası dâhil çeşitli araçlara yönelmesi Güney Çin Denizi’ndeki özellikle Paracel (Shisha) ve Spratly (Nansha) adaları gibi ihtilaf noktalarında çatışma potansiyelini göstermektedir. Filipinler, Malezya ve Vietnam gibi Çin ile çakışan egemenlik iddiaları konusunda sürekli sorun yaşayan ülkeler, ABD’nin Güney Çin Denizi’ndeki varlığını dengeleyici olarak görmektedir. Bunlar arasında örneğin Filipinler gibi Tayvan’la çakışan egemenlik alanları bulunan ülkeler bakımından ABD’nin Tayvan’la ilişkileri ve bu noktalarda uzlaştırıcı olması önemli bir konudur. ÇHC ise tarihsel temellere dayandırdığı

³⁸ Kasım, “Asya Pasifik’te Güç Mücadeleleri Odağında Tayvan-Çin İlişkileri”, 65. “Asia’s Top Risk in 2022 Will be U.S.-China Tensions Over Taiwan, Says Political Risk Analyst”, *CNBC*, 5 Ocak 2022, <https://www.cnbc.com/2022/01/05/us-china-relationsover-taiwan-will-be-asias-top-risk-in-2022-analyst.html>, (22.09.2023).



iddialarında ısrarcı olduğu gibi, doğal kaynakların kullanımında da balıkçılıkta olduğu gibi diğer hak iddia eden ülkeleri engelleme politikası izliyor. Her ne kadar ÇHC bölgedeki ekonomik etkisi ve kurduğu ve geliştirmeye çalıştığı ekonomik bütünleşme çabalarıyla iddialarını kabul ettirerek tansiyonu düşürmeye çalışsa da diğer ülkelerin askeri tehdit algılaması Filipinler örneğinde olduğu gibi bu ülkeleri ABD ile daha sıkı askeri bağlara zorluyor. Bu durum Güney Çin Denizi'nin daha da silahlanmasına ve bir tırmanma ile çıkacak çatışmanın daha yıkıcı olmasına yol açabilir. Diğer taraftan ABD'nin gücünü dengeleyici olarak görenler açısından, ABD askeri varlığı Çin'in bu ülkelere yönelik çatışmaya girmesini önleyerek gerilimin savaşa varmasını engellemektedir.

Extended Summary

The South China Sea disputes are the subject of global security discussions due to the region's importance in world trade. The tension arising within the framework of conflicting sovereignty claims in the South China Sea has led to competition involving the People's Republic of China (PRC), Brunei, Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan, and Vietnam, as well as global actors. The fact that 60% of world maritime trade passes through Asia and one-third of global maritime transport comes from the South China Sea increases the importance of the South China Sea.

China's claims based on the map titled Position of the Islands in the South China Sea, which first consisted of 11 lines and later became nine lines, declared in 1947, led to the potential for conflict with other countries in the region. Claims centered around the Spratly (Nansha) and Paracel (Shisha) islands, as well as the Pratas (Tungsha) islands, Natuna Islands, and Scarborough Reef, also cause tension between the PRC and the USA. Particularly during the Obama era, the USA increased its military engagements with the Asia Pivot and rebalancing strategy declared in 2011 and made its largest military expansion in the region after the Vietnam War with the agreement signed with Australia, making the discussions on the South China Sea issues more intense. This led to it being handled more in the context of international security. Countries that are parties to the South China Sea issues are rapidly arming themselves. This situation causes concern in the global arena, considering the weight of the countries in the region in the international economy. The issue also has a Taiwan dimension. PRC and Taiwan have overlapping claims in the South China Sea issues. On the other hand, the USA, which follows the one-China policy, has declared that it will not accept the PRC's use of military force



against Taiwan. The tension between the PRC and Taiwan, which flares up from time to time, increases the security risk in the region, along with the South China Sea disputes.

The concern that the conflicting sovereignty claims of the countries involved in the problem will turn into an armed conflict and that this will disrupt world trade and lead to a long-term global economic crisis also causes non-regional countries to be interested in the issue. The developing military potential of the countries in the region also indicates that a possible conflict would be quite destructive. The increasing US-PRC rivalry after the Cold War period led to the two countries coming face to face in the South China Sea. The military steps taken by the USA to support its allies such as the Philippines and the constant presence of important ships of the US Navy in the South China Sea have made the USA party to overlapping sovereignty claims in the region. Countries such as the Philippines, Malaysia, and Vietnam, which have persistent problems with China over conflicting sovereignty claims, see the US presence in the South China Sea as a counterbalance. Among these, for countries that have overlapping sovereignty areas with Taiwan, such as the Philippines, the US's relations with Taiwan and its role as a conciliator on these issues is an important issue. PRC, on the other hand, insists on its claims based on historical foundations and follows a policy of obstructing other claimant countries in the use of natural resources, as in fisheries.

Although the PRC tries to reduce tension by asserting its claims with its economic influence in the region, the military threat perception of other countries forces these countries to have tighter military ties with the USA, as in the case of the Philippines. This situation may lead to further weaponization of the South China Sea.

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Policy Impacts of the Department of Defense Office of Net Assessment on Sino-U.S. Soft Power Competition in Africa

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Abstract

The Strategic Consequences of Chinese Racism is a book-length academic research article commissioned by Andrew Marshal, director of the Department of Defense Office of Net Assessment (ONA). Owing to the significant policymaking power of ONA, Strategic Consequences indicates potential soft-power tactics in use by the Pentagon in countering Chinese influence in Africa. This paper examines Strategic Consequences' three key arguments. This paper examines the argument that Chinese society is more racist than U.S. society and finds this argument is likely correct. This paper examines the argument that Chinese racism is a stabilizing force for the Chinese government and finds this argument is likely correct. Finally, this paper examines the argument that U.S. anti-racist culture acts as a useful tool of soft-power influence in Africa, and finds this argument is likely incorrect. This paper concludes that ONA has accurately gauged the strategic value of Chinese racism for the Chinese government but overestimates the U.S. capacity to counter China in the field of soft power competition.

Keywords: Africa, Anti-racism, China, In-group preference, Racism, Soft power competition, United States

1. Introduction

In 1992, Francis Fukuyama published *The End of History and the Last Man*, describing the then-nascent unipolar world order in which the United States was the unchallenged single superpower. As it happens, the “end of history” ended quickly, as the current geopolitical environment has grown increasingly multipolar. The single largest point of contention in this new environment exists between the current superpower – the United States of America – and the rising superpower – the People’s Republic of China. The emergence of a cold war between these two giants is of immense importance to researchers, certainly for the extent of its impact, but also for the creative means by which this soft power struggle is fought. One of the most hotly contested of these cultural battlefields is the continent of Africa, flush with resources that both powers seek to monopolize. Therefore, any information about this conflict that emerges from within the depths of either the U.S. or Chinese states is of historical and academic importance.

On February 26, 2017, a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request made by unknown parties caused the Office of the Secretary of Defense (DoD) and Joint Staff (OSD/JS) to publish

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publicly a series of internal documents¹. Among these documents was a research document titled *The Strategic Consequences of Chinese Racism: A Strategic Asymmetry for the United States*. Upon initial publication, this document garnered an altogether negligible amount of attention, with no more than half a dozen unique online mentions between the years of 2017 and 2022². In early 2022, the document was “rediscovered” by armature sociology enthusiasts on Twitter, from where it gained a second – albeit, muted – new life. The most significant measurable reach the document has achieved comes from a Twitter post with 558 Retweets and 1,781 Likes³.

The deafeningly quiet public reaction to this paper stands in direct, inverse proportion to the document’s tremendous significance. *The Strategic Consequences of Chinese Racism* is perhaps the single most comprehensive and authoritative breakdown of United States foreign policy in the field of Sino-American soft power influence operations in developing nations. *Strategic Consequences* provides researchers an unprecedented opportunity to – in crude terms – “see how the sausage is made,” to take a look behind the curtains of one of the most influential military policy-making apparatuses in the world. Such analysis is capable of providing greater context to current events and may additionally provide predictive power for the future actions of China and the United States as they compete on the world stage.

This paper aims to critically examine *The Strategic Consequences of Chinese Racism*, noting its most significant claims and applying to them a degree of scrutiny. This paper selects three arguments made by *Strategic Consequences* in support of its overarching thesis. These three arguments are examined against existing data and literature to determine the relative strength of their contentions and to invite further academic investigation on the topics involved. Given the potential geopolitical importance of *Strategic Consequences*, the degree to which it withstands critique is important for understanding the methods in which U.S. foreign policy is crafted.

¹ United States Department of Defense. (2017, February 26). *Litigation Release*. Washington Headquarters Service. https://www.esd.whs.mil/FOIA/Reading-Room/Reading-Room-List_2/Litigation_Release/

² Google. (2022). *Strategic Consequences of Chinese Racism*. [https://www.google.com/search?q=Strategic+Consequences+of+Chinese+Racism"&tbs=cdr:1,cd_min:1/1/2017,cd_max:1/1/2022&sxsrf=ALiCzsZ6oiJW7JJ0Q2y35h_YtVtmabv7vg:1669926072933&ei=uAyJY9-7OMHY5NoP4c67wAw&start=0&sa=N&filter=0&ved=2ahUKEwjf94Kzn9n7AhVBLfKfHWHnDs4ChDy0wN6BAgFEAQ&biw=1920&bih=962&dpr=1](https://www.google.com/search?q=Strategic+Consequences+of+Chinese+Racism)

³ s_decatgur. (2022, February 6). *Thread*. Twitter. https://twitter.com/s_decatgur/status/1490408671779729425



2. Contextual Significance

2.1 Author Speculation

Officially, the author of *The Strategic Consequences of Chinese Racism* remains unknown, as his name has been redacted in the released document. This redaction was marked under FOIA exemption (b)(7)(c), which empowers the releasing agency to “withhold information compiled for law enforcement purposes the release of which could reasonably be expected to constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy”⁴. Despite having this redaction authority, the DoD was remarkably un-thorough, as it left un-redacted a treasure trove of personal information on the “About the Author” page⁵.

Using this information, it can be confidently asserted that the author of the paper is Dr. Bradley A. Thayer. Thayer’s resume exactly matches the content found within the “About the Author” section, including his past professorship at Missouri State University, his fellowship at Harvard University’s Belfer Center, and his employment with the RAND Corporation⁶. The clearest piece of evidence, however, is the un-redacted note that the paper was commissioned from Thayer Limited, LLC, a sole proprietorship government contractor with Bradley Thayer listed as its only employee⁷. As such, throughout this paper, *The Strategic Consequences of Chinese Racism* will be referred to as “Thayer’s paper,” “Thayer’s research,” or any variation thereof. However, because Thayer’s identity as the author has not been officially confirmed, his paper will be listed in citations under “Author Unknown.”

2.2 Andrew Marshall and The Office of Net Assessment

Thayer is the archetypical accomplished academic, having been employed at various prestigious universities, private sector behemoths, and academic journals. However, his identity as the author pales in significance to the identity of the man who commissioned Thayer’s paper, that being the late Andrew Marshall of the Office of Net Assessment.

⁴ United States Department of Justice. (2022). *Freedom of Information Act Guide, May 2004*. <https://www.justice.gov/archives/oip/foia-guide-2004-edition-exemption-7c>

⁵ Author Unknown. (2013, January 7). *The Strategic Consequences of Chinese Racism: A Strategic Asymmetry for the United States*. United States Department of Defense, Office of Net Assessment. https://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/FOID/Reading%20Room/Litigation_Release/Litigation%20Release%20-%20The%20Strategic%20Consequences%20of%20Chinese%20Racism%20%20201301.pdf

⁶ Encyclopedia.com. (2022). *Thayer, Bradley A.* Encyclopedia.com. <https://www.encyclopedia.com/arts/educational-magazines/thayer-bradley>

⁷ GovTribe. (2022). *Thayer Limited, LLC*. <https://govtribe.com/vendors/thayer-limited-llc-5whe5>



Described by peers as “the most famous person you’ve never heard of,” Marshall held the title of the oldest serving federal employee, having retired from the federal service at age 93⁸. Marshall spent his nearly half-decade tenure in government between 1973 and 2015 as the founder and director of the Office of Net Assessment, a personal fiefdom from which he leveraged tremendous authority within the U.S. national security establishment. Before joining the public sector, Marshall was one of the leading voices in the RAND Corporation, described alternatively as either “the world’s first ‘think tank,’” or as “the private sector CIA”⁹. While at RAND, Marshall was the “first among equals” within a group of researchers who would go on to make remarkable impacts on the American political landscape. Among Marshall's close colleagues and protégés were Charles Hitch - future Assistant Secretary of Defense (SecDef), Herman Kahn - founder of the Hudson Institute, Daniel Ellsberg – the man who would leak the Pentagon Papers, and James Schlesinger - future Secretary of Defense. Marshall’s propensity for training protégés would continue throughout his career, with Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, and Paul Wolfowitz counting themselves as being among his pupils¹⁰.

It was under SecDef Schlesinger that Marshall would enter public service, founding the Office of Net Assessment (ONA) in 1973. ONA was established to serve as the DoD’s internal think tank, mirroring Marshall and Schlesinger’s work at RAND. As Director of ONA, Marshall was answerable only to the SecDef and assistant SecDef and was the official primary advisor to the SecDef¹¹. He held this position uninterrupted for 42 years, serving under eight U.S. Presidents and 13 Secretaries of Defense. This long period of service was likely an intentional element of the ONA’s organization; the office was established with the explicit goal of generating long-term strategic outlooks, rather than implementing short-term initiatives. To this end, ONA has commissioned approximately \$400 million in studies and articles solicited from leading academics¹². According to Andrew Marshall biographer and former ONA employee Andrew Krepinevich, Marshall personally read each paper commissioned and used this

⁸ Krepinevich, A.. (2019, April 19). *Measures of Power: On the Lasting Value of Net Assessment*. Foreign Affairs. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2019-04-19/measures-power>

⁹ Krepinevich, A., & Watts, B. (2015). *The Last Warrior: Andrew Marshall and the Shaping of Modern American Defense Strategy* (1st ed.). Basic Books.

¹⁰ Krepinevich & Watts, 2015

¹¹ Elliott, J. (2009, March 10). *Inside the Pentagon’s Idea Factory: The Office of Net Assessment*. Talking Points Memo. https://web.archive.org/web/20130515022119/http://tpmmuckraker.talkingpointsmemo.com/2009/03/inside_the_pentagons_idea_factory_office_of_net_as.php#more

¹² Elliott, 2009



acquired knowledge in his principle advisory role to the SecDef. Allegedly, Marshall was highly secretive with the studies he commissioned, only allowing one copy to be printed and maintaining this copy in a cabinet in his office¹³ (although, clearly, these alleged precautions did not protect the studies from FOIA requests).

Judging the extent to which Marshall influenced U.S. military policy over his tenure is inherently difficult. According to a research paper drafted by the National Defense University, this opacity was intentionally designed (“it seemed more important to keep Andrew Marshall’s name off the final product than his thoughts out of it”)¹⁴. However, according to the same paper, Marshall’s influence was evident at all levels of DoD operations. Most crucially, his impact is said to best be seen in the post-9/11 transition of the DoD from a “threat-based force” to a “capabilities-based force.” That is to say, the prevailing pre-9/11 U.S. military doctrine was to create a fighting force capable of countering the nation’s known enemies (primarily the Soviet Union). The post-9/11 U.S. military doctrine (allegedly crafted by Marshall) is to create a fighting force capable of countering all threats – known and unknown – from enemies both present and future. This transformation is most evident in the DoD’s significantly expanded 21st-century focus on the fields of space militarization and biotechnology, both of which Marshall believed were key to maintaining force capabilities in the medium and long-term future¹⁵.

This focus on the future is mirrored by Marshall’s views on America’s two strongest great power rivals: Russia and China. According to Krepinevich, Marshall was an early advocate for the position that the Soviet Union was in a much weaker economic position than was understood by those outside of the Iron Curtain¹⁶. This was directly in contrast with the prevailing view in U.S. military and academic circles, which claimed that the Soviet economy was strong enough to directly compete with that of the U.S.¹⁷. Famously, as conventional wisdom shifted in Marshall’s favor, the Ronald Reagan administration pursued a policy of attempting to bankrupt the Soviets through excessive military spending, a policy which is often

¹³ Krepinevich & Watts, 2015

¹⁴ Maddrell, D. (2003, May 3). *Quiet Transformation: The Role of the Office of Net Assessment*. National Defense University. <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA441633.pdf>

¹⁵ Maddrell, 2003

¹⁶ Krepinevich & Watts, 2015

¹⁷ Samuelson, P., & Nordhaus, W. (1989). *Economics* (14th edition). McGraw-Hill Inc.,US.



attributed as being an element of the USSR's eventual collapse¹⁸. Supposedly, this policy originated in the windowless Pentagon office from where Andrew Marshall worked his magic¹⁹.

In contrast to the USSR - which he saw as weaker than commonly believed - Marshall was an advocate for the position that China would become the most significant great power rival of the U.S. in the 21st Century. Allegedly, Marshall was one of the key voices advocating for the Barack Obama administration's 2011 "Pivot to Asia" policy, which sought to shift American military goals away from the Middle East and towards the Far East²⁰. *The Strategic Consequences of Chinese Racism* - having been drafted in 2013 - would appear to be an element of ONA's participation in the Pivot to Asia. Thayer's paper is not alone in this regard. In the same FOIA release batch are found a total of seven other papers commissioned by ONA on the topic of China, more than for any other nation or region²¹.

2.3 Importance to U.S. Policy-Making

The Strategic Consequences of Chinese Racism draws its significance from having been commissioned - and potentially used in policy making - by Marshall. If his biographers are to be believed, then Marshall was one of the single most influential crafters of military doctrine in U.S. history. Even if his biographers are incorrect, and his influence is overestimated, then it must still be recognized that the Director of ONA is the principal long-term strategic advisor to the Secretary of Defense, meaning that Marshall's influence is necessarily non-negligible. Therefore, as the only publicly known ONA document on Sino-American soft power competition for developing nations, Thayer's paper is the closest thing that can be found to an official policy document on the subject. Indeed, it is orders of magnitude more significant than any publicly released statement on the subject by government officials because Thayer's paper is unmarred by the need for diplomatic language. To whatever extent a "deep state" exists, Thayer's paper is the best available window into their understanding of this particular topic.

¹⁸ Edwards, L. (2021, December 28). *How Reagan Doctrine Brought Down the Evil Empire*. The Heritage Foundation. <https://www.heritage.org/conservatism/commentary/how-reagan-doctrine-brought-down-the-evil-empire>

¹⁹ Krepinevich & Watts, 2015

²⁰ Krepinevich & Watts, 2015

²¹ United States Department of Defense, 2017



2.4 Literature Review

In his executive summary, Thayer claims that he is “not aware of a single study that addresses this important topic,” in reference to Chinese racism and its strategic implications²². As best as this author can determine, Thayer’s claim was correct for its time, as there do not appear to be other academic studies crafted on this topic prior to 2013. Since this time, very small academic literature has developed on the subject of Chinese racial attitudes towards Africa and its potential impact on soft power relations. *Race and Racism in Contemporary Africa-China Relations Research: Approaches, Controversies and Reflections*, published in the journal *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, analyzes instances of racial violence between Chinese and Africans in recent years, and attempts to create a “multiple triangulations” methodology for understanding Afro-Sino relations independent of Afro-European relations²³. *They’ve Made our Blood Ties Black: On the Burst of Online Racism Towards the African in China’s Social Media*, published in the journal *Critical Arts*, analyzes instances of racial violence between Chinese and Africans in recent years, and attempts to create a “multiple triangulations” methodology for understanding Afro-Sino relations independent of Afro-European relations²⁴. Two separate articles have provided case studies of China’s largest African diaspora population, which occupies the black market African trading district of Guangzhou. These are *The Shifting Meanings of Race in China: A Case Study of the African Diaspora Communities in Guangzhou*, published in the journal *City and Society*²⁵, and *Africans in Guangzhou: Is the Ethnic Enclave Model Applicable in the Chinese Context?*, published in the journal *Cities*²⁶.

Much more has been written by academics on the topic of Chinese racism broadly. *Neo-Racism in China: Reasons for China’s Otherwise Inexplicable Modern-Day Racism*, published in the journal *Language in India*, approaches the traits and expression of racism in China both through an Indian perspective and also in regard to the role of modern Chinese media in shaping

²² Author Unknown, 2015

²³ Castillo, R. (2020). “Race” and “Racism” in Contemporary Africa-China Relations Research: Approaches, Controversies and Reflections. *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 21(3), 310–336. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14649373.2020.1796343>

²⁴ Liu, T., & Deng, Z. (2020). “They’ve Made our Blood Ties Black”: On the Burst of Online Racism Towards the African in China’s Social Media. *Critical Arts*, 34(2), 104–107. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02560046.2020.1717567>

²⁵ Lan, S. (2016). The Shifting Meanings of Race in China: A Case Study of the African Diaspora Communities in Guangzhou. *City and Society*, 28(3), 298–318. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ciso.12094>

²⁶ Jin, X., Bolt, G., & Hooimeijer, P. (2021). Africans in Guangzhou: Is the Ethnic Enclave Model Applicable in the Chinese Context? *Cities*, 117, 103320. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2021.103320>



racist attitudes²⁷. *Neo-Racism in China* is not alone in approaching Chinese racism through particular ethnic lenses. *On the Perils of Racialized Chineseness: Race, Nation and Entangled Racisms in China and Southeast Asia*, published in the journal *Ethnic & Racial Studies*, discusses racism among the Chinese diaspora in Southeast Asian nations like Vietnam and Singapore²⁸. *The Rise of Xenophobia and the Uyghur-China Situation*, published in the journal *Social Research*, discusses Chinese racism in regard to the highly contentious and ongoing Xinjiang turmoil²⁹. These papers generally reinforce major arguments made by Thayer, chiefly in regard to how pervasive racism is among the Chinese population. However, the one paper in recent literature that best supports and expands upon Thayer's work is *Discourses of Race and Rising China*, published in Monash University's *China Journal*. *Discourses* reiterates points made by *Neo-Racism* concerning the impact of modern media on Chinese racism, but more poignantly it dedicates time to discussing historical and evolutionary explanations for Chinese racism, a topic which Thayer emphasizes heavily³⁰. In short, while Thayer's arguments may be considered extreme among certain American researchers, the international academic literature provides a solid foundation for his contentions.

3. Examining Claims

While this existing academic literature is valuable, Thayer's paper still remains the only known academic work to address the implications of Sino-African racial relations in the context of Sino-American great power competition. For this alone - even outside of its context as an important DoD policy document - Thayer's work deserves discussion in research circles. However, to the best of this author's knowledge, there has not yet been an academic paper to have cited *The Strategic Consequences of Chinese Racism*. It is the intention of this author to rectify this issue by providing a critical analysis of Thayer's study. Specifically, this paper will parse out three key pieces of Thayer's thesis and apply academic scrutiny to them in order to determine the relative strength of Thayer's arguments. These three critical analyses are not intended to be fully exhaustive examinations, as doing so would require entirely separate studies

²⁷ Mutesa, M. (2017). *Neo-Racism in China: Reasons for China's Otherwise Inexplicable Modern Day Racism*. *Language in India*, 17(12), 256–262

²⁸ Ang, I. (2021). On the Perils of Racialized Chineseness: Race, Nation and Entangled Racisms in China and Southeast Asia. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 45(4), 757–777. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2021.1990979>

²⁹ Abdulla, M., & Shamseden, Z. (2021). *The Rise of Xenophobia and the Uyghur-China Situation*. *Social Research*, 88(4), 949–972.

³⁰ Carrico, K. (2022). *Discourses of Race and Rising China*. *China Journal*, 88, 189–191. <https://doi.org/10.1086/720197>



for each claim. Rather, each analysis is designed to judge the relative strength of Thayer's argument by comparing it to available research and data. In short, this paper will provide a "sniff test" to gauge the initial viability of Thayer's thesis. Additionally – as a decade has passed since Thayer's paper was submitted to ONI - it may be possible to see indicators of how extensively the DoD has applied Thayer's principles.

3.1 Paper Overview

The Strategic Consequences of Chinese Racism is divided into four chapters across 238 pages. Chapter One provides an evolutionary history and biological explanation for the existence of human racism. Chapter two provides a history of Chinese racism specifically, including the cultural/religious factors that have impacted its development, as well as the racist belief structures of major Chinese historical figures. Chapter three delves into the modern effects of Chinese racism and how it impacts the nation's behavior in the geopolitical arena. Included in this chapter are discussions on the ways in which racism serves as a unifying strategic asset for the Chinese state. Chapter four concerns the ways in which Chinese racism should be used geo-strategically by the United States. Included in this chapter are discussions on how the U.S.'s anti-racist society provides it with an advantage in establishing soft power influence in Africa³¹

This article has selected three key arguments from Thayer's study for critical analysis. The first is Thayer's claim that Chinese society is more racist than U.S. society. The second is that Chinese racism acts as a stabilizing force for the Chinese government. The third is that current U.S. racial policies benefit the perception of the U.S. in Africa. To whatever extent Thayer is factually accurate in these claims, then the DoD ONA has been provided valuable information with which to shape U.S. military policy. To whatever extent Thayer is incorrect, U.S. military policy is at risk of making strategic mistakes.

3.2 Is Chinese Society More Racist than U.S. Society?

The fundamental core that underpins Thayer's work is that Chinese society is racist, both in absolute terms and in relative terms when compared to the U.S. In his words, "Racism remains a key component of how the Chinese see the world, their central place in it, and the

³¹ Author Unknown, 2015



world's other, inferior inhabitants.”³² Additionally, his introduction states, “This chapter concludes with the recognition that China has been and remains a racist state, where racists and eugenicist beliefs inform the Chinese worldview.”³³ In isolation, this is already a damning indictment, but Thayer goes further, claiming that China is both more racist than the U.S. and that “China must be seen as one of the few racist states in international politics today.”³⁴

It is important at this point to ensure that definitions are clear between the writer and the audience, especially in the face of such aggressive critiques of the largest ethnic group on Earth. For Thayer's purposes, racism is defined as “the belief or doctrine that race is the primary determinant of human abilities and capabilities, of an individual or group, and, second, that racial differences produce an inherent superiority of a particular race.”³⁵ Thayer's conception of racism can be classified as hereditarian. That is to say, Thayer claims that racism and its variations are evolutionarily developed cognitive defense mechanisms that were useful for the survival of the early human species. Therefore, racism is an inherent element of human nature that is passed down through genes. Thayer laments this fact by noting:

*“The fundamental reason why it is so difficult to erase such behavior is because the trait, found in all humans across all cultures, is rooted in human evolution. The trait of racism is an unfortunate consequence of living in a hostile and dangerous world, where resources were scarce and the need to identify family members, whether close or more distantly related, was essential for survival.”*³⁶

While Thayer defines racism as biologically innate, he defines anti-racism as exclusively cultural. That is to say, humans are inborn with racism and the only means of mitigating or removing this cognitive trait is through “great efforts (which) must be maintained by governmental and economic actors, twinned with those in civil society and popular culture.”³⁷ Therefore, modern U.S. society is anti-racist because it has been molded to be this way through the intentional and continued work of powerful public and private bodies (“For the American student today, anti-racism and minority history months are as much a part of his primary and secondary education as instruction in mathematics, government, or physical education”)³⁸. In this conception, Chinese society remains racist because the Chinese

³² Author Unknown, 2015

³³ Author Unknown, 2015

³⁴ Author Unknown, 2015

³⁵ Author Unknown, 2015

³⁶ Author Unknown, 2015

³⁷ Author Unknown, 2015

³⁸ Author Unknown, 2015



government and private sector actors have not taken any steps to instill anti-racism into Chinese culture and have instead allowed or encouraged the inherent biological racism of the Chinese people.

While this author does not dispute Thayer's definition of racism, it must be said that with such a definition it is difficult to prove or disprove the existence of broad, nation-level racism. Thayer's definition is determined by internal beliefs held by individuals, which are simple to mask, rather than observable actions, which are more suitable to academic research. Thankfully, Thayer inadvertently provides the solution to this riddle by discussing the concept of "groupishness," which he considers to be "close, but not identical" to racism³⁹. Groupishness, as defined by Thayer, is "the human ability to create in-groups and out-groups" and in so doing to favor the in-group⁴⁰. Groupishness (alternatively known as "in-group bias") is a known, quantifiable element of cognitive science, and not only can be measured empirically but has been for decades. Thus, even though Thayer's definition of racism is not exactly identical to groupishness, the latter can be used as a metric to provide some form of objective proof to his contention of Chinese racism.

Guo et. al., 2022 provide a uniquely excellent dataset for this question. In the study, researchers recruited both Chinese nationals in one sample and U.S./British nationals in another sample (referred to as the "Western" sample). Participants were placed in-game tests where they were responsible for the allocation of money to various individuals, with the key differentiating factor being the ethno-racial identity of the individual (Chinese or Western). The researchers added one additional variable to the study, which is the length of time that the subjects had in order to make their decision. The two lengths of time used were classified as either reflexive (very short) or reflective (moderately long) and were designed to gauge if a participant's instinctual reaction would be different than if they had time to ruminate on their choice⁴¹. In effect, Guo et. al. simultaneously tested both Thayer's contention that Chinese citizens are more racist than U.S. citizens, as well as his contention that racism is instinctual and is therefore only mitigated through environmental factors.

³⁹ Author Unknown, 2015

⁴⁰ Author Unknown, 2015

⁴¹ Guo, Z., Guo, R., Xu, C., & Wu, Z. (2022). Reflexive or Reflective? Group Bias in Third-Party Punishment in Chinese and Western Cultures. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 100, 104284. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2022.104284>



As it so happens, the results of Guo et. al.'s study are exactly in line with Thayer's contentions. Chinese participants demonstrated a greater level of in-group bias during the reflexive test and a lower level of bias during the reflective test. However, during both tests, Chinese participants still demonstrated notably high levels of in-group bias. Western participants demonstrated a degree of in-group bias during the reflexive test. However, during the reflective test, this bias shrank to statistical insignificance⁴². In both the reflective and reflexive tests, Chinese participants demonstrated greater in-group bias than Western participants. The results of the Western tests strengthen Thayer's contention that U.S. citizens are biologically compelled to racism - as they will demonstrate in-group bias when not given time to think - but that U.S. society pushes its citizens towards anti-racism - as the participants demonstrated very little in-group preference when given time to think through the social implications of their actions. The results of the Chinese tests strengthen Thayer's contention that Chinese society is more racist than U.S. society across the board. The only element of the Guo et. al. study which does not immediately support Thayer's claims is the evidence of in-group bias reduction (though not elimination) for Chinese participants in the reflective test. Within Thayer's conception of racism, this might be explained by saying that Chinese society has some small - though ultimately unsubstantial - dampening effect on the inherent racism of Chinese citizens.

These outcomes are corroborated and expanded upon by data from the non-partisan research firm American National Election Studies. The ANES Pilot Study was carried out in the immediate aftermath of the 2018 U.S. midterm elections and included questions designed to measure in-group racial preference among different categories, with the assumption that this data would be valuable to election analysts⁴³. Most germane to this paper is the ANES data on in-group preference based on respondent race. While the data does not sample Chinese nationals, it does sample Asian Americans, a category composed of 22.4% ethnic Chinese Han people⁴⁴. Thus, while data specific to ethnic Chinese individuals cannot be perfectly extracted,

⁴² Guo et. al., 2022

⁴³ American National Elections Studies. (2019). *2018 Pilot Study*. <https://electionstudies.org/data-center/2018-pilot-study>

⁴⁴ United States Census Bureau. (2020). *ASIAN ALONE OR IN COMBINATION WITH ONE OR MORE OTHER RACES, AND WITH ONE OR MORE ASIAN CATEGORIES FOR SELECTED GROUPS Universe: Total Asian categories tallied and people with no specific Asian category reported*. <https://archive.ph/20200212213039/http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml#selection-263.0-269.92>



this dataset can be used to estimate the relative difference in in-group bias between Americans broadly and those of Chinese descent.

The ANES study calculated in-group preference by asking participants their degree of favorability to their racial group and subtracting their degree of favorability to other racial groups, thus leaving respondents' net in-group racial favorability on a 0-100 scale. White American respondents averaged a net in-group bias of 3.59, mirroring the near-zero results of Guo et. al. Asian Americans reported a net in-group bias of 13.94, Hispanic Americans reported 12.83, and African Americans reported 15.58. Perhaps most strikingly, White Americans who self-identified as liberal were the only racial-political group to demonstrate out-group favorability, i.e. a preference for races that are not their own. The in-group bias among white liberals averaged -13.17, with the negative value reflecting a negative relative bias towards one's own race⁴⁵.

The ANES data supports Thayer's contentions on the hereditary nature of racism and on Chinese racism specifically. Thayer claims that racism is inborn and can only be mitigated by the sustained effort of societal institutions like the government and media. White American liberals - whose socio-political orientation most closely matches the broad positions of U.S. government and media – demonstrated more than simple non-racism, but instead demonstrated an anti-racist out-group bias. By contrast, Asian Americans demonstrated the second-highest in-group preference among the four primary American racial groups. Under Thayer's conception of the topic, this could be explained as Asian Americans (specifically Chinese Americans) maintaining the racist cultural traditions that continue in China today. This theory is bolstered by the relatively high in-group preference of Hispanic Americans, many of whom are recent arrivals to the U.S. and have thus been less exposed to the anti-racist elements of U.S. society.

3.3 Does Chinese Racism Provide Greater Stability to the Chinese Government?

While the central thrust of Thayer's paper concerns the ways in which the U.S. can strategically benefit from China's racism, the paper also investigates the ways in which societal racism actually provides advantages to the Chinese state. In Thayer's words: "Chinese racism also is a strategic asset that makes (China) a formidable adversary." In order to function, even

⁴⁵ American National Elections Studies, 2019



the most authoritarian of governments require a certain degree of support (or, failing this, acquiescence) from the general population. Thayer claims that the Chinese state draws popular support by “making appeals based on racism and ethnocentrism for purposes of unity, identity, sense of self, and identification.”⁴⁶

“The government educates the people to be proud of being Han and of China. In turn, the Chinese people are proud and fiercely patriotic as well as ethnocentric, racist, and xenophobic. This aids the government and permits them to maintain high levels of popular support.”⁴⁷

Inbuilt loyalty to the government is an unmistakable advantage in geostrategic terms (if not in terms of societal well-being). As evidenced by the Cold War of the 20th Century, great power conflicts can be ended in dramatic fashion by the failure of one state to maintain the support of its own population. The belief that the current Chinese state will outlast the current U.S. state actually forms a key element of Chinese foreign policy. To quote Hu Xijin, the former editor-in-chief of the major state-owned newspaper *The Global Times*, “I bet the Communist Party of China will definitely outlive the United States of America.”⁴⁸

There exists some evidence to support Thayer’s contention (and Hu’s hope) concerning Chinese racial unity and the stability of the state. Although modern China can hardly be considered communist in economic terms, it still proclaims itself officially as a communist state and has remained so for 73 years. History’s largest communist state – the Soviet Union – collapsed after 74 years. Other communist states tend not to last very long, be they East Germany (40 years), the Somali Democratic Republic (22 years), Cambodia (22 years), or the Kurdish Republic of Mahabad (less than one year). In 2022, there exist only four other nominally communist states: Cuba, Laos, North Korea, and Vietnam. Of these four, three have populations that can be considered genetically proximate to the Han Chinese. This trend provides circumstantial evidence for the claim that Chinese culture creates inherent loyalty to the state.

If Thayer is correct, then this loyalty is driven at least in part by racism and racial solidarity. Circumstantial evidence in favor of this theory can be found in the ways in which

⁴⁶ Author Unknown, 2015

⁴⁷ Author Unknown, 2015

⁴⁸ Feng, J. (2021, November 11). *Chinese Communist Party Will Outlive United States: State Media Editor*. Newsweek. <https://www.newsweek.com/chinese-communist-party-outlive-united-states-global-times-media-editor-1653231>



China approaches international intelligence operations. A key tactic used by Chinese agencies that has sparked alarm among U.S. institutions is the “thousand grains of sand” approach. Under this model, ethnic Han Chinese émigrés in all corners of the world are recruited to serve as intelligence assets within their current country of residence⁴⁹. These freshly minted spies rarely have strong ties to the Chinese military intelligence apparatus, but their shared racial/cultural background makes them easier to recruit. Thus, while many non-Han have been convicted for spying on the U.S. on behalf of the Chinese government, a disproportionately large number of cases involve ethnic Chinese spies. This disproportionality in high-level espionage is likely due in part to the disproportionate representation of ethnic Chinese individuals in high-ranking industry and government positions (as exemplified by Asian Americans being the highest-earning racial group in the U.S.)⁵⁰. However, this disproportionality also lends credence to Thayer’s contention that there exists an innate racial solidarity between the Han Chinese people and the Chinese government.

Ultimately, though, if the goal is to demonstrate intrinsic loyalty to the state, the simplest method to do so is to gather data on general favorability towards the government. This metric is not a direct answer to the question of racial-state solidarity, but it can serve as a loose proxy. Given the censorious nature of the Chinese state, it is difficult to trust figures produced by the CCP. Thankfully, a longitudinal study conducted by researchers at Harvard University’s Kennedy School provides data on Chinese citizens’ favorability towards the Chinese state as measured by Western researchers and using Western techniques⁵¹. This not only minimizes the impact of CCP interference in the study but also allows for closer “apples-to-apples” comparisons with Western government favorability studies. This data is shown in Figure 1, below, prepared by the author.

⁴⁹ Mattis, P. (2011, October 31). *China’s Misunderstood Spies*. The Diplomat. <https://thediplomat.com/2011/10/chinas-misunderstood-spies/>

⁵⁰ United States Department of Labor. (2021). *Median Annual Earnings by Sex, Race and Hispanic Ethnicity*. <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/wb/data/earnings/median-annual-sex-race-hispanic-ethnicity>

⁵¹ Cunningham, E., Saich, T., & Turiel, J. (2020, July). *Understanding CCP Resilience: Surveying Chinese Public Opinion Through Time*. Harvard Kennedy School, Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation. https://ash.harvard.edu/files/ash/files/final_policy_brief_7.6.2020.pdf



Figure 1. China's Overall Satisfaction with the National Government

The data provided by the Harvard study is incomplete, as the researchers were unable to record data from the years 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2013, and 2014. In Figure 1, these gaps are filled by maintaining the satisfaction rate of the most recent year recorded. Despite these gaps, two key conclusions can be clearly drawn from the data. First, the rate of satisfaction felt by Chinese citizens towards their government is remarkably high, averaging 89% at the federal (central government) level. This result is in line with Thayer's contention of racism and ethnocentrism strengthening Chinese faith in their government. Second, the rate of government satisfaction has a positive growth trend. While there are many potential explanations for this effect, Thayer's theory would likely attribute this trend to either increasingly racist government messaging or to a rise in domestic ethnocentrism commensurate to China's growing presence in the world state. As China becomes increasingly powerful in international affairs, one may speculate that Chinese nationalism will grow accordingly.

By contrast, data for U.S. government favorability is much more robust, but also systematically scores much lower. For several decades, the Pew Research Center has regularly



polled U.S. citizens to determine what percentage of the population held trust in the American government⁵². This data is shown in Figure 2, below.

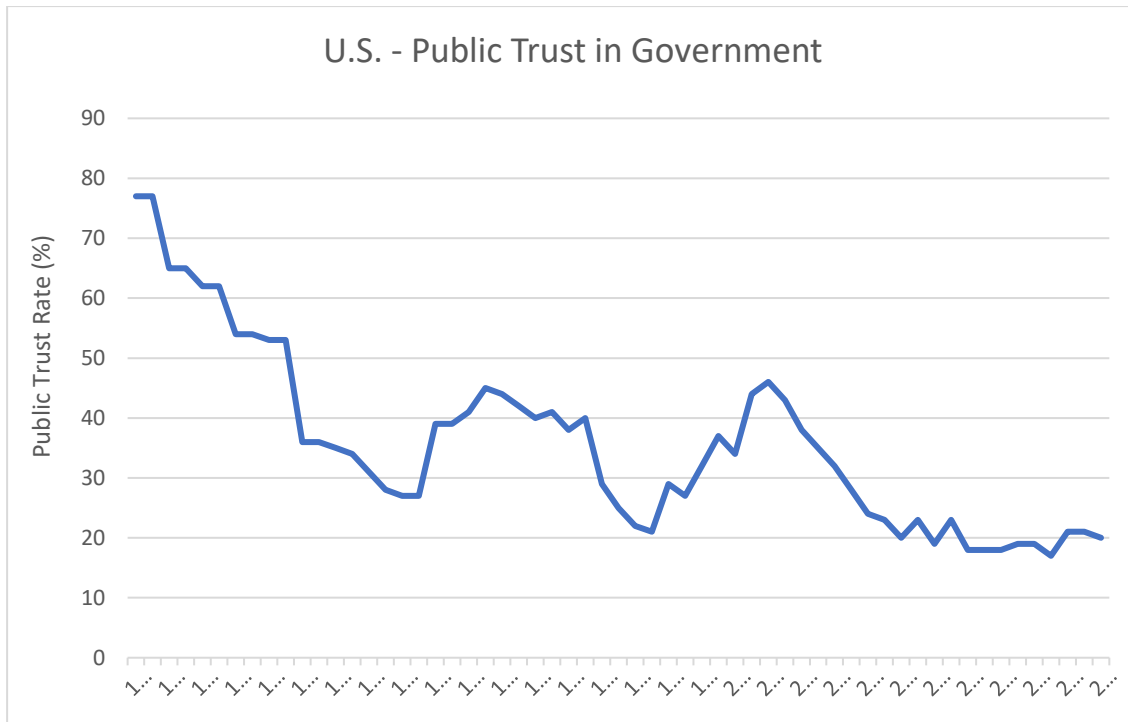


Figure 2. U.S. – Public Trust in Government

As seen in Figure 2, two trends are visible in the data, and they are directly inverse to the trends seen in the Chinese data. First, U.S. trust in government is extremely low, an entire 75 percentage points lower than the Chinese data as of 2016. Second, trust in government has decreased precipitously both since Pew began collecting U.S. data (1964) and since the Harvard study began tracking Chinese data (2003). While U.S. government trust has seen occasional spikes during periods of economic growth (mid-1980s) or heavy nationalism (post-9/11), the overall trend is unmistakably downward.

This data supports Thayer’s claim that Chinese racism provides the CCP government with a strategic advantage by encouraging ethnic loyalty. If Chinese society is indeed more racist than U.S. society – and if racism strengthens support for government – then we would expect to see exactly these results in the data: Chinese government support is expected to be high, and U.S. government support is expected to be low. Moreover, this data supports the belief

⁵² Pew Research Center. (2022, June 6). *Public Trust in Government: 1958-2022*. <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2022/06/06/public-trust-in-government-1958-2022/>



that U.S. society has become less racist/more anti-racist with time. A significant body of academic literature has demonstrated an inverse correlation between societal trust and ethnic diversity⁵³⁵⁴⁵⁵⁵⁶. Therefore, as the U.S. has become more diverse and anti-racist with time, we should expect that trust in government (alongside other forms of societal trust) would decrease. The Pew data could therefore be seen as supporting evidence for Thayer's claim that U.S. society has become less racist with time.

3.4 Do Current U.S. Racial Policies Benefit Perceptions in Africa?

Crucially, as Thayer contends that Chinese society has become increasingly racist, he also contends that U.S. society has become increasingly anti-racist. In his words, "The days of a Don Rickles performance, long on ethnic jokes, are at least a generation past in the West."⁵⁷ However, this change did not come easily. Further emphasizing his contention that anti-racism can only be created through intensive and intentional social efforts, Thayer outlines some of the steps taken to bring the U.S. to this point:

"The news media are particularly sensitive to racism in corporations, governmental policies, or even individuals... Anti-racist messages are common in film and television, while positive images of racial minorities are heavily emphasized. Hollywood and television take their monitoring and policing of the public sphere seriously and work to identify violators, and punish them through ridicule or expulsion from the community and acceptable company... The primary and secondary educational system has been completely remade since the 1970s to emphasize the contributions of racial minorities and the dangers of racism. The students receive instruction about the evils of prejudice and bigotry from K-12, while positive education about minorities is heavily emphasized. For the American student today, anti-racism and minority

⁵³ Kokkonen, A., Esaiasson, P., & Gilljam, M. (2014). Migration-based Ethnic Diversity and Social Trust: A Multilevel Analysis of How Country, Neighbourhood and Workplace Diversity Affects Social Trust in 22 Countries. *Scandinavian Political Studies*, 37(3), 263–300. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9477.12027>

⁵⁴ Beugelsdijk, S., & Klasing, M. (2016). Diversity and Trust: The Role of Shared Values. *Journal of Comparative Economics*, 44(3), 522–540. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jce.2015.10.014>

⁵⁵ Ziller, C. (2014). Ethnic Diversity, Economic and Cultural Contexts, and Social Trust: Cross-Sectional and Longitudinal Evidence from European Regions, 2002–2010. *Social Forces*, 93(3), 1211–1240. <https://doi.org/10.1093/sf/sou088>

⁵⁶ Dinesen, P., Schaeffer, M., & Sønderkov, K. (2020). Ethnic Diversity and Social Trust: A Narrative and Meta-Analytical Review. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 23. <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.20314.70081>

⁵⁷ Author Unknown, 2015



history months are as much a part of his primary and secondary education as instruction in mathematics, government, or physical education.”⁵⁸

While Thayer has stressed the advantages of racism for China, a greater portion of his paper is focused on extolling the virtues of American anti-racism, and particularly the ways in which it should be leveraged to aid the United States in matters of geo-strategic dominance. Thayer’s primary contention is that American anti-racism provides the U.S. government with an inherent advantage when cultivating soft-power influence in developing regions, especially Africa. Whereas – Thayer argues - China is a racist state that will treat Africa with contempt, the U.S. is an anti-racist state that will treat Africa with respect. Therefore, it is in the strategic best interest of African states to draw near to the occident and far from the Orient.

“The combination of the two messages, ‘China is racist with no culture of anti-racism, and their business practices are destructive for the locals,’ would be most effective in making appeals to the Third World... The Chinese are hypocrites when it comes to race and racial equality. For all of their rhetoric on Africa and their “African brothers,” the cold facts of Chinese racism triumph paeans to Third World solidarity... The message of the United States should be: We are better than the Chinese for the development of Africa. We will assist you with economic aid to offset what you receive from China. Culturally, socially, and politically, we are better, we are equal, recognize racial equality and civil rights.”⁵⁹

The most central thesis of Thayer’s paper is reliant on the belief that African citizens and African governments will respond negatively to Chinese racism and favorably to U.S. anti-racism. The military/governmental strategy that Andrew Marshall commissioned Thayer to academically support is a soft power push by the U.S. into the African continent under the initial salvo of racial equality and civil rights. Therefore, while this paper has thus far supported Thayer’s contentions on Chinese racism and Chinese government strength through racial unity if Thayer’s primary contention on U.S.-Africa policy falters, then Thayer’s work represents a liability to the U.S. Department of Defense. Unfortunately for all parties involved, existing evidence suggests that Thayer’s contention may be incorrect.

⁵⁸ Author Unknown, 2015

⁵⁹ Author Unknown, 2015



Among available open-source datasets, the one that most closely matches the needs of Thayer's contention is the Pew Research Center's U.S. Favorability Index, which tracks the percentage of respondents from various countries who have a favorable view of the U.S. in general terms⁶⁰. This data is modeled in Figure 3, below.

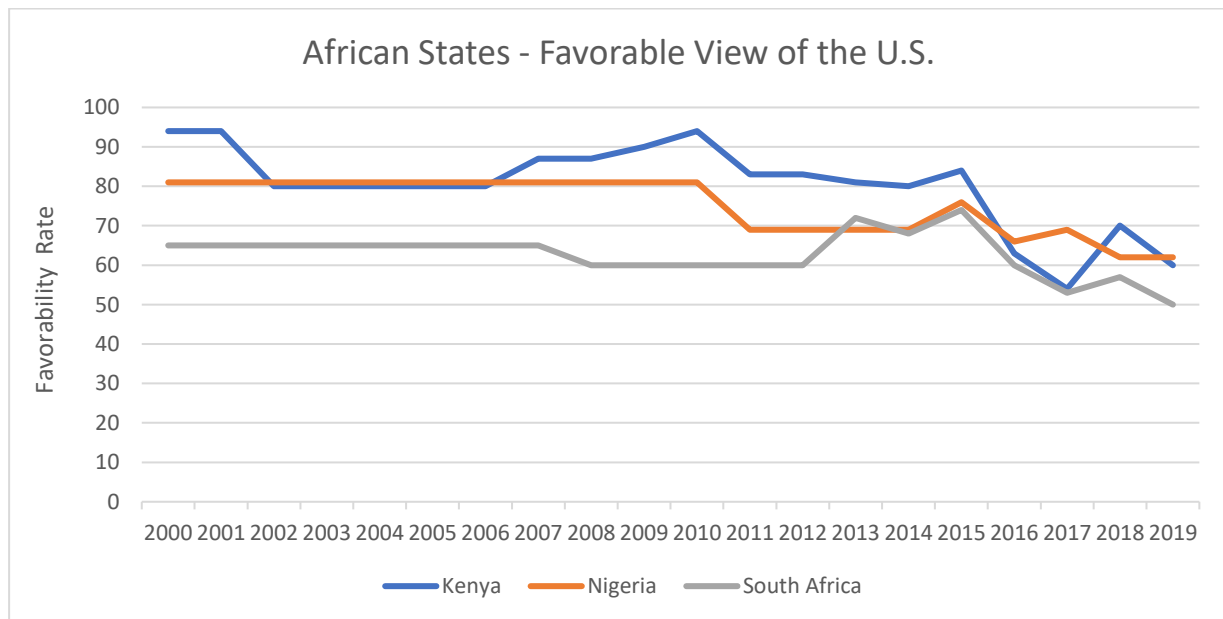


Figure 3. African States – Favorable View of the U.S.

This dataset is somewhat limited, as it only tracks three of the continent's largest nations. Additionally, several years feature incomplete data for one or more nations. In Figure 3, these gaps are filled by maintaining the favorability rate of the most recent year recorded. Despite these limitations, a clear trend can be viewed, with all three nations demonstrating decreased favorability towards the U.S. over the course of the 21st Century. If we grant Thayer's contention that the U.S. is an increasingly anti-racist country, then anti-racism is inversely correlated with favorable views of African nations to the U.S. This inverse correlation is obviously absent any of the thousands of other, unrelated factors that drive African favorability. If nothing else, though, this dataset casts doubt on the claim that anti-racism increases African favorability.

⁶⁰ Pew Research Center. (2020, January 8). *U.S. Image Generally Favorable Around the World, but Mixed in Some Countries*. <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2020/01/08/u-s-image-generally-favorable-around-the-world-but-mixed-in-some-countries/#:~:text=Across%20the%20three%20sub-Saharan%20African%20countries%20surveyed%2C%20views,60%25%20respectively%29%20say%20they%20view%20the%20U.S.%20positively>

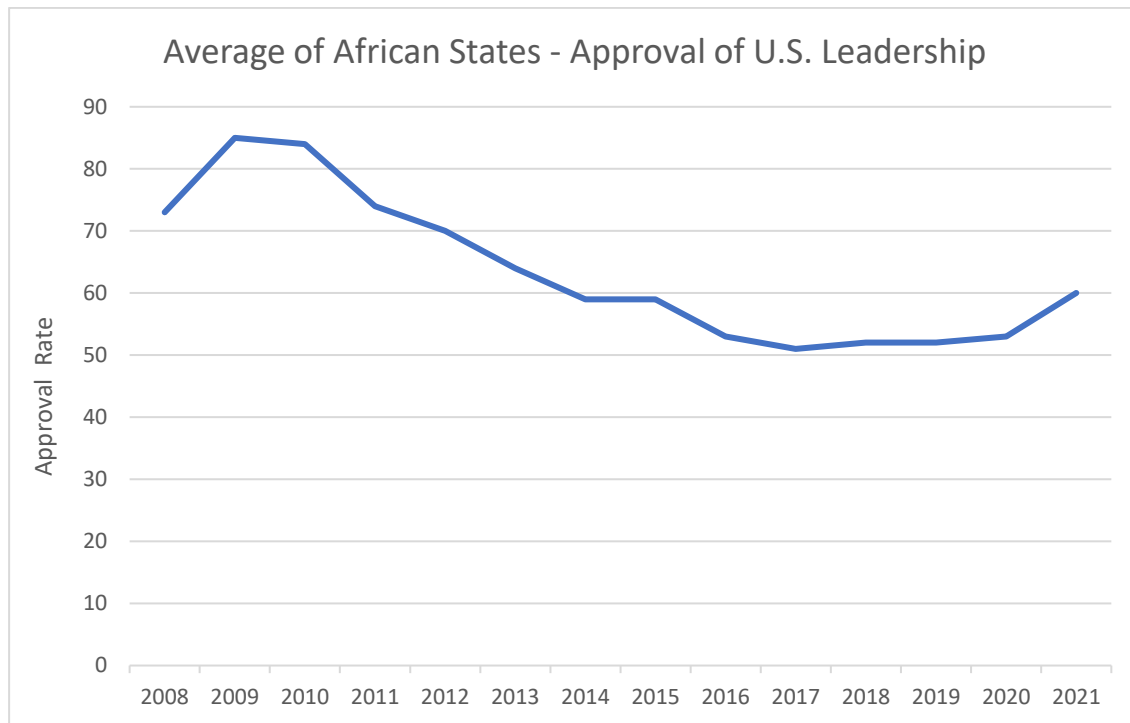


Figure 4. Average of African States – Approval of U.S. Leadership

Figure 4 documents the findings of the Gallup Rating World Leaders study. This dataset is much more complete than the Pew dataset, as it features scores from 27 African states and features complete yearly data since 2008⁶¹. It should be noted that this dataset is not a direct measure of African favorability towards the U.S., but rather a measure of African sentiments towards U.S. leadership specifically. As such, any of a myriad number of factors are liable to serve as key drivers of this data. Nonetheless, the Gallup dataset demonstrates a similar trend to the Pew dataset, that being a general downward slope. Under Thayer's contention that U.S. anti-racism increases with time, anti-racism is therefore inversely correlated with positive views of Africans towards U.S. leadership.

Thayer's contention faces additional scrutiny when accounting for specific nations. For instance, Thayer claims that one of the practical ways in which U.S. anti-racism directly benefits citizens of developing nations is through affirmative action policies.

⁶¹ Gallup. (2020). *Rating World Leaders*. <https://www.gallup.com/analytics/355787/gallup-rating-world-leaders-report.aspx?thank-you-report-form=1>



“When compared with China, it is easy to convey to the rest of the world the message that the United States is open and inclusive... The United States seeks the best from around the world, and will permit them to come to the country so that they may prosper... It has in place Affirmative Action policies as a matter of state policy that benefits immigrants from racial minorities.”⁶²

Assuming that Thayer is correct in his claim that affirmative action policies endear African nationals to the U.S., one would expect the data to demonstrate this relationship. Among African nationals accepted to U.S. universities, Nigerians are the most common. In fact, among all black students at U.S. universities (African native and African American), Nigerians are noticeably overrepresented⁶³. If we grant Thayer’s contention that affirmative action benefits racial minority immigrants in university admissions, then it can be said that Nigerians are the largest beneficiary of U.S. affirmative action among African groups. Therefore, one would expect Nigeria to have the highest favorability towards the U.S. among African countries. Unfortunately for Thayer, this is not the case. Rather, in both the Pew and Gallup datasets, Nigeria places squarely in the middle of U.S. favorability (13 out of 27 in the Gallup dataset)⁶⁴.

This article does not – and does not seek to – prove the existence of an inverse correlation between U.S. anti-racism and African favorability towards the U.S. Rather, this paper only seeks to demonstrate the lack of a positive relationship between these two variables, and in so doing, cast doubt on Thayer’s contention that U.S. anti-racism is a useful foreign policy tool in soft power competition with China. With that said, an inverse correlation is one possibility that is softly supported by the data. If such an inverse relationship exists, it is worthwhile to briefly explore why that may be. In light of Occam’s Razor, the simplest explanation is that U.S. anti-racist culture is not in line with existing African cultures. While, obviously, there is no one African culture – and various cultures from various parts of the continent are aligned with U.S. culture to greater or lesser degrees – existing data suggests that Africans broadly hold racial views more closely aligned with Chinese culture.

⁶² Author Unknown, 2015

⁶³ Hsleh, E. (2011, May 11). *Following Obama, Students Define “Black” on Ivy League Campuses*. The Huffington Post. https://www.huffpost.com/entry/barack-obama-has-broken-r_b_217965

⁶⁴ Gallup, 2020



As discussed previously, the ANES dataset provides an objective methodology for measuring in-group bias and, by proxy, racism. African Americans demonstrated the highest rate of in-group preference at 15.58, Asian Americans a slightly lower rate at 13.94, and White Americans the lowest rate at 3.59⁶⁵. The gulf between African American and Asian American scores is much smaller than that between African American and White American scores. This finding was replicated in *Ingroup Preference and Homogeneity Among African American and Chinese American Students*, published in the *Journal of Social Psychology*. Data from this study demonstrates similar degrees of in-group bias between African Americans and Chinese Americans, with African Americans scoring somewhat higher on average⁶⁶. To be clear, neither of these studies is sufficient to demonstrate racial attitudes in continental African culture, seeing as how they only study ethnic Africans and Asians/Chinese who are U.S. citizens, rather than measuring the in-group bias of Africa and China respectively. However – to whatever extent African and Chinese racial attitudes persist among émigrés and their descendants living in the U.S. – these studies imply that existing African racial attitudes are more closely aligned with Chinese racial attitudes than they are with U.S. anti-racist culture.

Thayer contends that culture is a valuable tool for soft power projection in international relations. Most scholars would likely agree with this sentiment. However, where the data suggests Thayer is incorrect is in his belief that any culture will have positive effects on international favorability so long as it is beneficial to the target. Thayer provides a case for how U.S. anti-racist culture is beneficial to Africans in practical terms, and this paper does not disagree with his assumption. With that said, if U.S. anti-racist culture is too significantly different from existing African culture, then it may simply be rejected outright. In geostrategic terms, cultural proximity may prove more valuable than a culture of anti-racism.

It is difficult to tell if or to what extent Thayer's contention of anti-racism as a soft power tool has been applied by the DoD in Africa since the paper's completion. Undoubtedly, the Pentagon's focus on anti-racism has dramatically escalated since 2013. In this past decade, the DoD has taken steps to significantly increase the proportion of people of color in hiring and

⁶⁵ American National Elections Studies, 2019

⁶⁶ Lee, Y. (1993). Ingroup Preference and Homogeneity Among African American and Chinese American Students. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 133(2), 225–235. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224545.1993.9712140>



promotion decisions⁶⁷, target for removal of employees expressing racist views⁶⁸, and actively promote anti-racism in its official publications⁶⁹. Mass media recruitment material reflects this with advertisements targeting communities of color and emphasizing anti-racist messages⁷⁰.

However, it would be much too presumptuous to assume that Thayer's report has been a driving influence in this policy shift. A great many factors have likely influenced the DoD's increased focus on anti-racism, likely none more significant than the general shift towards anti-racism within the broader U.S. government and culture during the same period. Moreover, there appear to be few, if any, cases of the DoD actively marketing anti-racism programs in continental Africa. Of course, one could argue that this is not the form that soft power would take; any form of anti-racist messaging put out by the DoD in any part of the world serves as a soft power signal to all parties globally. However, the lack of Africa-specific focus in these programs leaves unanswered the question of how fruitfully the policies of *Strategic Consequences* have been put into practice.

4. Conclusions

The Strategic Consequences of Chinese Racism provides a trove of valuable information for scholars of international relations and foreign policy. This article examines *Strategic Consequences*, but it does not serve as an exhaustive study of every argument Thayer has made. Rather, this article is meant as an opening salvo in what will hopefully be a fruitful, years-long examination of Thayer's work and that of others from the Department of Defense's Office of Net Assessment. The very existence of *Strategic Consequences* tells us a great deal about how the U.S. national security apparatus operates. We know that powerful factions within the U.S. government have been concerned about the growing power of China well before it became a topic of common conversation. We know that these factions have been crafting strategies for competition between the great powers, not only in military terms but also in soft power terms.

⁶⁷ Miller, C. (2020, December 17). *Memorandum for Senior Pentagon Leadership*. U.S. Department of Defense. <https://media.defense.gov/2020/Dec/18/2002554854/-1/-1/0/ACTIONS-TO-IMPROVE-RACIAL-AND-ETHNIC-DIVERSITY-AND-INCLUSION-IN-THE-U.S.-MILITARY.PDF>

⁶⁸ Austin, L. (2021, December 20). *Report on Countering Extremist Activity Within the Department of Defense*. U.S. Department of Defense. <https://media.defense.gov/2021/Dec/20/2002912573/-1/-1/0/REPORT-ON-COUNTERING-EXTREMIST-ACTIVITY-WITHIN-THE-DEPARTMENT-OF-DEFENSE.PDF>

⁶⁹ Garamore, J. (2020, July 9). *No Place for Racism, Discrimination in U.S. Military, Milley Says*. U.S. Department of Defense. <https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/2269438/no-place-for-racism-discrimination-in-us-military-milley-says/>

⁷⁰ GoArmy. (2021, May 4). *RICKIE | THE CALLING | GOARMY* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DWo5-pFrjNg>



We know that these factions are willing to engage in unorthodox methodologies such as examining enemy culture for vulnerabilities to be exploited.

Still, just because these factions engage in strategic research in coordination with respected academics does not mean that the conclusions they draw are absolute and unquestionable. Indeed, by analyzing their works, it is possible to determine the areas in which U.S. foreign policy is backed by sound judgment, as well as the areas in which it falters due to incomplete analysis. This paper breaks out three primary arguments that fundamentally underpin Thayer's article. While these contentions do not compose the entirety of *Strategic Consequences*, they do represent the three most important points made by Thayer: the foundational nature of Chinese racism, the strategic advantages it provides China and the strategic opportunities it provides the United States.

This paper first analyzes Thayer's argument that Chinese society is not only racist but is significantly more racist than U.S. society. Based on existing in-group bias studies, this paper concludes that Thayer is likely correct in his analysis. This paper also supports Thayer's sub-contention that racism is primarily driven by evolutionary instinct and that anti-racism is primarily driven by social/political institutions.

This paper second analyzes Thayer's argument that Chinese racism provides a strategic advantage to the Chinese state by fostering stability through ethnic loyalty. Based upon Western-generated data on Chinese government satisfaction, this paper concludes that Thayer is likely correct in his analysis. Moreover, this conclusion is strengthened by U.S. government trust data which indicates an inverse trend to that of China, with government support waning during a period in which U.S. society has become less racist.

This paper finally analyzes Thayer's argument that American anti-racist culture can serve as a tool for extending U.S. soft power in Africa and reducing Chinese soft power in the region. Based upon longitudinal Africa-U.S. favorability data, this paper concludes that Thayer is likely incorrect in his analysis. Moreover, this paper speculates that the failure thus far of U.S. anti-racist culture in cultivating favor in Africa is possibly the result of inherent divergence between existing African cultures and modern U.S. anti-racist culture.

In conclusion, this paper substantiates the theory that Thayer – and by extension, the Department of Defense as a whole – has accurately gauged the strategic advantage that Chinese



racism provides for the Chinese state. However, this paper also concludes that Thayer and the Department of Defense have overestimated the advantage that Chinese racism provides the United States in countering Chinese soft-power ambitions.

While it is understandable that the DoD would commission *The Strategic Consequences of Chinese Racism* in secret, the danger of hiding away valuable academic literature is that it takes away the ability of the public to critique such works. Absent this critique, U.S. military and foreign policy are more susceptible to poor decision-making. Thayer's work provided Andrew Marshall and the ONA with both some valuable truths and some concerning flaws. In the years since the article's commissioning, we have seen some of these recommendations implemented by the U.S. state apparatus. This paper hopes that future U.S. administrations will take from Thayer's work the most valuable elements and think critically about the article's weaker elements.

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https://ash.harvard.edu/files/ash/files/final_policy_brief_7.6.2020.pdf
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Chinese Geoeconomics and Geostrategic Motives in a Changing International Order: Understanding the Significance of a Chinese Military Base in Djibouti

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Abstract

This study examines the geoeconomic and geostrategic motives driving China's establishment of a military base in Djibouti. From a geoeconomic perspective, it explores economic interests and opportunities in the Horn of Africa. Geographically, it addresses implications for global power dynamics, militarization of China-Africa partnerships, oil resource security, peacekeeping, counterterrorism, piracy, and the Maritime Silk Road. It also delves into China's Maritime Security Strategy within the Belt and Road Initiative, focusing on marine environmental protection, cooperative development, security alliances, knowledge promotion, and governance. A qualitative approach to research involves combining primary sources, such as official Chinese documents, with secondary sources, such as reports from the media and scholarly articles. Through a literature review and analysis, China's motives for the Djibouti military base are discerned.

Keywords: *Geoeconomics, Geostrategic Motives, International Order, Belt and Road Initiative, Maritime Silk Road, Indo-Pacific, Maritime Security Alliance, Maritime Governance.*

1. Introduction

By the beginning of the 21st century, China had shown significant enthusiasm for strengthening its global power position. This is after rapid economic growth over the past three decades. Based on its rapid economic and political escalation, Beijing has occupied the second global polar position after the United States. Beijing's rise as a second major polar region has implications for global order. First, it means that the United States will no longer be the sole superpower in the world. This could lead to a more competitive and unstable global order. Second, it means China will have a greater say in international affairs. This could lead to world governance changes. Third, it implies that the United States and China will need to cooperate on common interests. This could be a challenge, given the two countries' different political systems and interests. Overall, the rise of China as a second global polar power is a significant development that is likely to have a major impact on the global order. It is a development that will need to be carefully managed by the United States and China, as well as by other countries around the world.

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Beijing has emerged as the second global polar region after the United States due to several factors, including:

a. China's economic growth: China has experienced rapid economic growth in recent decades, becoming the world's second-largest economy. This economic growth has given China a greater say in global affairs and has allowed it to invest heavily in its military and infrastructure.

b. China's military power: China has been modernizing its military at a rapid pace, and it is now one of the most powerful militaries in the world. This military power gives China a greater ability to project its power around the world and defend its interests.

c. China's Soft Power Projection: China has been actively cultivating its soft power through various economic, cultural, and diplomatic initiatives in recent years. This strategic employment of soft power elements and tools aims to enhance China's global influence and shape a favorable narrative around its rise as a major power. However, some observers argue that this soft power push is a calculated attempt to create a sphere of influence and deflect criticism over human rights concerns and perceived hegemonic ambitions.

Beijing's soft power projection encompasses a multifaceted approach, leveraging its economic influence through initiatives like the Belt and Road Initiative, which aims to foster infrastructure development and trade connectivity across multiple regions. Additionally, China has invested in cultural diplomacy programs, such as the establishment of Confucius Institutes worldwide, to promote the Chinese language and culture. Simultaneously, China has sought to counter negative perceptions and criticisms by projecting a positive image through state-sponsored media outlets, academic exchanges, and strategic partnerships with other nations. This approach aims to cultivate a narrative that portrays China as a responsible global stakeholder and a viable alternative to Western dominance.

Critics, however, contend that China's soft power efforts are a thinly veiled attempt to expand its geopolitical influence and insulate itself from scrutiny over human rights issues, particularly in regions like Xinjiang and Tibet. They argue that economic incentives and cultural outreach programs are tools to coerce acquiescence and create a sphere of influence favorable to China's interests. Ultimately, China's soft power projection is a complex and multidimensional endeavor, intertwining elements of economic, cultural, and diplomatic



engagement. While it has undoubtedly elevated China's global prominence, the underlying motivations and potential implications remain subjects of ongoing debate and scrutiny within the international community.

As a result of its economic ascendancy and the subsequent creation of interdependencies through increased investment and trade ties, Beijing has emerged as a formidable global player in recent years. China's burgeoning economic clout has translated into significant political leverage, allowing it to project influence on a global scale. Consequently, China has solidified its position as the second-largest power pole in the world, trailing only the United States in terms of comprehensive national strength.

This dramatic rise of China as a preeminent force on the international stage has ushered in an era of heightened strategic competition with the United States, the incumbent superpower. The two nations find themselves locked in an unprecedented rivalry for global influence, with each vying to shape the contours of the emerging world order through their respective interests and values.

Sino-American power competition is a multidimensional phenomenon, encompassing economic, technological, military, and ideological dimensions. It manifests itself in various theaters, ranging from trade disputes and technological decoupling to strategic posturing in regions of vital interest, such as the Indo-Pacific and the Arctic. This great power rivalry is likely to be a defining feature of the global landscape in the near future, profoundly influencing the dynamics of international relations, the trajectory of multilateral institutions, and the evolution of regional alliances and partnerships. As the two titans jockey for influence, their actions and interactions will reverberate across the globe, shaping the contours of the emerging global order for years, if not decades, to come.

Accordingly, the ability of other nations to navigate the complexities of this Sino-American rivalry and strike a delicate balance between the competing power poles will be critical to preserving their strategic autonomy and advancing their national interests in an increasingly multipolar world.

In June 2017, the Chinese government, through the National Development and Reform Commission in cooperation with the National Oceans and Oceans Administration, issued an authoritative document on coastal cooperation. The document was entitled "Vision for



Maritime Cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative 一带一路”建设海上合作设想¹.

Chinese overseas expansion is most notable for its effort to establish its first military base abroad in Africa. This strategic effort was preceded by nine other countries, notably the United States², former colonial powers of Britain³, and France⁴, as well as emerging powers such as Russia⁵, India⁶, and Japan⁷.

China's decision to establish its first overseas military base in Djibouti is a strategic move that underscores the country's growing global ambitions and its desire to safeguard its expanding economic and security interests abroad. Several factors contributed to the selection of Djibouti as the location for this pivotal military outpost.

Firstly, Djibouti's geostrategic location at the intersection of the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, near the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, a critical chokepoint for global maritime trade, makes it an ideal staging ground for China's expanding naval operations⁸. This strategic position enables China to monitor and protect its vital shipping lanes and commercial interests in the region, as well as maintain a presence in the politically volatile Horn of Africa. Secondly, Djibouti's political stability and pro-investment policies have made it an attractive partner for foreign powers seeking to establish a military presence in the region. The country has cultivated close ties with China, as evidenced by the signing of a military pact in 2014⁹, which paved the way for the establishment of China's first overseas base. Furthermore, Djibouti's willingness to host foreign military forces, including those of the United States, France, and Japan, has

¹ Xinhua. 2022. August 15. China's fixed-asset investment expands 5.7 pct in first seven months. <https://english.news.cn/20220815/43ec8cb0b1d4485281e5bc965652874c/c.html>.

² Ariana. 2021. *Defending Our Sovereignty: US Military Bases in Africa and the Future of African Unity*. July 5, 2021 5. <https://thetricontinental.org/dossier-42-militarisation-africa/>.

³ Makin-Isherwood, Laura. 2020. *How The British Military Are 'Opening Doors' In Africa*. March 10. <https://www.forces.net/news/how-british-military-opening-doors-africa>.

⁴ Vincent, Elise. 2022. *France forced into redefining military presence in Africa*. October 6. https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2022/10/06/france-forced-into-redefining-military-presence-in-africa_5999420_4.html

⁵ Alden, Elizabeth Sidiropoulos and Chris. 2019. *Russia in Africa — post-Soviet re-engagement*. Jan Smuts House: South African Institute of International Affairs. : <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep25995.5>

⁶ Pham, J. Peter. 2011. *India in Africa: Implications of an Emerging Power*. US Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep11446>.

⁷ Kubo, Nobuhiro. 2016. *Japan to expand Djibouti military base to counter Chinese influence*. October 13. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-japan-military-djibouti-idUSKCN12D0C4>.

⁸ Downs, Erica, Jeffery Becker, and Patrick DeGatengo. 2017. "China's Military Support Facility in Djibouti: The Economic and Security Dimensions of China's First Overseas Base." 84.

⁹ China, The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of. 2019. *China's National Defense in the New Era*. China



contributed to its appeal as a hub for regional security operations. China's decision to establish a base in Djibouti allows it to operate alongside other major powers, facilitating potential cooperation and intelligence sharing while also serving as a counterweight to Western influence in the region.

In contrast, Yemen's ongoing political instability, civil war, and the presence of extremist groups made it a less desirable option for China's first overseas military base. The security risks and potential for entanglement in the country's complex conflicts likely deterred China from pursuing Yemen as a location for its initial overseas military foothold.

It is worth noting that while Djibouti currently hosts China's sole overseas military base, Beijing's growing global aspirations and the need to protect its expanding economic and strategic interests may prompt the establishment of additional military outposts in other regions in the future¹⁰.

Achieving its goal of completing its stations on the Silk Road, both onshore and offshore, China is working on its initiative “One Road, One Belt 一带一路”¹¹. Its station in Djibouti complements its strategy to “extend” its “String of Pearls” sea belt, stretching from the South China Sea across the Indian Ocean to Africa, to protect its trade and navy through establishing various military and logistical bases¹².

The Chinese navy set up a military base at Djibouti's upgraded port; in return, Beijing pays about twenty million dollars annually to Djibouti on a ten-year lease in exchange for the use of this military base¹³. The base can accommodate four hundred troops, but it can harbor about 10,000 marines, as it dedicates Djibouti as a defensive stronghold protecting the Silk Road's Sea routes.

¹⁰ Blanchard, Ben. 2015. November 27. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-nato-idUSKBN0TG08H20151127>.

¹¹ Jie, Wallace and Yu. 2021. *What is China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)?* September 13. <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2021/09/what-chinas-belt-and-road-initiative-bri>.

¹² Marantidou, Virginia. 2014. “Revisiting China's ‘String of Pearls’ Strategy.” *Issues & Insights*, June. https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/182061/140624_issuesinsights_vol14no7.pdf.

¹³ Jeffrey, James. 2016. *China is building its first overseas military base in Djibouti*. May 3. <https://theworld.org/stories/2016-05-03/china-building-its-first-overseas-military-base-djibouti-right-next-key-us-one>.



The public announcement that the People's Liberation Army established this strategic facility in August 2017. China People's Liberation Army's in-Djibouti Support Base 中国人民解放军驻吉布提保障基地 consists of military barracks, paved areas, and eight runways dedicated to serving helicopters, drones, and jet fighters. The expansion of this base has continued through the ongoing construction of a maritime pier with an area of 450 meters. This pier can accommodate large warships. After these extensive developments, it is estimated that the base will be able to accommodate several thousand troops. Satellite footage of this base indicates the presence of many underground facilities in an area of about twenty-three thousand km²¹⁴. Since the opening of this base, there has been increasing tension between China and the United States. This is because of accusations that base personnel used lasers to blur American pilots' views while patrolling the Red Sea¹⁵.

The most crucial and imminent threat is the growing concern among American official circles regarding the possibility that the United States military base in Djibouti will be targeted in any future conflict due to China's control of the "Port of Doraleh"¹⁶. From a more regional perspective, NATO members alert that the establishment of the Chinese military base in Djibouti may be a precursor to the establishment of a network of other armed strongholds in the Indian Ocean as part of China's naval power projection¹⁷.

2. Chinese Geoeconomics and Geostrategic Motives in a Changing International Order

Geopolitics and geostrategics are two essential concepts in international relations and political geography. They offer distinct perspectives on how geographical factors influence states' behavior and strategies.

a. *Geopolitics*: It is the study of how geography and politics interact. It seeks to understand how geographical features, such as landforms, natural resources, climate, and

¹⁴ Nantulya, Paul. 2022. *Considerations for a Prospective New Chinese Naval Base in Africa*. May 12. <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/considerations-prospective-chinese-naval-base-africa/>.

¹⁵ Browne, Ryan. 2018. *Chinese lasers injure US military pilots in Africa, Pentagon says*. May 4. <https://edition.cnn.com/2018/05/03/politics/chinese-lasers-us-military-pilots-africa/index.html>.

¹⁶ Tritten, Travis J. 2018. *China may Assert Control of Djibouti Port, U.S. General Fears*. March 8. <https://tesfanews.net/china-control-key-us-military-port-djibouti-general-fears/>.

¹⁷ Castaldo, Fabio Massimo. 2022. *REPORT on a European Parliament recommendation to the Council, the Commission and the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on the EU's strategic relationship and partnership with the H. European Parliament, Committee on Foreign Affairs*. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-9-2022-0207_EN.html.



location, influence states' political behavior and decision-making. Geopolitics emphasizes that geography is not merely a passive backdrop but an active force shaping international relations¹⁸. In geopolitics, scholars analyze how territorial configurations, proximity to natural resources, and access to strategic waterways or chokepoints can impact a state's security, economic interests, and power projection capabilities. For example, control over vital sea lanes, like the Strait of Hormuz or the South China Sea, can give a nation significant leverage in global trade and influence.

Geopolitics examines how geographical factors contribute to alliances, power blocs, and regional dynamics. It also explores how states use geographical advantages to project power and pursue national interests on the international stage.

b. *Geostrategic*: Geostrategic refers to the strategic significance of specific geographical locations or regions in the context of broader political and military considerations¹⁹. It focuses on how states' and territories' geographical positioning can influence military planning, defense postures, and warfare conduct. Geostrategic thinking involves the assessment of critical chokepoints, natural barriers, and access to resources that impact a state's military capabilities and vulnerabilities. It also considers the potential threats and opportunities that arise from a country's location relative to its neighbors and potential adversaries.

For instance, a country with a favorable geostrategic position may enjoy a defensive advantage, secure borders, and control over key trade routes. A disadvantageous position may expose it to potential threats and security risks.

Accordingly, while geopolitics examines the broader relationship between geography and politics, geostrategic narrows the focus to the strategic implications of specific geographical locations. Both concepts play a crucial role in shaping states' and other actors' behavior in the global arena. They help policymakers and scholars understand international relations and strategic decision-making.

China's motives for establishing a military base in Djibouti are geoeconomic and geospatial:

¹⁸ Nicol, Heather, and Lassi Heininen. 2022. "The Evolving Geopolitics of Polar Regions." *Polar Cousins* 59-88.

¹⁹ Cohen, Benjamin. 2017. *Should China be Ejected from the SDR?* May 30. <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/china-exchange-rate-imf-sdr-by-benjamin-j--cohen-2017-05?barrier=accesspaylog>.



2.1.1. Geoeconomic Motives

Djibouti is an excellent opportunity for Chinese investment abroad and economic interests in the Middle East and North Africa region. This is because China's trade with the European Union passes through the Gulf of Aden. This is estimated to be worth more than one billion dollars a day. Chinese oil imports pass through the Indian Ocean for 40% of their total imports²⁰. A Chinese base in Djibouti would allow increased trade through the Arabian Sea and the Red Sea. The Chinese government views the military base in Djibouti as supporting China's economic interests in the Horn of Africa. This is a pivotal role in the Belt and Road Sea Route, referred to as the Maritime Silk Road. This route links China's coastal regions with Africa, Asia, and Europe. It passes through the Red Sea to the Mediterranean Sea through the Suez Canal.

2.1.2. Geostrategic Motives

The Chinese base has been described as a “logistical support base” and a “strategic strength”²¹ by Chinese experts and policymakers to indicate its role in supporting China's military capabilities in imposing long-range global polar. Being part of China's network of strategic strengths through the “pearl thread” strategy²², where each pearl in this strategy represents a port project on the coast of the Indian Ocean, and linking these ports, will create a series of military facilities as observation posts for the Chinese army.

This strategy aims to develop naval capabilities by establishing external garrisons and command posts. This will enable it to achieve its security objectives of challenging U.S. maritime dominance and eliminating U.S. international influence.

China's establishment of a military base in Djibouti serves several strategic purposes and aligns with its growing economic and political interests in Africa and South Asia:

²⁰ Indu Saxena, Robert Uri Dabaly, & Arushi Singh. 2021. *China's Military and Economic Prowess in Djibouti: A Security Challenge for the Indo-Pacific*. November 18. <https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/JIPA/Display/Article/2847015/chinas-military-and-economic-prowess-in-djibouti-a-security-challenge-for-the-i/>.

²¹ Wilhelm, Jan. 2021. *Djibouti's role in geopolitics*. August 4. <https://www.dw.com/en/tiny-but-mighty-djiboutis-role-in-geopolitics/a-57136069>.

²² Magnani, Enrico. 2022. *Rivals and partners in difficult waters*. August 1. <https://en.difesaonline.it/geopolitica/analisi/rivali-e-partners-acque-difficili>.



- The base aids the increasing numbers of Chinese nationals engaged in trade, residing, and working in these regions. As Chinese private and state-owned enterprises expand their operations in Africa and South Asia, enhanced security and support are needed for the growing Chinese community.
- The base serves as a crucial facility for Chinese national evacuation during various crises. This ensures the safety of Chinese citizens during times of emergency or conflict. It demonstrates China's commitment to safeguarding its nationals abroad and reinforces its image as a responsible global actor.
- The military base protects China's overseas assets, including critical infrastructure, investments, and trade routes. By establishing a secure foothold in Djibouti, China can ensure asset safety and maintain stability in the region. Furthermore, the base offers logistical support to the United Nations peacekeeping forces, in which China actively participates with more than 2,000 military personnel in Africa. This support reinforces China's commitment to peacekeeping efforts and its growing role as a contributor to international security.
- The military base provides a maritime facility to support anti-piracy operations in the region. With piracy being a significant concern in Africa's waters, China's presence in Djibouti enhances its capacity to protect its maritime interests. It also contributes to international piracy combat efforts.
- The military base supports China's broader diplomatic efforts in Africa. By maintaining a physical presence in Djibouti, China can strengthen its bilateral relations with African countries. It can also enhance its influence in regional politics and project itself as a significant player in African affairs.
- The proximity of the military base to Western military installations in Djibouti provides China with a strategic advantage. It allows China to gather intelligence on all air, land, and sea operations conducted by Western powers in the region. This intelligence-gathering capacity enhances China's situational awareness and ability to respond effectively to potential security challenges.

China's strategic decision to establish additional naval bases across Africa reflects a multifaceted approach to bolstering its diplomatic and geopolitical influence on the continent.



While Djibouti serves as China's flagship offshore naval base, the expansion into new locations underscores a broader ambition to solidify its presence and leverage in African affairs. The proliferation of naval bases allows China to diversify its strategic assets and mitigate the risks associated with relying solely on one location. While Djibouti provides a pivotal foothold in the Horn of Africa, establishing new bases in various parts of Africa enhances China's operational flexibility and resilience in the region. This decentralized approach ensures continuity of operations even in the face of geopolitical tensions or logistical challenges in specific areas.

Moreover, these new naval bases serve as vital hubs for China's maritime activities, including anti-piracy operations, humanitarian assistance, and disaster relief efforts. By expanding its naval presence, China demonstrates its commitment to contributing to regional stability and security, which can foster goodwill and strengthen diplomatic ties with African nations. This proactive engagement aligns with China's broader narrative of being a responsible global actor and a dependable partner in addressing familiar challenges.

Furthermore, the establishment of additional naval bases underscores China's growing economic interests in Africa, particularly in securing key maritime trade routes and protecting its investments along the continent's coastline. As China's economic footprint expands across Africa through initiatives such as the Belt and Road Initiative, safeguarding maritime security becomes imperative to ensure the uninterrupted flow of goods and resources vital to China's economic prosperity. Additionally, with these bases, China could influence regional politics and shape Africa's geopolitical landscape. By strategically positioning itself across different maritime zones, China can actively participate in regional forums, engage in bilateral and multilateral negotiations, and project its image as a formidable maritime power. This diplomatic leverage enhances China's ability to advance its interests, forge alliances, and counterbalance the influence of other global actors in Africa.

Accordingly, China's decision to open new naval bases in Africa reflects its nuanced approach to advancing its diplomatic, economic, and strategic interests on the continent. By diversifying its naval presence, China seeks to bolster regional stability, protect its maritime interests, and enhance its influence in African affairs, all while projecting itself as a responsible global actor committed to fostering cooperation and development.



Eventually, China's military base in Djibouti serves multiple strategic purposes. These purposes range from supporting its economic interests and protecting its nationals to gathering intelligence and contributing to international peacekeeping efforts. The base signifies China's growing global power. It also signifies its commitment to securing its interests and contributing to regional stability in Africa and South Asia.

3. Chinese Maritime Security Strategy: Vision for Maritime Cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative

China's maritime expansion has garnered significant attention from the international community. One crucial aspect of this expansion is the establishment of a military base in Djibouti. This is a small but geopolitically critical country situated in the Horn of Africa. This move has raised numerous questions and concerns about China's intentions and role in global maritime security.

As part of the maritime component of the BRI, the Chinese government's decision to establish a military base in Djibouti has raised eyebrows among global stakeholders. Djibouti's strategic location at the crossroads of Africa, the Middle East, and the Indian Ocean makes it a critical transportation hub. This has attracted various armed forces powers seeking to secure their interests in the region.

The significance of the Chinese military base in Djibouti and its potential implications for regional and global maritime security, based on these points:

- *China's Maritime Security Strategy*: Understanding the motivations and strategic objectives driving China's territorial expansion, including the need to protect vital sea lanes, ensure access to resources, and safeguard its interests in critical regions.
- *Djibouti's Geopolitical Importance*: Analyzing Djibouti's unique location and significance as a gateway to key sea routes, making it a hotspot for major world powers seeking a foothold in the region.
- *Regional and Global Implications*: Examining the potential consequences of China's military presence in Djibouti on regional stability, existing geopolitical dynamics, and its impact on global maritime security.
- *The Belt and Road Initiative's Maritime Component*: Unraveling the maritime dimension of the Belt and Road Initiative and how the establishment of the military base in



Djibouti fits into China's broader vision for strengthening marine cooperation and securing its economic interests.

The announcement of this landmark document came in the context of China's plans to manage Chinese cooperation with countries and regions along the route of the maritime component of the Belt and Road Initiative, but in fact, it reflects a Chinese orientation in the maritime field. The document contained an extensive list of ideas, divided into six primary areas.

3.1. Protection of the Marine Environment

The blueprint called for “taking green development together,” including:

- Building common marine ecosystem monitoring systems.
- Issue joint worldwide reports on the marine environment.
- Join building transboundary marine ecological corridors.
- Maintain the health and biodiversity of the marine ecosystem.
- Marine environmental services.
- Protecting island ecosystems and coastal wetlands, combating marine pollution, and treating marine litter.
- Protection and rehabilitation of marine environments.
- Strengthening the ratio in addressing climate change in the maritime field by providing Chinese support to small island countries along the Maritime Silk Road.

A subjective approach that links China's military presence in Djibouti to environmental concerns may potentially legitimize its military activities in the region. However, it is essential to recognize that environmental protection is a global issue that transcends political and military considerations. Therefore, while it may not be appropriate to link China's military presence to environmental concerns in Djibouti, it is pertinent for China, like any other nation, to demonstrate its commitment to environmental stewardship wherever it operates.

China's engagement in environmental protection efforts, as outlined in the blueprint you provided, reflects its recognition of the importance of safeguarding marine ecosystems and mitigating the impacts of climate change. Regardless of its military presence in Djibouti or elsewhere, China, as a responsible global actor, must contribute to environmental conservation efforts.



In the context of Djibouti specifically, China could leverage its presence to support local environmental initiatives, such as implementing measures to combat marine pollution, promoting sustainable fishing practices, or engaging in environmental education and awareness programs. By doing so, China can demonstrate its commitment to environmental protection while also addressing broader diplomatic and geopolitical objectives in the region. Ultimately, while it may not be appropriate to link China's military presence in Djibouti to environmental concerns, acknowledging and addressing environmental issues in the region can contribute to fostering goodwill and cooperation with local stakeholders, thereby enhancing China's overall reputation and influence in Africa.

International collaboration is aimed at meeting the challenges of global climate change and maritime disasters, the problems of sea level rise and shoreline erosion, marine ecosystem degradation, assessing the conditions of islands and coastal belts, and organizing an international forum on coastal wetlands.

China's "Maritime Silk Road Carbon Plan" goal is to monitor, calibrate, and propagate the blue carbon ecosystem in the seas and coastal areas²³. For that, joint reports on the subject, the convening of an international blue carbon forum, and the development of a mechanism to combat water pollution are necessary.

3.2. Cooperative Development Goals

These goals can be achieved by providing Chinese support to developed countries on the maritime route, depending on the industrial sector of port construction and management²⁴. The expanding undersea fiber optic cable projects raise the level of communication and interdependence between countries along the route²⁵.

Cooperative development goals are based on:

²³ Vidal, John. 2022. *Will China's plan for a 'green silk road' live up to environmental promises?* September 2022. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/sep/20/china-plan-green-silk-road-environmental-promises>.

²⁴ Blaubach, Thomas. 2022. *Connecting Beijing's Global Infrastructure: The PEACE Cable in the Middle East and North Africa*. March 7. <https://www.mei.edu/publications/connecting-beijings-global-infrastructure-peace-cable-middle-east-and-north-africa>.

²⁵ Zhang, Xin. 2021. "Investment value analysis of China's participation in port projects." *World Maritime University Digital Repository*. World Maritime University, August 27. https://commons.wmu.se/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2629&context=all_dissertations.



- Assisting developing countries on the road to developing marine resources investment plans
- Building shipping service networks between countries along the route by establishing international and regional shipping centers.
- Cooperation in the development and exploitation of marine resources along the Maritime Silk Road, starting with surveying these resources.
- Enhancement of maritime industry cooperation through the construction of marine industrial zones for economic and commercial cooperation.
- Enhancing connectivity by strengthening maritime transport cooperation.
- Establishing a directory and information database.
- Forming a seaport union.
- Promote tourism, set up exchange mechanisms, and exchange information.
- Provide local partners with technical assistance.
- Strengthening cooperation between ports on the route.

3.3. Maritime Security Alliance

The international collaboration on the concept of mutual benefit, according to the Chinese perspective in Africa²⁶, is based on:

- Assisting countries on the road to obtaining the technologies and equipment necessary for monitoring and controlling the seas.
- Building a seaport for monitoring and controlling the seas.
- Development in the field of maritime security and safety through the establishment of a mechanism for the management and control - bilateral and multilateral - of the security and safety of maritime navigation.
- Expanding the application of Chinese “satellite navigation” services (BeiDou) and enforcing other key regulations in this regard²⁷.
- Protect maritime navigation security and safety.

²⁶ Xinhua. 2021. *Forum on China-Africa Cooperation Dakar Action Plan*. November 30. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the People's Republic of China.

²⁷ Lague, David. 2013. *Special Report: In satellite tech race, China hitched a ride from Europe*. December 22. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-breakout-beidou-idINBRE9BL0CA20131222>.



- Strengthening international cooperation and developing port-related public services.
- The joint fight against sea crimes.

In addition, cooperation in the areas of information exchange and joint inspection and rescue work among countries along the route has been strengthened, including a mechanism for the exchange of visits between maritime inspection and rescue units, the sharing of information, the organization of qualification and training courses in this field, raising joint capacity to respond to emergencies, disaster management, and tourism security, and building an early warning system for forecasting marine disasters in the South China Sea, the Arabian Sea, and the Gulf of Aden.

The strategy affirms China's readiness to assume “appropriate” legal obligations in this field, as well as cooperation in the implementation of the law of the sea, at the bilateral and multilateral levels, in the areas of fishing, combating terrorism, and violent activities at sea. It also establishes a mechanism for cooperation in this area.

3.4. Promotion of Knowledge and Innovation in Marine Science Research

The Belt and Road Initiative is a Chinese program designed to improve international connectivity and promote economic development. The initiative involves the building of infrastructure and links to countries along the route. Along with this, China also promotes marine science knowledge and innovation. This could be done through the development of programs for maritime scientific collaboration, implementation of surveys, construction of infrastructure facilities, promotion of cooperation through joint research institutions, development of maritime educational and cultural exchanges, and strengthening media cooperation²⁸. Such measures could improve marine science knowledge and innovation.

This will be done through the following:

- a. Construction of marine research infrastructure and facilities.
- b. Developing programs for marine scientific collaboration among countries along the route.

²⁸ Xu, Y., & Zhang, J. 2019. “Belt and Road Initiative: A Strategic Choice for China’s Maritime Science and Technology Development.” *Frontiers of Engineering Management*, 172-184. doi:10.15302/J-FEM-2019134.



- c. Development of maritime educational and cultural exchanges through the development of scholarship programs with countries on the path of the initiative and the organization of annual cultural events such as navy and maritime art festivals; cooperation in the field of spreading culture about maritime affairs.
- d. Implementation of the survey.
- e. Promotion of cooperation through joint research institutions in marine science between China and some countries along the route.
- f. Strengthening media cooperation.

3.5. Maritime Governance

In this context, the document proposes the establishment of the “Round Table of Ministers of Maritime Affairs of China and Small Island States”²⁹, the “China- European Maritime Cooperation Forum”³⁰, the “Global Blue Economy Partnership Forum”³¹, and the “International Forum for Marine Spatial Planning”³² in addition to emphasizing the issuance of periodic reports on the “Blue Economy.” This critical concept is based on:

- a. Expanding its fields through the establishment of a high-level dialogue mechanism for maritime cooperation between countries along the maritime path.
- b. Joint development of cooperation plans and implementation of various projects and areas.
- c. Signing maritime cooperation documents between governments.

3.6. Strategies Aimed at Improving Maritime Transport Facilitation

Maritime transport facilitation is a vital goal for many countries, as it allows for the efficient and safe movement of goods and services across oceans and borders. To achieve this goal, countries must cooperate and build systems that enable smooth, secure, and efficient

²⁹ Xinhua. 2022. May 25. Fact Sheet: Cooperation Between China and Pacific Island Countries. http://mk.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/zgyw/202205/t20220524_10691917.htm.

³⁰ Affairs, Directorate-General for Maritime. 2019. EU and China join forces to improve international ocean governance. September 10. https://oceans-and-fisheries.ec.europa.eu/news/eu-and-china-join-forces-improve-international-ocean-governance-2019-09-10_en.

³¹ Xinhua 2017. June 20. Full text: Vision for Maritime Cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative. http://www.china.org.cn/world/2017-06/20/content_41063286_3.htm.

³² Borja A, Pouso S, Galparsoro I, Manca E, Vasquez M, Lu W, Yang L and Uriarte A. 2022. “Applying the China’s marine resource-environment carrying capacity and spatial development suitability approach to the Bay of Biscay (North-East Atlantic).” *Frontiers in Marine Science*, September 20. doi:10.3389/fmars.2022.972448.



maritime transport. China's approach outlines strategies to improve maritime transport facilitation, including expanding cooperation in the areas of international transport market calibration, recognizing the results of port surveillance mutually, mutual assistance in law enforcement, building systems for the transfer, processing, management, and application of information, building a system of information security standards, and setting up a public platform for communication, networking, and information sharing.

The Chinese strategy explores the next steps:

- Building systems for information transfer, processing, management, and application
- Create a set of information security guidelines.
- Expanding cooperation in international transport market calibration.
- Mutual law enforcement assistance.
- Recognizing port surveillance results on a mutual basis.
- Setting up a public platform for communication, networking, and information sharing.

This included the establishment of a station to monitor the oceans' state and study climate and environmental changes and their effects. This provides forecasting services for shipping lanes in this region.

In this context, this strategy affirmed the Chinese government's readiness to support countries bordering the Arctic Ocean to improve transport conditions on Arctic shipping lanes. It also encouraged Chinese enterprises to participate in the commercial use of these shipping lanes. This would contribute to sustainable resource investment in the Arctic region. Finally, China called for multilateral cooperation to conduct comprehensive scientific surveys of Arctic shipping lanes.

4. The Militarization of China-Africa Development Partnership Objectives

China's move to militarize its development partnership by building a naval base in Djibouti seems to be a qualitative leap in Beijing's international relations as a rising economic pole. Through this strategic leap, Beijing strengthens its global position in an international system open to all possibilities. Global and regional power balances are changing at various levels.



Chinese investments are global but concentrated in Africa. China is the largest foreign investor in Africa, and its investments have grown rapidly in recent years. Chinese investments are global but concentrated in Africa. China is the largest foreign investor in Africa, and its investments have grown rapidly in recent years. In 2021, Chinese companies invested a record \$282 billion in Africa³³.

China's substantial investments in Africa stem from multifaceted motivations, prominently driven by the continent's resource abundance, burgeoning market potential, and strategic partnership opportunities. Analyzing the trajectory of China-Africa economic trade and investment over the past two decades through a table or graph would vividly illustrate this evolving relationship.

Primarily, Africa's vast reservoir of natural resources serves as a pivotal attraction for China, necessitated by its quest to sustain economic growth. Graphically depicting the steady rise in Chinese investment in African resource sectors, such as mining and energy, underscores China's imperative to secure access to vital commodities to fuel its industries and meet domestic demands. Simultaneously, the graphical representation would delineate the exponential growth in bilateral trade between China and Africa, mirroring Africa's emergence as a substantial market for Chinese goods and services. This upward trajectory reflects China's strategic pivot towards leveraging Africa's expanding consumer base and its role as a driver of global economic growth.

Moreover, the graph or table would vividly capture China's concerted efforts to deepen its engagement with Africa beyond mere resource extraction or trade. Over the years, China's investment landscape in Africa has diversified, encompassing infrastructure development, manufacturing, agriculture, and telecommunications. This diversification reflects China's recognition of Africa's potential as a vibrant investment destination beyond its resource endowment. Furthermore, the graphical representation would underscore China's strategic intent to cultivate Africa as a key ally and partner on the global stage. Through sustained investment and economic cooperation, China aims to bolster its influence and presence in Africa, forging closer diplomatic ties and garnering support for its geopolitical objectives.

³³ Nyabiage, Jevans. 2023. *China-Africa trade hits record US\$282 billion with boost from Beijing and soaring commodity prices*. January 19. <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3207403/china-africa-trade-hits-record-us282-billion-boost-beijing-and-soaring-commodity-prices>.



In essence, a graphical depiction of China-Africa economic trade and investment patterns over the past two decades would not only underscore the economic dynamics at play but also illuminate the strategic imperatives driving China's deepening engagement with Africa. It would highlight China's evolving role as a major player in Africa's economic development trajectory and its broader aspirations for geopolitical influence on the continent.

Chinese investments in Africa have mixed effects. On the one hand, they have helped boost economic growth in some African countries. On the other hand, they have also led to concerns about debt, environmental impact, and labor rights. These investments in Africa are complex issues with both positive and negative aspects. It is imperative to carefully consider the benefits and risks of these investments before making judgments. Here are some specific examples of Chinese investments in Africa:

- *China-Africa Economic and Trade Cooperation Zones:* China has established over 25 economic and trade cooperation zones in Africa. These zones are designed to attract Chinese investment and promote trade between China and Africa.
- *The Belt and Road Initiative:* The Belt and Road Initiative is a massive infrastructure project led by China. The initiative includes plans to build roads, railways, ports, and other infrastructure projects in over 60 countries, including many in Africa.
- *The China-Africa Development Fund:* The China-Africa Development Fund is a \$10 billion fund established by China in 2006. The fund invests in infrastructure, agriculture, and other sectors in Africa.

Eventually, China wants to achieve several strategic objectives through its recently established base in Djibouti, including:

4.1. Consolidating Chinese Influence and Crowding out Major Powers

Beijing's choice of the African continent as the starting point for this strategic change in its foreign policy is significant as it grows as a significant international player³⁴. Continental wealth heavily influences international powers' strategies. Africa is considered the future

³⁴ Wu, Yenna. 2019. "Recognizing and Resisting China's Evolving Sharp Power." *American Journal of Chinese Studies*, October: 129-153. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/45216268>



continent, with its human and natural resources and promising investment and economic opportunities.

The tangible shift in Chinese foreign policy towards cooperation between the “military” and the “economic” shows its worth as an international pole, not just economically.

4.2. Safeguarding China's Economic Interests in Africa

The newly constructed base in Djibouti will enable China to preserve its economic interests on the African continent. China is Africa's largest trading partner compared with the major powers in the world, including the US, European Union, and Japan. This is due to the magnitude of trade exchange between the two sides, estimated at 254 billion dollars in 2021³⁵. Major global companies are vying for investment privileges in Africa's emerging markets in a frantic race. In addition to the United States, former colonial powers such as France, Britain, and even Italy are also considered leading players in this race.

China's presence in the region has allowed it to enter Djibouti through economic gates first, before establishing a military base. Since 2007, China's foreign direct investment has grown significantly, as it did not exist previously. For example, in 2022 China surpassed the United States' investments, as China invested an extra \$ 4.47 trillion³⁶. In contrast, American overseas assets increased from \$779.2 billion to \$35.21 trillion during the same period³⁷.

The most receiving Chinese investments and projects in the eastern and southeastern parts of the continent are:

a. China's Pledges at FOCAC Meetings:

- 2015: \$60 billion
- 2018: \$60 billion
- 2021: \$40 billion

b. Chinese Investments and Projects in Select African Countries:

- Zambia: 273 projects

³⁵ Sheehy, Thomas P. 2022. 10 Things to Know about the U.S.-China Rivalry in Africa. December 7. <https://www.usip.org/publications/2022/12/10-things-know-about-us-china-rivalry-africa>

³⁶ Xinhau. 2022. November 11. Remarks by Ambassador Zhang Jun, China's Permanent Representative to the UN, at the Security Council High-Level Debate on 'Counter Terrorism In Africa. https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjb_663304/zwjg_665342/zwbd_665378/202211/t20221112_10973113.html

³⁷ BEA. 2022. U.S. International Investment Position. March 29. <https://www.bea.gov/news/2022/us-international-investment-position-fourth-quarter-and-year-2021>



- Ethiopia: 255 projects
 - Zimbabwe: 167 projects
 - Tanzania: 149 projects
 - Sudan: 148 projects
 - Kenya: 137 projects
- c. *Chinese Loans to Africa:*
- Total loan commitments (2000-2020): 1,188 worth \$160 billion
 - Top loan recipient countries:
 - Angola
 - Zambia
 - Ethiopia
 - Kenya
 - Nigeria
 - Cameroon
 - Most recently, the largest recipients included Ghana, South Africa, and Cote d'Ivoire.
- d. *COVID-19 Vaccines for Africa:*
- China has committed to providing 1.2 billion doses of COVID-19 vaccines to Africa.
- e. *Chinese presence in Djibouti:*
- There were an estimated 400 Chinese soldiers stationed at the base.
- f. *Zambia's Debt and Chinese Investments:*
- Zambia's external debt: roughly \$6 billion
 - Percentage of Zambia's external debt held by China: 65.8%
 - Two-thirds of China's heavily subsidized fishing vessels in West Africa operate illegally.
- g. *Huawei's Presence in Africa:*
- Huawei has constructed up to 70% of Africa's information technology infrastructure.
 - Huawei and ZTE have built more than 40 telecom networks in over 30 African countries.
- h. *China's Security Assistance and Arms Transfers:*



- China offered \$100 million in new military aid to the African Union over the next 5 years (as of 2017).
- Between 2017 and 2020, China transferred almost three times as many arms to sub-Saharan Africa as the United States did, according to CSIS analysis of data compiled by SIPRI.
- Nearly all Chinese peacekeepers are deployed in Africa, most notably in Mali and South Sudan³⁸.

Beginning in 2014, Beijing approved funding for large projects, including rail, water, and natural gas links to Ethiopia³⁹. Eventually, the two sides agreed to work together to build industrial parks and ports in neighboring Djibouti⁴⁰.

4.3. Securing China's Oil Resources

Another determinant of Beijing's quest to militarize its strategic orientation towards Africa is China's thirst for safe and continuous oil resources. This thirst is based on the urgent need for Chinese industries for oil. Beijing's oil imports from the African continent are estimated at 25% to 30% of its total oil imports from abroad, especially from the Middle East⁴¹. The Bab al-Mandab Strait is a corridor for 20% of global trade, with China having the largest share. More than half of oil imports to China come from Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and South Sudan; this makes the corridor doubly critical strategically for Beijing⁴².

China's need to turn towards the African shore of the strait has been exacerbated by Yemen's turmoil after the Arab Spring in 2011. China has expressed a desire to invest in expanding the port of Aden in southern Yemen by more than half a billion dollars. This is to ensure a foothold in one of its most sensitive trade terminals. However, it has not yet been able to do so because of Yemen's turmoil. Beijing was not the first in its orientation towards establishing a military base in Djibouti under the pretext of protecting the strategic strait and

³⁸ GOP. 2022. "China Regional Snapshot: Sub-Saharan Africa." Committee on Foreign Affairs. November 21. <https://foreignaffairs.house.gov/china-regional-snapshot-sub-saharan-africa/>.

³⁹ Bradley, Sandrine. 2014. *Ethiopian government signs \$865 mln railway financing*. October 27. <https://www.reuters.com/article/ethiopia-loans-idUKL5N0SM4SM20141027>

⁴⁰ Liben, Habtamu. 2018. *Chinese development endeavor in Ethiopia wins acclaim*. June 14. http://za.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/zfgxss/zyjw/201805/t20180518_7688541.htm

⁴¹ Editorial, AOW. 2019. *Understanding Chinese investment in African oil & gas*. September. <https://africa-oilweek.com/articles/understanding-chinese-investment-in-african-o>

⁴² Khanna, Parag. 2024. "The Red Sea Crisis Proves China Was Ahead of the Curve." *Foreign Policy*. January 20. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2024/01/20/url-red-sea-houthis-china-belt-road-suez-trade-corridors/>.



trade routes, as it was preceded by France, Italy, the United States, and Japan, in addition to the presence of forces from other Western countries that came to protect their countries' ships from the acts of piracy that the Gulf of Aden has witnessed since 2005.

4.4. Facilitating the Tasks of the Chinese Peacekeeping Forces

The People's Liberation Army of China (PLA) 中国人民解放军 plays an instrumental role in the United Nations peacekeeping efforts in Africa. 40000 Chinese soldiers participate in peacekeeping forces in Africa, most deployed in conflict-affected oil-producing regions⁴³. Therefore, building a Chinese command base in Djibouti would facilitate Chinese peacekeepers' tasks in Africa. This would provide them with a base to operate from and better manage their operations. The base would also provide logistical support, allowing them to respond quickly to crises. In addition, it would allow better communication and coordination between Chinese troops and other peacekeepers in the region. This would result in a more efficient and effective peacekeeping mission.

There is a remarkable increase in threats to Chinese interests in the African Horn due to the spread of fundamentalist movements and violent militias, such as Al-Shabaab Mujahideen, Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat, and Boko Haram⁴⁴. This has led China to insufficiently rely on the “symbolic” participation of its armed forces in United Nations peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions in some African countries. This prompted it to build a garrison in Djibouti to serve as a springboard for Chinese armed forces. This was to safeguard Beijing's vital interests.

Since 2015, Chinese naval forces have conducted several combat missions off Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden. These missions were part of international efforts to combat piracy⁴⁵. However, they have faced severe logistical difficulties regarding docking and supply stations. This motivated Beijing to build its first overseas base in Djibouti to avoid these difficulties.

Chinese want to establish a “maritime silk road,” linking the Indian Ocean, the Mediterranean, and the Red Sea through the Bab al-Mandab gate and the Suez Canal, and the

⁴³ Xinhua. 2022. August 15. China's fixed-asset investment expands 5.7 pct in first seven months. <https://english.news.cn/20220815/43ec8cb0b1d4485281e5bc965652874c/c.html>

⁴⁴ Xinhua. 2022. July 28. Ambassador Zhou Pingjian: China to continue backing peace efforts in Africa. https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjb_663304/zwjg_665342/zwbd_665378/202207/t20220728_10729497.html

⁴⁵ Blanchard, Ben. 2015. November 27. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-nato-idUSKBN0TG08H20151127>



countries surrounding those vital waterways, to secure China's global trade and oil supply lines from Africa and the Middle East⁴⁶.

President Xi Jinping announced two reforming foreign trade strategies in 2013: the Silk Road Economic Belt in September 2013 and the Maritime Silk Road Strategy in October⁴⁷. This makes the Chinese fortress in Djibouti a strategic goal for Chinese national security in the heart of the world. It may result in further bases being set up in the future as China gains ground on its competitors in the evolving world order.

Through the Belt and Road Initiative, China aims to aggressively export to specific countries in Central Asia and Europe. It also targets countries in South and Southeast Asia, the Middle East, as well as Kenya and Madagascar on Africa's east coast. Here it should be noted that the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is a comprehensive development strategy led by China that includes both the “Silk Road Economic Belt” and the “21st Century Maritime Silk Road.” These two components together make up the BRI:

- *The Silk Road Economic Belt*: This component aims to connect China with Central Asia, Europe, and beyond through a network of roads, railways, and other infrastructure projects. It aims to facilitate trade and investment between China and countries along the ancient Silk Road land routes.
- *The 21st Century Maritime Silk Road*: This component focuses on enhancing maritime trade and connectivity between China and countries in South and Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and East Africa. It seeks to improve port infrastructure and promote maritime trade routes⁴⁸.

⁴⁶ Shahmohammadi, Julia Gurol and Parisa. 2019. *Projecting Power Westwards. China's Maritime Strategy in the Arabian Sea and its Potential Ramifications for the Region*. November 11. <https://carpo-bonn.org/en/study-07-projecting-power-westwards-chinas-maritime-strategy-in-the-arabian-sea-and-its-potential-ramifications-for-the-region/>

⁴⁷ Xinhua. 2017. “Full text of the Vision for Maritime Cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative.” The State Council of the People's Republic of China. June 20. http://english.www.gov.cn/archive/publications/2017/06/20/content_281475691873460.htm

⁴⁸ Mboya, Cliff. 2021. *G7's Global Infrastructure Initiative Will Have to Contend With China's Massive Lead in Africa*. August 19. <https://chinaglobalsouth.com/2021/08/19/g7s-global-infrastructure-initiative-will-have-to-contend-with-chinas-massive-lead-in-africa/>



Both components of the BRI have ambitious goals of increasing economic cooperation, investment, and trade between China and the participating countries. BRI's scope is global, extending to various regions beyond Africa. Through these two strategies, Beijing aims to secure large markets for its products. It also creates economic alliances that contribute to China's stability and growth. Through these alliances, Beijing can secure its natural resource needs, which are abundant in Central Asia, the Middle East, and Africa.

China's economic strategy is accompanied by a political and military strategy, albeit one that warns against the risks of collapse of the economic strategy by establishing more military strongholds in the coming years, especially in countries along the sea route where China has invested in ports. Choosing Djibouti first due to its position on the map of ports in which China has invested, which seems central. This is because Türkiye has ports stretching north through Greece, Israel, Egypt, and Eritrea to Kenya, Tanzania, and Mozambique in southern Africa. In addition, there are other ports in Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Myanmar.

In the next decade, China seeks to establish a fulcrum in the ports of Salalah in Oman and Karachi in Pakistan, which overlook the Arabian Sea, so that it will have a base near the strategic Strait of Hormuz after securing a base adjacent to Bab al-Mandab in Djibouti. Oceans and seas have become a major arena for international conflict. It involves the main rising power within the system, China, as well as the dominant power in the world order, represented by the United States.

In the evolving international system, especially in the maritime domain, the basic strategic assumptions revolve around the changing dynamics and strategic interests of major powers, mainly Beijing and Washington. As a result, China seeks to establish strategic footholds in Salalah, Oman, and Karachi, Pakistan. Both ports overlook the Arabian Sea. These locations are strategically significant as they provide China with a presence near the Strait of Hormuz, a critical chokepoint for global oil transportation. This is after securing a base adjacent to Bab al-Mandab in Djibouti, which is a crucial maritime gateway linking the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden.

The emerging competition and interests of major powers, such as China and the United States, in securing positions and influence in key maritime regions are seen as a significant shift in international order. This change has led to the development of the concept of the “Indo-



Pacific” as a geopolitical framework that expands the focus beyond just the Asia-Pacific region to encompass the Indian Ocean as well⁴⁹. The Indo-Pacific concept reflects the growing interconnectedness of the Indian and Pacific Oceans and acknowledges the increasing importance of maritime security and trade routes in major powers' strategic calculations. It recognizes that the oceans and seas have become crucial arenas for international conflict and competition. This involves both rising powers (China) seeking to expand their influence and dominant powers (the United States) seeking to maintain their position within the global order.

This change in basic assumptions was reflected in the emergence of the concept of “Indo-Pacific” as a key arena for international interactions taking place at the top of the global system and the subsequent emergence of new alliances⁵⁰. In 2017, the United States, India, Japan, and Australia participated in the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD)⁵¹, and the United States, Australia, and the United Kingdom participated in AUKUS⁵².

Many factors explain the return of the seas and oceans as an arena for international interactions. Wealth can be discovered at an increasing rate and with greater opportunities than ever before. In addition, they include the escalating relative importance of water estuaries as connecting channels between regions of the world. However, the most influential factor is related to the growing relative importance of naval military capabilities as a key element in building armies and naval powers. This led to the increasing relative importance of oceans and seas as conflict arenas. This factor explains why the U.S.-China conflict is concentrated in the Indo-Pacific region and the emergence of the concept of “Indo-Pacific.”

China's relentless quest to build an alternative or parallel “maritime governance” to existing maritime governance must be understood. Maritime governance refers to the set of rules, institutions, and systems governing international interactions in the maritime domain.

⁴⁹ Kliem, Fredrick. 2022. *How the EU Can Still Succeed in the Indo-Pacific Despite the War in Ukraine*. May 28. <https://thediplomat.com/2022/05/how-the-eu-can-still-succeed-in-the-indo-pacific-despite-the-war-in-ukraine/>

⁵⁰ KOGA, KEI. 2019. “Japan’s “Free and Open Indo-Pacific” Strategy.” *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, August: 286-313. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26798855>

⁵¹ Chanlett-Avery, Emma. 2018. *Japan, the Indo-Pacific, and the “Quad”*. Chicago Council on Global Affairs. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep17325>

⁵² Coşkun, Alper. 2021. *QUAD, AUKUS and the American Pivot to Asia: Implications for Turkey and a case for recalibration*. Centre for Economics and Foreign Policy Studies. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep35887>



5. Concluding Remarks

China's primary goal in establishing internationally recognized military bases is to bolster its strategic presence and project power globally. The move is driven by the desire to compete with the United States, starting with one overseas naval base, which already maintains a vast network of military bases across several continents. By establishing its bases, China aims to challenge the US's armed dominance and assert itself as a major player in international affairs. China's military base expansion aligns with its ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), a massive infrastructure and trade project aimed at enhancing connectivity and influence across Asia, Africa, and Europe. The bases serve as strategic nodes along critical trade routes, securing China's trade lines from future sanctions. The BRI's extensive investment in ports in candidate countries further underscores the link between economic interests and armed expansion. Establishing naval and military bases in strategically significant countries provides China with significant intelligence advantages. By being present at these locations, China can gather crucial information about regional dynamics, potential threats, and other nations' movements. Such intelligence can inform China's decision-making processes and allow it to respond effectively to emerging challenges. The choice of candidate countries for military base construction reflects China's focus on securing its trade and resource interests. Countries like Sri Lanka, Equatorial Guinea, and Pakistan are strategically located along vital trade corridors and rich in natural resources. By investing heavily in infrastructure and trade exchanges, Beijing aims to ensure smooth access to resources and enhance its economic ties in these regions. China's approach to military bases differs significantly from traditional Western powers.

The People's Liberation Army does not seek formal military alliances with host countries, unlike the US and its NATO partners. Instead, China pursues a more discreet strategy, preferring to exploit its privileged coastal locations to maintain influence and safeguard its interests. Africa plays a pivotal role in China's global military base expansion. The continent is vital for Beijing's trade interests, particularly concerning crucial minerals and resources needed for electronic chip manufacturing. This is a sector where China competes strongly with the US. Additionally, Africa's strategic position and key trade corridors make it an essential battleground in China's bid to challenge US military dominance.

The establishment of a Chinese military base in Djibouti holds significant geopolitical and strategic implications for both China and the broader international community. Djibouti, a



small African country located at the entrance to the Red Sea and the gateway to the Suez Canal, is strategically positioned at the crossroads of Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. This location makes it a highly sought-after area for major powers seeking to expand their presence and influence in key maritime regions.

- *Competition and Security Concerns:* While the PLA's military base in Djibouti may be geared towards economic and strategic interests, it has raised concerns among regional and global players. The presence of multiple foreign military bases in Djibouti could increase competition and security risks. This is especially true when tensions arise between powers. Additionally, Djibouti's proximity to conflict-prone regions like Somalia and Yemen adds complexity to security dynamics.

- *Countering the US Presence:* Djibouti is already home to several foreign government bases, including the United States, France, and Japan. By establishing its base in Djibouti, China aims to challenge the United States' traditional dominance in the region. The US has maintained a significant military presence in Djibouti. This serves as a hub for counterterrorism efforts in the Horn of Africa and the Arabian Peninsula. China's presence in Djibouti provides it with a platform to monitor US military activities and potentially counterbalance American influence in the region.

- *Economic Interests:* Djibouti's strategic location also aligns with China's economic interests in the region. As Beijing's largest trading partner in Africa, Djibouti plays a significant role in facilitating trade between China and the African continent. China's increasing investments in Djibouti's infrastructure, such as ports and railways, are part of its efforts to strengthen bilateral ties and expand its political influence.

- *Enhancing Regional Diplomacy:* Beyond military considerations, this base in Djibouti allows diplomatic engagement with African and Middle Eastern countries. Beijing has been actively pursuing its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), a massive infrastructure and economic development project spanning multiple continents. Djibouti's strategic location aligns with the BRI's objectives of enhancing connectivity and trade linkages across regions. The military base provides China with an opportunity to strengthen its economic ties with African and Middle Eastern nations. It also positions itself as a key partner in their development aspirations.

- *Facilitating Naval Operations:* The Chinese base in Djibouti provides logistical and operational support for the Chinese People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN). It serves as a



refueling station and repair facility, enabling the PLAN to sustain long-range deployments and conduct operations in distant waters. This ability is essential for China's blue-water navy ambitions, allowing it to protect its expanding overseas interests and support non-combatant evacuations during regional crises.

- *Geopolitical Significance:* Djibouti's proximity to the Bab al-Mandab Strait, one of the most critical maritime chokepoints globally, gives it immense geopolitical importance. The Strait connects the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean. This makes it a crucial transit point for international trade and energy shipments, particularly for oil-exporting countries in the Middle East. Control over this strategic passageway provides a country with substantial influence over global trade routes and the ability to exert leverage on international commerce.

- *Projection of Power:* For the People's Liberation Army, the military base in Djibouti marks a significant milestone in its efforts to project power beyond its immediate borders. Historically, China has been a continental power, but with its growing global economic interests and maritime ambitions, it now seeks to establish a stronger naval presence to safeguard its trade routes and secure its interests in distant regions. Djibouti's location allows the PLA to extend its reach into the Indian Ocean and protect its sea lines of communication. This is especially true along critical routes like the Red Sea-Gulf of Aden corridor.

Accordingly, the establishment of a Chinese military base in Djibouti marks a significant step in China's efforts to expand its global influence. It also protects its maritime interests. Djibouti's strategic location at the crossroads of major trade routes and its existing network of foreign military bases make it a critical battleground in the geopolitical power struggle between China and the United States. While the base provides China with a platform to project power and protect its economic interests, it also raises concerns about potential competition and security risks in the region. The strategic importance of Djibouti as a key maritime outpost underscores its role as a vital element in China's broader vision for its future presence and influence on the global stage. As China's global influence grows, Washington will seek ways to counter Beijing's ambitions and prevent its unchecked expansion. However, the strong political and economic ties that candidate countries have forged with China through substantial investments in their infrastructure and trade exchanges could complicate the US's efforts to thwart China's military base strategy.



Finally, China's drive to establish naval and military bases across multiple continents over the next five years is a manifestation of its determination to compete with the United States on a global scale. With a focus on strategic locations, securing trade routes, and gathering intelligence, Beijing aims to project its power and safeguard its economic and resource interests. The intensifying competition between China and the US raises concerns about potential destabilization in regions hosting these bases. However, both sides seem keen on avoiding direct armed conflict. Instead, the battle for dominance is played out through strategic military maneuvers and economic investments. Africa is emerging as a critical battleground in this geopolitical power struggle.

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Ontolojik Güven(siz)liğin Türkiye’de Seçmen Davranışı Üzerindeki Etkileri: 14 Mayıs 2023 Seçimleri Örneği*

Canan KATILMIŞ**

Özet

Bu çalışmanın amacı; Türkiye’de seçmen davranışlarının şekillenmesinde ve Türk siyasetini anlamada ontolojik güven(siz)liğin önemli bir faktör olduğunu ortaya koymaktır. Çalışmada, ontolojik güven(siz)liğin Türkiye’de siyasi davranışların şekillenmesinde iyi ya da kötü bir güç olabileceği savunulmaktadır. İkincil verilere dayanan araştırma, ontolojik güven(siz)lik ile ilgili ulusal ve uluslararası alanyazınındaki tanımlamalar üzerinden kuramsal bir çerçeve üzerine oturtulacaktır. Türkiye’de siyasi seçmen davranışının şekillenmesinde ontolojik güven(siz)liğin etkili bir faktör olduğu temel argümanı ise; Türk siyasal hayatında ulus devletin oluşumu sürecinden itibaren süregelen beka endişesi, askeri darbeler ve sonrasında oluşan toplumsal travmalar, sorunlar ve açmazlar ile uyumlu gelişen ontolojik kaygıların, Türkiye’de seçmenin davranışlarını mevcut iktidarın korunması noktasında nasıl yönlendirdiği üzerinden analiz edilecektir. Bu ontolojik kaygılar ile uyumlu olarak; 14 Mayıs 2023 seçimlerinde iktidar kanadının yürüttüğü “pragmatik” siyasetin, muhalefet kanadının yürüttüğü ve seçmeni mobilize edemeyen “akim” siyasete galip gelerek, toplumda güçlü bir lider tarafından sağlanan ulusal istikrar arayışını nasıl arttırdığı sorusuna cevap aranmaktadır. Çalışmada nitel araştırma yöntemleri kullanılmaktadır. Çalışma, mantıksal muhakeme içerisinde ise, tümevarım araştırma yaklaşımını benimsemektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Türkiye, Kimlik, Güvenlik, Ontolojik Güven(siz)lik, Seçmen Davranışı.

The Effect of Ontological Security (In)Stability on Voter Behavior In Türkiye: The Example of May 14, 2023 Elections

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to demonstrate the significant role of ontological security (in)stability in shaping voter behavior in Türkiye and understanding Turkish politics. In this context, the study argues that ontological security (in)stability can be both a positive and negative force in shaping political behavior in Türkiye. The theoretical section of the research, based on secondary data, will be built upon a theoretical framework derived from the definitions in the national and international literature concerning ontological security. The fundamental argument that ontological security (in)stability is an influential factor in shaping the political behavior of Turkish voters will be analyzed through the lens of how the ongoing concerns of national survival since the formation of the nation-state, coupled with the ontological anxieties that have evolved in harmony with social traumas, problems, and dilemmas following the military coups, have directed the behavior of Turkish voters towards the preservation of the current regime. In line with these ontological anxieties, the study seeks to answer how the “pragmatic” politics pursued by the ruling party during the elections on May 14, 2023, triumphed over the “passive” politics pursued by the opposition, and how it increased the pursuit of national stability provided by a strong leader in the society. Qualitative research methods are employed in the study, while an inductive research approach is adopted with logical reasoning.

* Bu makale, II. Uluslararası Güvenlik Çalışmaları Kongresi’nde sunulan “Ontolojik Güven(siz)liğin Türkiye’de Seçmen Davranışı Üzerindeki Etkileri: 14 Mayıs 2023 Seçimleri Örneği” başlıklı bildiri özetinden yola çıkarak kaleme alınmıştır.

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1. Giriş

Ontolojik güvenlik kavramı son dönemde önemli oranda dikkat çeken ve hızla büyüyen araştırma kavramlarından biridir. Büyük ölçüde varoluşçu felsefe, psikanaliz ve eleştirel güvenlik çalışmaları ile güvenlikleştirme teorisi ve kimlik çalışmalarının kesişiminde faaliyet gösteren, birçok farklı disiplinden elde edilen içgörürleri birleştiren bu yenilikçi kavram, disiplinlerin temel ilgi alanlarına yeni bakış açıları sağlayarak önemli katkılarda bulunmaktadır. Ontolojik güvenlik kavramı, ilk kez İskoç psikiyatrist Laing tarafından *The Divided Self: An Existential Study in Sanity and Madness* adlı kitabında kullanılmıştır. İngiliz Sosyolog Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society* adlı kitabında kavramı detaylandırarak, “sosyal aktörlerin kendi devamlılığını sürdürebilmek için bir öz kimliğe (anlatıya) ihtiyaç duyduğu” temel düşüncesi üzerinden kavramı geliştirmiştir. Bu öz kimlik, bireylerin “kim olduğu, nereden geldiği ve gelecekte nerede olacağına” dair istikrarlı ve devamlı olmasını istedikleri bir güvende olma hali üzerine bina edilmektedir. Bu alternatif bakış açısı bireyin güvenliğini sadece “hayatta kalma” olarak değil, “yaşamı belirleyen tehditlerden bir miktar özgürlük ve seçim yapma alanı” şeklinde tanımlayarak farklı disiplinlere ve güvenlik araştırmalarına önemli katkılar sunmaktadır.

Siyaset Bilimi ve Uluslararası İlişkiler disiplininde de önemli bir yer edinen ontolojik güvenlik kavramı; son dönemlerde eleştirel güvenlik ve barış çalışmaları, duyguların politik davranışlar üzerindeki etkisi, kaygı ve kollektif hafıza gibi çalışma konularında yoğunlaşmaktadır. Ontolojik güven(siz)liği ve yeniden inşasını duygular, kaygı çalışmaları ve kollektif hafıza üzerinden inceleyen politik psikoloji çalışmaları ise; siyaset biliminde uzun zamandır göz ardı edilen fiziksel güvenliğin dışındaki güvenliğe tehdit olarak algılanan unsurların ortaya çıkardığı korku ve mağduriyetin, değişen ve dönüşen kimlikler üzerinden nasıl okunması gerektiğini analiz etmeye çalışmaktadır.

Devletlerin veya aktörlerin ontolojik güven(siz)liği siyasetin şekillenmesinde bir araç olarak kullanabilmesi, ontolojik güven(siz)liğin tanımlı dış tehditlerin ürettiği korkular yerine iç kaynaklı varlığa ve devamlılığa dayanan ve kaygıları merkeze alan bir güvenlik kavramı olmasından ötürüdür. Çalışmada ontolojik güven(siz)liğin kavramsal ve kuramsal çerçeve olarak tercih edilmesinin nedeni ise ontolojik güvenliğin kavramsal kökenlerinin devlet, toplum ve birey davranışları arasındaki etkileşime dair bir köprü kurabilmesi ve bu köprüyü ulusların kültürel ve siyasal söylemlerinin içerisine yerleştirebilen esnek bir analiz düzeyi sağlamasıdır.



Tarihsel süreçte şekillenen ve gerek ulusal gerek uluslararası alanda karşılık bulan söylemler; devletlerin öz imajlarının oluşmasından, öz anlatıları ve davranışsal kodları, savaş/çatışma ve barış kararlarının şekillenmesine varıncaya kadar birçok farklı siyasi kararı çözümlmek için yaygın olarak kullanılmaktadır. Söylemler, devletlerin ve toplumların tecrübe ettiği birtakım hassas siyasal süreçler üzerine inşa edilmektedir. Bu nedenle, devletlerin ve toplumların politik yaklaşımları, ontolojik güvenlik çalışmalarının desteklediği daha uzun bir zaman dilimi perspektifinden ele alındığında, devletlerin neden öz imajlarına bağlı kaldığı ya da imajlarını dönüştürdüğü, belirli söylemlerin ve politikaların zaman içerisinde nasıl yankı uyandırdığı ve seçmen davranışlarını nasıl şekillendirdiği gibi sorulara cevap verilebilecektir.

Bu bağlamda çalışmanın amacı; Türkiye’de seçmen davranışlarının şekillenmesinde ve Türk siyasetini anlamada ontolojik güven(siz)liğin etkili bir faktör olduğunu ortaya koymaktır. Bu amaçla sürdürülen çalışmada öncelikle ontolojik güven(siz)liğe dair kavramsal bir çerçeve çizilmeye çalışılmakta, ontolojik güven(siz)liğin ana argümanlarının ve duygularının tanıtılması hedeflenmektedir. Sonrasında ontolojik güven(siz)lik ve siyaset arasındaki ilişki irdelenerek, Türkiye’de seçmenin tutum ve davranışlarının şekillenmesinde ontolojik güven(siz)liğin odaklandığı sosyo-psikolojik kaynaklara değinilmektedir. Bu sosyo-psikolojik kaynaklar, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nun son döneminden günümüze kadarki süreçte gerçekleşen önemli gelişmeler üzerinden Türkiye'nin siyasi tarihine dair yapılacak analizler ile ortaya konulmaya çalışılmaktadır. Bu analizler ile amaç; Türkiye'nin yüz yıllık siyasi tarihini ele almak değil; Türkiye’de seçmenin tutum ve davranışlarının şekillenmesinde ontolojik güven(siz)liğin odaklandığı sosyo-psikolojik kaynakları tespit ederek, daha kapsamlı ve sistematik çalışmalar için ana hatlar çizmek ve bir fikir sunmaktır. Bu bağlamda çalışma; 14 Mayıs 2023 seçimlerinde seçmen davranışlarına, toplumun ontolojik kaygılarını doğru analiz ederek ve bu kaygıları teskin edecek söylemlerde ve eylemlerde bulunarak, halkta “güven, güvenlik ve istikrar” duygularını beslemeyi başaran iktidarın mı yoksa muhalefetin mi yön verdiği sorusuna cevap aramaktadır. Ayrıca çalışma, 14 Mayıs seçimleri özelinde ele alınmakta; ancak ontolojik güven(siz)liğin Türkiye’de önceki ve sonraki seçimler için seçim sonuçlarına etki edebilecek bir faktör olabileceğine dair bir fikir ortaya koymaktadır. Çalışmada nitel araştırma yöntemleri kullanılmakta olup mantıksal muhakeme içerisinde ise, tümevarım araştırma yaklaşımı benimsenmektedir.



2. Ontolojik Güven(Siz)lik

Ontolojik güvenlik kavramı, ilk olarak psikiyatrist Laing¹ tarafından “sosyal aktörlerin yaşamları süresince kendi öz kimliklerini sürdürebilmeleri için tatmin etmeye çalıştıkları dürtü” şeklinde ifade edilmiştir. Kavramı geliştirirken varoluşsal bir yaklaşımı benimseyen Laing, psikolojik sorunları olan bireylerin anlaşılmasına ve araştırılmasına yardımcı olmak amacıyla bu kavramı ortaya koymuştur. Kierkegaard’dan etkilenen Laing, bireylerin kişisel deneyimlerini başlangıç noktası olarak alan bir tür psikolojiyi savunmakta, böylece ontolojik güvenlikten yoksun bir bireyin deneyimleyebileceği türden kaygıları dile getirmek için sık sık Kierkegaard’ın “dehşet” kavramından² yararlanmaktadır.

Sosyolog Giddens³ ise, ontolojik güvenlik kavramını modernitenin etkilerine ilişkin olarak ve güvenlik ile ilişkilendirerek geliştirmiş ve daha popüler hale getirmiştir. Giddens, Laing gibi Kierkegaard’ın varoluşsal korku olarak ifade ettiği “kaygı” tanımlamasından büyük ölçüde ilham alırken; tanımını özellikle Freud’un “kaygının temel olarak bilinçdışı operasyonlara bağlı olduğu” yönündeki düşüncesiyle birleştirmesi açısından Laing’den farklılaşmaktadır. Giddens’a göre ontolojik güvenlik; “kişinin dünyadaki mevcut ve gelecekteki tehdit ve tehlikelere karşı temel güvenlik duygusuna atıfta bulunmakla birlikte, diğer bireyler ve toplumla olan güven ilişkisini de içermektedir.”

Mitzen⁴ ise, ontolojik güvenliği “benliğin güvenliği” şeklinde kavramsallaştırmaktadır. Mitzen’e göre ontolojik güvenlik; kişinin kim olduğuna dair eylemlerini ve seçimlerini motive eden öznel duygulardır. Steele⁵ de Mitzen ile benzer şekilde ontolojik güvenliği “varlığın güvenliği” olarak ifade etmektedir. Steel’in ifade ettiği varlık, aktörlerin “öz imajları” ve “öz anlatıları”dır. Aktörler, öz imajlarını iç dinamiklerine bağlı olarak formüle etmekte ve daha sonrasında bu öz imajlar diğer aktörler ile olan ilişkisini belirlemektedir. Aktörler için ontolojik güvenliğin varlığı; kimliklerine dair güven duymalarına, istikrarlı, bilişsel ve duygusal

¹ Ronald David Laing, *The Divided Self. An Existential Study in Sanity and Madness*, (London: Penguin Books,1960).

² Soren Aabye Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Anxiety: A Simple Psychologically Oriented Deliberation in View of the Dogmatic Problem of Hereditary Sin* (Liverlight: New York, 2014).

³ Giddens Anthony, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*, (California: Stanford University Press, 1991).

⁴ Jennifer Mitzen ve Kyle Larson, *Ontological Security and Foreign Policy*, (2017).

⁵ Brent J Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations: Self-Identity and the IR State*, (Londra, Routledge, 2008).



çerçevelere sahip olmalarına, sosyal ve maddi çevrelerinin istikrarlı ve öngörülebilir olmasına bağlıdır.⁶

Diğer taraftan, koşullar veya içerisinde buldukları durum aktörlerin öz anlatılarının ve davranış kalıplarının devamlılığını engelleyecek veya radikal değişiklikler doğuracak şekilde ise, temel ontolojik sorunlar ve belirsizlikler ortaya çıkmaktadır. Bu şartlar altında aktörler gerek kendisinin gerek aidiyet hissettiği çevresinin devamlılığına dair güven kaybı yaşayacağı için kendilerini derin bir kaygı durumunun içerisinde bulacaklardır. Bu bağlamda, ontolojik güvensizliği açığa çıkaran temel duygunun “kaygı” olduğu ifade edilebilecektir.⁷ Ontolojik güvenlik; “kaygı” duygusunu merkeze alarak, gerçekliğin nedensellik açısından kavramsallaştırılmasına, geçmişte, bugün ve gelecekte yaşanmış olayların kavranmasına ve aktörlerin davranışlarının sonuçları hakkında düşünülmesine olanak sağlayan bilişsel yeteneklere sahip olması açısından önemlidir.

Bununla birlikte, ontolojik güvenlik çalışmalarında kaygı ve korku arasındaki ayrım çoğu zaman araştırmacılar için bir çıkış noktası olmuştur. Korku; kişinin bilebileceği ve dolayısıyla mücadele edebileceği somut bir nedene dayanırken, kaygı belli olmayan ve tek bir şey ile ifade edilemeyen daha yaygın bir duyguya dayanmakta ve daha zamansal bir perspektifi ifade etmektedir.⁸ Bu nedenle tehditten ziyade kaygının belirsizlikle ilişkilendirilmesi daha yaygındır ve büyük ölçüde kavramın varoluşçu anlayışıyla da uyumludur. Eğer koşullar, bireyin öz anlatılarının devamlılığını ve alışlagelmiş davranış kalıplarını engelleyecek bir belirsizliğe dönüşürse, bu durum var olan temel ontolojik sorunların yüzeye çıkmasına neden olmaktadır.

Rumelili ve Adısönmez,⁹ ontolojik güvensizliğin tanımlı bir dış tehdidin yarattığı korkudan kaynaklanmadığını, devamlılığa ve iç-kaynaklı varlığa dayalı kaygıların yol açtığı korkulardan kaynaklandığını ifade etmektedir. Bu anlamda ontolojik güvensizlik durumu aktörlerin kendi devamlılıklarına tehdit olarak tanımladıkları şeylerden kaynaklanmaktadır. Ontolojik güvensizlik; bireylerin hangi tehlikeler ile yüzleşeceğini, hangi tehlikelerin göz ardı edileceğini bilememenin verdiği belirsizliğin ortaya çıkardığı güvensizliktir. Bu nedenle ontolojik güvenlik çalışmaları, aktörlerin hayatta kalmak veya kendi öz benliklerini sürdürmek

⁶ Filip Ejodus, *Crisis and Ontological Insecurity: Serbia's Anxiety over Kosovo's Secession*, (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 65-95.

⁷ Bahar Rumelili, Umut Can Adısönmez, “Uluslararası İlişkilerde Kimlik-Güvenlik İlişkinine Dair Yeni bir Paradigma: Ontolojik Güvenlik Teorisi”. *Uluslararası İlişkiler Dergisi*, (2020).

⁸ Beril Dedeoğlu, *Uluslararası Güvenlik ve Strateji*, (İstanbul: Yenyüzyıl Yayınları, 2020), s.392.

⁹ Rumelili, B., Adısönmez, U. C. “Uluslararası İlişkilerde Kimlik-Güvenlik İlişkinine Dair Yeni bir Paradigma: Ontolojik Güvenlik Teorisi”, s.26.



için basit fiziksel ihtiyaçları dışındaki tehditlere karşı kaygılarla hareket etme eğiliminde oldukları fikrine odaklanmaktadır¹⁰. Steele ve Mitzen'e göre ontolojik güvensizlik durumunda aktörler, kendi durumlarından ötürü duydukları kaygı duygularına karşı koymak ve ontolojik güvenlik durumunu yeniden oluşturmak için motive olmaktadır. Ontolojik güvensizlik durumlarından kurtulmak için ise, aktörler ya davranışlarını biyografik anlatılarına göre ayarlamakta ya da faillik ve kimlik duygularını sürdüreceği rutinlere tutunmaya çalışmaktadır.¹¹

Giddens¹² ise, sosyal ve toplumsal ilişkilerin büyük ölçüde rutinleşmiş doğasının, insanların kimliklerini yapılandırmalarına ve temsil kapasitelerini geliştirmelerine yardımcı olduğunu, bu nedenle bireylerin ve kimliklerinin güvenlik sisteminin önemli bir bileşeni haline geldiğini vurgulamaktadır. Bireylerin güvenlik sisteminin önemli bir bileşeni haline gelmesi ise, rutinlerini bozan herhangi bir belirsizlik veya kriz anında yoğun kaygı yaşamalarına neden olmasından ötürüdür.

Bireylerin belirsizlik dönemlerinde duygusal yönelimlerini değerlendiren ontolojik güvenlik çalışmaları, aktörlerin kendilerine zarar veren davranışlarda bulunarak kendi çıkarlarına aykırı hareket ettikleri durumları veya ontolojik güvensizlikleri ortadan kaldıracak eylemleri analiz etmek amacıyla gelişme göstererek geleneksel teorilere katkıda bulunmuştur. Ontolojik güvenlik çalışmalarına göre aktörler fiziksel ve ontolojik güvenlikleri söz konusu olduğunda dahi kimi zaman ontolojik güvenliklerini fiziksel güvenliklerine öncemiştir. Bu anlamda aktörler için neyin öncelikli ve gerekli olduğu konusu değişiklik göstermektedir¹³.

Özellikle beka siyasetinin ve kimlik siyasetinin güvenlikleştirici politikalarla birlikte yürütüldüğü ülkelerde, devletin fiziksel güvenliğinin tehlike altında olduğu algısı, bireylerin davranışlarını ve kararlarını önemli ölçüde belirlemektedir. Ontolojik güvenlik boyutu ile değerlendirildiğinde bireylerdeki beka kaygısı ve kimliklerin birbirlerine dair tehdit algılamaları yeni bir şey olmadığı gibi ontolojik güvensizlik algısı, devletlerin fiziksel güvenliğine yönelik somut bir tehditten kaynaklanmak zorunda da değildir. Bu anlamda beka kaygısı ve kimliklerin birbirlerine karşı güvensizliği geçmiş deneyimlerle tecrübe edilen ve devamlılığına ihtiyaç duyulduğunda yeniden üretilen bir anlatıya dayanmaktadır.

¹⁰ Jennifer Mitzen, "Anchoring Europe's Civilizing Identity: Habits, Capabilities, and Ontological Security", *Journal of European Public Policy* 13(2): 270–285.

¹¹ Jennifer Mitzen, "Anchoring Europe's Civilizing Identity: Habits, Capabilities, and Ontological Security". Steele, Brent J. *Ontological Security in International Relations: Self-Identity and the IR State*.

¹²Giddens Anthony. *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*, s.100.

¹³ Jennifer Mitzen, "Anchoring Europe's Civilizing Identity: Habits, Capabilities, and Ontological Security".



Toplumdaki elit müdahalelilerinin dahi çoğu zaman toplumların ontolojik güvenlik arayışları gözetilerek belirlendiği ifade edilmektedir. Bu bağlamda Mitzen ve Larson¹⁴, ontolojik güven(siz)liğin elit anlatıları bağlamında manipüle edilmesini, elitlerin kendi amaçları doğrultusunda yeniden nasıl aktive edildiğine bağlı olarak incelemiştir. Mitzen ve Larson'un vardığı sonuç ise şu şekildedir; “bir meselede önemli olan toplumun çoğunluğunun devletin kimliği hakkındaki görüşleri ve o mesele hakkında ne düşündüğüdür”.

Diğer taraftan, aktörlerin ontolojik güvenlik arayışları, güvenliklerini dost-düşman veya biz-öteki ikilikleri üzerinden sağlama eğilimlerini de arttırmaktadır. “Bizim” herhangi bir şeye karşı tehdit ya da rekabet oluşturan “ötekiyi” ortadan kaldırmaya veya ona karşı koymaya yönelik eylemleri, tutarlılığı içinde belirli bir özü güvence altına almaya çalışan eylemler olarak okunmaktadır.¹⁵ Ontolojik güvenliğin “biz” ve “öteki” ayrımı üzerinden tesis edildiğini belirten Kinnvall, aktörlerin ontolojik güvenliğinin önem atfettikleri ötekiler ile kurduğu tarihsel ilişkilerden bağımsız değerlendirilemeyeceğini eklemektedir. Bu bağlamda, aktörlerin ontolojik güven(siz)lik algısı, aktörlerin öteki aktörler ile kurdukları ilişkilerden ve ötekilerin tarihsel süreçte meydana getirdiği eylemlerden kaynaklanmaktadır. Aktörler; eylemlerini kimlikleri ile bütünleştiremediklerinde ve “ötekilerin” eylemlerini “bizim” anlatılarına sığdıramadıklarında ontolojik güvensizliğin daha da belirginleştiği ifade edilmektedir.

Özetlemek gerekirse, gerek devletler gerek toplumlar ve bireyler var oldukları süre zarfında bir öz anlatıya ihtiyaç duymakta ve yaşamları süresince bu öz anlatının devamlılığını aramaktadır. Bu anlamda ontolojik güvensizlik, belirli bir öz kimlik kavramını tehdit etmektedir. Aktörler kim olduğunu bilmediğinde veya kimliğini sabit veya sürdürülebilir hissetmediğinde ontolojik olarak güvensiz hissetmektedir. Bu nedenle ontolojik güvenlik kendini belirli bir kimliğin korunma ve sürdürülebilirlik kapasitesinde bulmaktadır.

3. Ontolojik Güven(siz)lik ve Siyaset

Ontolojik güvenlik çalışmalarındaki temel görüşlerden biri, aktörlerin kimliklerine dair bir süreklilik ile istikrarlı ve sağlıklı bir anlam arayışında olduğudur. “Hatırlamanın ve kolektif hafızanın” bu süreçte önemli bir rol oynadığı ifade edilse de siyaseti yönlendirici gücü, ontolojik güvenlik biliminin merkezinde yer almamıştır. Bu bölüm ontolojik güvenlik ve siyaset ilişkisini kolektif hafıza, kimlik ve beka siyaseti üzerinden ele alarak, tarihsel

¹⁴ Jennifer Mitzen ve Kyle Larson, *Ontological Security and Foreign Policy*.

¹⁵ Kinnvall, Catarina. “Globalization and religious nationalism: Self, identity, and the search for ontological security.” *Political Psychology*, (2004), 25:5, 741–767.



perspektiften seçilmiş zaferlerin ve seçilmiş travmaların siyasetin inşasında nasıl hem onarıcı hem de yozlaştırıcı etkiye sahip olabileceğini tartışmaya açmayı hedeflemektedir.

3.1.1. Kimlik, Ontolojik Güvenlik ve Beka

Kimlikler; etnik köken, ortak dil ve inançlar ile ilgili olduğu kadar ortak değerler ile de ilgilidir. Bu anlamda kimlikler tek başına sabit ve doğal bir var oluşu temsil etmemekte, bir oluş süreci olarak varlık göstermektedir. Hall'un¹⁶ da ifade ettiği gibi “doğumdan ölüme kadar birleşik bir kimliğe sahip olduğumuzu hissediyorsak, bu kimliğimizin tutarlı bir hikâyeye ve rahatlatıcı bir anlatıya dayanıyor olmasından ötürüdür”. Bu bağlamda aktörlerin kimlikleri; dünyaya attıkları anlamlar, normlar ve varsayımlar ile çıkarları ve davranışları üzerinden tarihsel süreç içerisinde şekillenmektedir.

Bununla birlikte kimlikler, karşılıklı olarak paylaşılan öznel ve ortak anlamlar ile ilgili olduğu kadar, başkalarına bakarak eylem ve davranışlarını tanımlayabildiğimiz farklı fikirler ve tahminler ile de ilgilidir. Bu nedenle kimlikler, aktörler tarafından iyi ya da kötü olarak tanımlanabileceği gibi aktörler için spesifik anlamlar içermekte ve bireylerin başkalarına karşı davranışlarına rehberlik etmektedir. Kimliklerin belirsizlik dönemlerinde nasıl yabancı veya öteki ilişkisini belirleyici bir güç olarak ortaya çıktığı da benzer şekilde aktörlerin, başkalarının kimliklerine dair tanımları ile uyumlu şekillenmektedir.

Kimliklere dair algılar aktörlerin çıkarlarını belirlemekte, çıkarlar ise aktörlerin nasıl hareket ettiği/davrandığı ve ne tür amaçlar gerçekleştirmeye çalıştıkları konusunda bir şeyler anlatmaktadır. Bu bakımdan kimlikler, güvenliği ve güvenliğe yönelik tehditleri nasıl gördüğümüzü, güvenlik sorunlarını nasıl anlamlandırdığımızı ve çözüm ürettiğimizi de önemli ölçüde belirlemektedir.¹⁷

Ontolojik güvenlik ve kimlik çalışmaları ise; geçmiş, şimdi ve gelecek süreçlerin kimlik ve kimlik çatışmaları üzerindeki etkilerine ve duygusal yönlerine dair değerlendirmelerde bulunmaktadır. Ontolojik güvenliğin sağlanması, bireyin hem fiziksel hem de sosyal bir çevre içinde kimliğini; yani varlığını, statüsünü ve konumunu sürdürmesi ile yakından ilgilidir.¹⁸ Bireyin güvenliğinin bir parçası olan kimlikler, bir taraftan bireylerin kendi varlığını ve

¹⁶ Stuart Hall, David Held, Anthony G. McGrew. *Modernity and Its Futures* / Edited by Stuart Hall, David Held and Tony McGrew. (Cambridge: Polity Press in association with the Open University, 1992), s. 227.

¹⁷ Emanuel Adler, “Seizing the Middle Ground: Constructivism in World Politics” *European Journal of International Relations*, (1997), 3(3), 319-359.

¹⁸ Bahar Rumelili ve Güneş Uzunoğlu, “Ontolojik Güven(siz)lik ve Popülizm”, *Eleştirel Güvenlik ve Türkiye* içinde, ed. Berk Esen ve Başar Baysal, 1. bs (İstanbul: İletişim Yayıncılık, 2022), s. 197.



çevresinde olup bitenleri anlamlandırmasını sağlarken, diğer taraftan varlığına ve dış dünyaya dair geliştirebileceği muhtemel kaygılar ile başa çıkmasını sağlamaktadır.

Bireylerin ontolojik güvenlik arayışları Aydınlanma, Rönesans ve Reform süreçlerinden önce dini, yerel veya kişisel otorite formları tarafından karşılanıyorken, tarihsel ve sosyolojik koşullarından doğan modern devletler ile birlikte siyasi otoriteler birincil ontolojik güvenlik sağlayıcısı şeklinde konumlanmıştır¹⁹. 2000'lerden itibaren Uluslararası İlişkiler ve Siyaset Bilimi disiplini içerisinde yer edinen ontolojik güvenlik çalışmaları da devletleri ve siyasi otoriteleri, hem iç siyasette hem de dış siyasette temel ontolojik güvenlik sağlayıcısı olarak analiz etmektedir.²⁰

Modern devletlerin ontolojik güvenlik arayışları, ulus devletlerin doğuşundan beri din, milliyetçilik, gelenekler, toprak kayıpları, galibiyetler ve travmalar gibi farklı referans nesnelere üzerinden oluşturulmaktadır. Devletlerin tarihsel süreçte meydana gelen olaylar veya travmalar sonucunda oluşan kaygı duygusu, şimdiki zaman, gelecek zaman ve yeniden inşa edilen geçmiş zaman arasında önemli bir bağlantı sağlamaktadır. Bu duygu, zamanla mitolojik hale gelerek ve farklı grupların benlik duygusu ile iç içe geçerek birbirini takip eden nesiller için de bir sosyal zincir işlevi görmektedir.

“Etnik çatışmaların zamansızlığını” ifade eden Murer’in²¹ ve “seçilmiş travmaların ve zaferlerin” sürekliliğini ve grup psikolojisine etkilerini ifade eden Volkan’ın²² anlatmak istediği temel düşünce de buna dayanmaktadır. Seçilmiş travmalar ve seçilmiş zaferler, bir grubun atalarının başına gelen bir felaketin veya zaferin zihinsel haritasını tanımlamakta ve kaygılara, kayıplara, beklentilere, yoğun duygulara ve kabul edilemez düşüncelere karşı savunmaları içermektedir. Bu bağlamda ontolojik güvenlik çalışmaları, geçmişe dayanan ve toplumda süregelen kaygıları ve endişeleri anlamak adına faydalı bir analiz alanı sunmaktadır.

Ontolojik güvenlik, devletlerin ve toplumların kolektif hafızasından etkilendiği gibi küresel ve kaotik dünyanın tetiklediği risk alanlarına karşı seçilmiş travmalarda kendini yineleyen/yenileyen yapısal ve psikolojik bileşenlerden oluşmaktadır. Bu bağlamda seçilmiş

¹⁹ Ayşe Zarakol, “States and Ontological Security: A Historical Rethinking”, *Cooperation and Conflict*, (2016), 52(1), s.51.

²⁰ Bahar Rumelili ve Güneş Uzunoğlu, “Ontolojik Güven(siz)lik ve Popülizm”.

²¹ Jeffrey Stevenson Murer, *Challenging Expectations: A Comparative Study of the Communist Successor Parties of Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania*. In Ishiyama, J. (Ed.). *Communist Successor Parties in Post-Communist Politics*, (Nova Science Publishers, 1999).

²² Volkan, Vamık D., 1932- Osmanlı'nın Yasından Atatürk'ün Türkiye'sine: Onarıcı Liderlik Ve Politik Psikoloji: "Söyleşi" / Vamık Volkan, Nuriye Atabey, (2010), s.35.



travmalar ve seçilmiş zaferler, ontolojik güven(siz)liğin arttığı zamanlarda toplumu rahatlatıcı veya endişelendirici etkiler doğurur. Seçilmiş travmalar ve zaferler, siyasal aktörler tarafından kullanıldığında meydana gelebilecek yeni belirsizlikleri ve krizleri yorumlamak için kullanılmaktadır. Bu bakımdan, bir ulusal kimliğin şekillenmesinden o ulusal kimliğin sürdürülmesine ve korunmasına kadarki her süreçte, seçilmiş zaferler ve seçilmiş travmaların önemli bir rol oynadığı ifade edilebilecektir.

Kinnvall²³ da Volkan ile benzer şekilde toplumların hafızlarında yer edinmiş travmatik duyguların, aktörlerin ontolojik güvenlik(siz)lerini nasıl yönettiğini ve bu duyguların geçmişi, bugünü ve geleceği kolektif hafıza üzerinden nasıl şekillendirdiğini analiz etmeye çalışmaktadır. Steele²⁴ de aktörlerin toplumsal travmaları ne şekilde kullandığına dikkat çekmek istediği çalışmasında, aktörlerin travmaları ontolojik güvenlik rutinlerini sürdürebilmek ve sahip oldukları kimliklerini net bir şekilde ortaya koyabilmek için kullandığı sonucuna varmıştır. Ulus devlet şuurunun sürdürülebilmesi, oluşturulmak istenen milletin ve onun oluşum sürecinin her zaman var olduğunun gösterilmesine dayanmaktadır. Bu durum ise, hem seçilmiş travmalar hem de seçilmiş zaferlerin süreç içerisinde yeniden inşa edilmesi ile yakından alakalıdır. Belirsiz yapısal koşulların olduğu dönemlerde din ve etnisite diğer kimlik gösterenlerine oranla daha güçlü kimlik gösterenleri haline gelmektedir.²⁵ Bu ontolojik güven(siz)lik inşa süreci, dini ve milli söylemler üzerinden oluşturulduğu gibi mevcut ulus arayışını sömürgeleştirme öncesi yüceltilmiş bir geçmiş ile ilişkilendirerek ve kolektif hafızaya başvurarak desteklemektedir.

Kinnvall'a²⁶ göre din ve millet gibi kavramları ontolojik güvenliğin inşasında daha öncelikli hale getiren şey, tarihsel süreç içerisinde rakip kavramlar ile her karşı karşıya geldiğinde ve ontolojik güvensizliğe bir cevap olarak her çağrıldığında yeniden keşfedilmeleridir. Aynı zamanda, din ve millet kavramları üzerine inşa edilen anlatılar ile sadece bir kimlik grubunu inşa etmek, sağlamlaştırmak ve harekete geçirmek amaçlanmamakta, aynı zamanda çatışmalı durumlarda duyguları yönlendirerek bir “ötekini icat etmek” için de

²³ Catarina Kinnvall, “Feeling ontologically (in)secure: States, traumas and the governing of gendered space”, *Cooperation and Conflict*, 52(1), (2016): 90–108.

²⁴ Brent J. Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations: Self-Identity and the IR State*, (Londra, Routledge, 2008).

²⁵ Catarina Kinnvall, “Feeling ontologically (in)secure: States, traumas and the governing of gendered space”, *Cooperation and Conflict*, 52(1), (2016): 90–108.

²⁶ Catarina Kinnvall, “Globalization And Religious Nationalism: Self, Identity, And The Search For Ontological Security”, s. 757.



yaygın olarak kullanılmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, toplumda manevi ve milli değerleri uyandırmak amacıyla inşa edilen yorumlar, tarihsel ve geleneksel olarak geçmiş olaylar ile bağlantı kurma konusunda ne kadar özcü hale gelebilirse, ben ve öteki arasındaki sınırları oluşturma açısından da o kadar başarılı olacaktır.²⁷

Bununla birlikte, devletler bir taraftan din ve millet gibi önemli kimlik unsurlarını belirli anlatılara dayandırarak devletlerin öz anlatılarının sürdürülmesine katkı sağlarken, bir taraftan beka siyaseti ile de öz anlatılarının devamlılığını sağlamaktadır. “Devletlerin bekası” söylemi gerek ontolojik güven(siz)liklere karşı uyarıcı (alarmist) bir söylem inşa etmesi açısından gerek kriz inşasının temelini oluşturan genel kaygı ve ontolojik güvensizlik ortamını şekillendiren bir kriz anlatısı olması açısından oldukça önemlidir. Bu nedenle, devletlerin beka kaygıları sadece belirli bir fiziksel tehdit karşısında şekillenmemekte, devletlerin öz anlatılarının sürdürülebilmesi için sıklıkla yeniden inşa edilmektedir.

Küresel kapitalizm koşulları nedeniyle toplumda oluşan daimi risk kültürünün, bireylerin beka kaygılarının sürdürülmesinde önemli etkilerinin olduğu ifade edilmektedir. Küreselleşme ile birlikte savaş, kıtlık, salgın hastalıklar, ekonomik krizler gibi belirli korkuların yerini bireyin yarınından dahi emin olamadığı daha derin belirsizliklerin ve korkuların almış olması, toplumda giderek artan bir güvence beklentisini doğurmaktadır²⁸. Bu doğrultuda, modern devletler ve siyasi aktörler geleneksel güvenlik anlayışının da ötesine geçerek, bir taraftan bireylerin gündelik korkuları ve beklentilerini ortaya çıkarıp belirginleştirmekte, diğer taraftan bu korkular ve beklentiler ile uyumlu kriz hallerini güvence ve memnuniyet haline çevirecek söylem ve araçlar inşa ederek yönlendirmeye çalışmaktadır. Kurumsallaşmış bir din ve milliyetçilik ise, kendilerini ontolojik olarak güvensiz hissedenlere cevap verme olasılığı daha yüksek olan iki kimlik göstergesi olması açısından bir birlik ve bütünlük resmi sunarak, bireylerin güvenlik arayışlarına varoluşsal yanıtlar sağlamakta daha başarılıdır.²⁹

Özetlemek gerekirse, ontolojik güvensizlik ortamlarında siyasal aktörler, bir taraftan milli ve manevi unsurları vurgulayarak ve beka kaygısını inşa ederek kriz inşasına dayalı söylem ve siyaset tarzı ile toplumda ontolojik güvensizlikleri körüklemekte, diğer taraftan özcü, milli ve manevi değer vurgusu taşıyan, bir taraftan ötekileştirici bir taraftan birleştirici

²⁷ Van der Veer, P. (1994). *Religious nationalism: Hindus and Muslims in India*. University of California Press, Year: 1994, s. 11.

²⁸ Bahar Rumelili ve Umut Can Adısönmez, "Uluslararası İlişkilerde Kimlik-Güvenlik İlişkinine Dair Yeni bir Paradigma: Ontolojik Güvenlik Teorisi". *Uluslararası İlişkiler Dergisi*, (2020).

²⁹ Catarina Kinnvall, “Feeling ontologically (in)secure: States, traumas and the governing of gendered space”, s. 90-108.



söylemlere dayanan, seçilmiş zaferler ve travmalara temas eden, geçmişe referans ile istikrar vurgusu yaparak güvensizliklere karşı çözüm üretmekte ve kendilerini ontolojik güvenlik sağlayıcıları olarak konumlandırmaktadır. Küreselleşmenin yarattığı risk toplumunun, belirsizliklerin, ekonomik ve kültürel güvensizliklerin ise, ontolojik güvensizliklerin belirli somut mağduriyetlere ve tehlikelere dönüştürülmesinde kolaylaştırıcı bir etki oluşturduğu ifade edilebilecektir.

3.1.2. Ontolojik Güven(siz)liğin Siyasal Davranışa Etkisi

Son yirmi yıldır politik psikoloji alanında yapılan çalışmalar ve araştırmalar, duyguların; siyasal tercihleri, tutumları, kararları ve bilginin halka işlenmesi gibi süreçleri etkilediği yönünde önemli sonuçlar vermektedir³⁰. Korku, kaygı, umut ve öfke gibi duyguların siyaseti yönlendirici ve şekillendirici duygular olarak varlık göstermesi, travmatik olaylar ile bağlantılıdır. Özellikle hızlı kültürel ve siyasal değişiklikler, büyük siyasal çalkantılar, toprak kayıpları, savaşlar, doğal felaketler, zorlu yaşam koşulları ve ağır ekonomik sorunlar gibi travmalara maruz kalan toplumlarda, duyguların kriz anlarında aidiyet duygusunu önemli ölçüde arttırdığı ve bu duygulara bağlı olarak özellikle artan güvensizlik ve belirsizlik nedeniyle toplumda güçlü bir lider tarafından sağlanan güven ve istikrar arayışını ortaya çıkardığı ifade edilmektedir.³¹

Ontolojik güvenlik çalışmaları ise, “anlatılar ve hafıza” arasındaki ilişkiye odaklanarak, halkın genelinde zaten var olan ve olumsuz olarak tanımlanmış toplumsal kaygıların, güvensizliklerin ve algıların genel ikna stratejileri ve örtülü güvence gösterileri ile istikrarını nasıl uzun yıllar sürdürdüğünü değerlendirmektedir. Son yıllarda ontolojik güven(siz)lik ve siyaset ilişkisini analiz eden çalışmalar, kamusal belirsizliğin ve güvensizliğin arttığı dönemlerde siyasal aktörlerin toplumun hafızasını tazeleyecek çağruları ve stratejileri arttırdığını ifade etmektedir.

Bununla birlikte, artan ontolojik güvensizlik durumu ve artan risk durumuna bağlı olarak, toplum nezdinde giderek artan bir güvence beklentisi ortaya çıkmaktadır. Bu doğrultuda siyasetçiler, geleneksel güvenlik anlayışının ötesine geçerek, bireyin gündelik hayatına yansımaya başlayan korku, arzu, umut gibi duygusal durumlarıyla doğrudan bir bağlantı

³⁰ Cengiz Erişen, “Emotions as a Determinant in Turkish Political Behavior”, *Turkish Studies*, 14(1), (2013), s.2.

³¹ Cengiz Erişen, “Emotions as a Determinant in Turkish Political Behavior”; Catarina, Kinnvall, “Feeling ontologically (in)secure: States, traumas and the governing of gendered space”.



kurmayı hedeflemektedir. Bunu yaparken siyasetçiler, bireylerin içerisinde bulunduğu sürekli belirsizlik ve kriz halini, çeşitli stratejik söylem ve araçlar ile karşılamaya çalışmaktadır.³²

Özellikle belirsizliğin ve istikrarsızlığın arttığı dönemlerde vatandaşların ahlaki, güvenilir ve ideolojik kesinlik sunan siyaset tarzlarına ve söylemelere yöneldiği ifade edilmektedir.³³ Bu bağlamda, ontolojik güvensizliğin ortaya çıkardığı siyaset tarzının popülist siyasete dayandığı, ontolojik güvenlik ile popülist siyaset arasında ise iki yönlü bir ilişkinin olduğu değerlendirilmektedir. Popülist siyaset de benzer şekilde belirsizlik ortamlarında uyarıcı söylemler yoluyla çeşitli krizler inşa etmektedir. Üretilen bu krizler ve yaratılan zıtlıklar ile siyaset yapıcılar rakiplerine ideolojik bir üstünlük sağlamakta ve ahlaki kesinliğe dayanan siyaset tarzlarının cazibesini arttırmaktadır.³⁴ Bu anlamda popülist siyasetin kendi arzını ve talebini kendisinin yarattığı ifade edilebilecektir.

Belirsizlik ve güvensizlik dönemlerinde popülizmin yaygınlaşmasını sağlayan yapısal koşullar ise, aynı zamanda genel kaygıyı ve ontolojik güvensizliği beslemektedir. Popülist siyaset, inşa ettiği bu krizler vasıtasıyla bir taraftan belirli güvensizliklere odaklanarak temsil ettiği halk kitlesini mağdur konumuna kolaylıkla oturtmakta, diğer taraftan mağduriyete karşı en etkili çözümü kendisinin ürettiğine ikna etmektedir.³⁵

Böyle dönemlerde liderler kendi şahıslarını ön plana çıkararak, halka doğrudan aracısız ve kurumsallaşmamış bir iletişim stratejisi uygulamaktadır. Bu iletişimin temelinde “yozlaşmış elitler” ile “saf halk” arasındaki keskinleştirilmiş ayırım yatmaktadır. Siyasetin “milli iradenin” bir yansıması olduğu varsayımı üzerinden inşa edilen bu keskin ayırım, aynı zamanda dost-düşman, iyi-kötü ayırımı ile örtüşen bir ahlaki söyleme dayandırılmaktadır.³⁶ Bu şekilde siyasi aktörlerin ontolojik güven(siz)lik dönemlerinde kendilerini ontolojik güvenlik sağlayıcıları olarak konumlandırmaları kolaylaşmaktadır.

Kendini güçlü ve kararlı bir ontolojik güvenlik sağlayıcısı olarak konumlandıran lidere karşı oluşan muhalefet, ortaya koyduğu siyaset ile popülist siyasetin ortaya koyduğu cesur,

³² Jim Marlow, “Governmentality, Ontological Security And Ideational Stability: Preliminary Observations On The Manner, Ritual And Logic Of A Particular Art Of Government”, *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 7(2), (2002): 241–259.

³³ Filip Ejodus, *Crisis and Ontological Insecurity: Serbia’s Anxiety over Kosovo’s Secession*; Dmitry Chernobrov, “Ontological Security and Public (Mis)Recognition of International Crises: Uncertainty, Political Imagining, and the Self.

³⁴ Brent J. Steele ve Alexandra Homolar, *Ontological insecurities and the politics of contemporary populism*. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, (2019) s.1–8.

³⁵ Bahar Rumelili ve Güneş Uzunoğlu, “Ontolojik Güven(siz)lik ve Popülizm”.

³⁶ Benjamin Moffitt, *The Global Rise Of Populism: Performance, Political Style, And Representation* (California: Stanford University Press, 2016).



tümdenci, yerli, milli, geçmişe referanslı istikrar vurgusu yapan, etkin ve çabuk çözümler ile rekabet edemeyecek durumda ise, vatandaşlar değişime daha az açık, belirsizliklere karşı ise daha az toleranslı davranmaktadır.³⁷ Bireylerde değişime kapalı olma hali, aynı zamanda belirsizlik dönemlerinde kaygıyı hafifletmenin bir yolu olarak rutinleştirilmiş davranışın inşasına da katkıda bulunmaktadır. Bireyler, yaşanan belirsizliklere ve yakın gelecekte yapılması gerekenlere ilişkin tutarlı bir senaryo ile karşı karşıya değilse, geçmişteki düzene ait olma ve dâhil olma eğilimlerini yeniden canlandıracak ve güçlendirecek vaatlerden yararlanan popülist politika için de hedef noktası haline gelmektedir.³⁸

Popülist siyaset inşa ettiği tehdit, mağduriyet ve yoksunlukları belli anlatılar ve vurgular ile anlamlandırmaktadır. Ayrıca halkı, bu krizlerin aslında basit ve kesin çözümleri olduğuna, ama bu çözümlerin elitlerce çeşitli çıkar ve ideolojik nedenlerle uygulanmadığına ikna etmeye çalışmaktadır. Bunu yaparken aynı zamanda popülist lider kendisini, tüm bu krizlerin yegâne yöneticisi ve ontolojik güvensizliğin sorun çözücüsü olarak sunmaktadır. Liderler tarafından inşa edilen bu sürece halkın ikna olmasının nedeni halkın cahil olması ya da kolay kandırılabilir olması değildir. Bu yapıdaki anlatıların halkın sosyolojik ve tarihsel olarak geçmiş kaygı ve güvensizliklerine seslenen ve onlar ile doğrudan örtüşen bir anlamı olmasından ötürüdür.³⁹

Seçim dönemleri de seçimlerin sonuçları açısından bir belirsizlik içermesi nedeniyle popülist siyasetçiler tarafından sadece siyasi rekabetin gerçekleşeceği dönemler olarak değil, rakiplerinin kazanması durumunda toplumun bilinmez bir kaosa sürükleneceği, çöküşün, yıkımın ve güvensizliğin ortaya çıkabileceği olağanüstü kriz zamanları olarak inşa edilme eğilimindedirler.⁴⁰ Bu eğilim nedeniyle seçim süreçleri, popülist siyasetçiler tarafından rakiplerini ulusal güvenlik sorunu olarak tanımlamalarına ve iyi ile kötünün mücadelesi olarak kurgulamalarına da zemin hazırlamaktadır. Bu şekilde popülist siyaset, kimin (ya da neyin) “gerçek” halkın parçası olarak kabul edileceğini ve kimin edilemeyeceğini içeren güç mücadelelerini ve duygusal bağlamları merkezileştirmektedir.⁴¹

³⁷ Adam Przeworski, *Demokrasinin Krizleri - Otoriterleşmenin Kıyısında Çağdaş Siyasetin Ahvali*, 1. bs (Ankara: Fol Kitap, 2023).

³⁸ Brent J. Steele ve Alexandra Homolar, *Ontological insecurities and the politics of contemporary populism*. s.1-8.

³⁹ Cas Mudde, “The Populist Zeitgeist.” *Government And Opposition*, (2004), 39:4, s.543.

⁴⁰ Bahar Rumelili ve Güneş Uzunoğlu, “Ontolojik Güven(siz)lik ve Popülizm”.

⁴¹ Brent J. Steele & Homolar, A. 2019. *Ontological insecurities and the politics of contemporary populism*. Cambridge Review of International Affairs, s.1–8.



Diğer taraftan popülizmin sağ ve sol ideolojik aktörleri, ulaşmak istediği hedef kitleye yönelik ontolojik kaygıları ile uyumlu güven tesis ederken, farklı özelliklerde anlatılar geliştirmektedir. Sağ popülizm; ötekileştirici, etnik milliyetçi temelli, dini ve manevi değerlere vurgu yapan ve özcü anlayışa dayanan, tarihsel geçmişi olan ve istikrarlı bir anlam çerçevesi ile ontolojik güvenlik sağlamayı hedeflerken; sol popülizm, eşitlikçi fikirlere dayalı, çok kültürlülük yanlısı ve özellikle gelir dağılımından ve ekonomik sıkıntılardan şikâyet edenlerin kaygılarına ve güvensizliklerine seslenen bir anlatımı tercih etmektedir.⁴²

Sağ popülist söylem, sol popülist söyleme göre belirsizliklerden ve krizlerden faydalanarak ontolojik güvensizlik ortamını şekillendirmede daha başarılıdır. Bunun nedeni sağ popülist söylemin, tarih anlatıları, mitler, kültürel semboller üzerine tartışmaları siyaset alanına taşıyarak, toplumun bireysel ve kolektif hafızasına başvurmada ve onlara varoluşsal önem atfetmede daha avantajlı olmasıdır. Yine sağ popülist siyasetin inşa ettiği aciliyet söylemlerinin, sıradan ve politik gündem ile çok alakası olmayan bireylerin dahi gündelik kaygılarına ve endişelerine değebilmesinden ötürüdür.⁴³ Bu anlamda, sağ popülizmin özünde sadece güncel siyasete değil, geçmişin siyasetine dair bir mücadeleyi de içerdiği anlaşılmaktadır.

Bununla birlikte ontolojik güven(siz)lik üzerinden siyaset üretmek, her türlü siyasi hareketin ve aktörün başvurabileceği siyasi bir yöntemdir. Ancak popülist siyaseti bu yöntemi kullanma noktasında daha başarılı kılan şey, kriz inşasını siyasetin merkezinde tutması ve süreklilik arz etmesidir. Toplumda var olan ancak belirli bir hedefe yönlendirilmemiş ontolojik güvensizlikler siyasal aktörler tarafından ve popülist söylemler ile daha somut bireysel, toplumsal ve milli güvensizliklere dönüştürüldüğünde, bireyler de verebileceği en temel tepkilerden birini vererek güvensizliğini ve varoluşsal kaygılarını azaltabileceğini düşündüğü kolektifine yaklaşarak, kendi kimliğini tekrar doğrulamaya çalışmaktadır. Bu nedenle, bireyin ontolojik güvensizliğini ortadan kaldıracak veya azaltacak her kolektif kimlik ve lider çekim noktası haline gelmektedir.

4. Türkiye’de Ontolojik Güven(siz)liğin Kaynakları ve 14 Mayıs 2023 Seçimleri

Türkiye Cumhuriyeti’nin kuruluşundan günümüze varıncaya kadar yaşanan siyasal, sosyal ve toplumsal olaylar; zaferler, kayıplar ve travmalar, siyasi aktörlerin milli ve manevi kavramları kullanarak siyaseti yönlendirme gücüne büyük oranda katkı sağlamaktadır.

⁴² Catarina Kinnvall, Globalization and religious nationalism in India: The search for ontological security.

⁴³ Bahar Rumelili ve Güneş Uzunoğlu, “Ontolojik Güven(siz)lik ve Popülizm”.



Ontolojik güvensizlik dönemlerinde siyasi aktörlerin milli ve manevi kavramları kullanarak siyaseti yönlendirme gücü, seçilmiş travmaların ve seçilmiş zaferlerin ulus için bütünleşik ve tutarlı bir hikâye sağlama ve bu hikâyeyi canlı tutma yeteneğinde yatmaktadır.

Bu bağlamda, Türkiye’de toplumda oluşan ontolojik güven(siz)liğin canlı tutulmasında; Türk siyasal hayatında ulus devletin oluşumu sürecinden itibaren süregelen beka endişesinin, sık sık demokrasiyi kesintiye uğratan darbelerin, sonrasında yaşanan toplumsal travmaların, ideolojik kutuplaşmaların, yoğun bir kimlik ve kriz inşasına dayanan siyaset stratejisinin meydana getirdiği açmazlar ile uyumlu gelişen ontolojik kaygıların sürekliliğinin etkili olduğu değerlendirilmektedir.

4.1. Beka Endişesi ve Toplumsal Travmalar

Ontolojik güvenlik çalışmaları, büyük oranda Batı literatürüne dayanması ve “Batılı bir öz benliğe” odaklanarak; devletlerin ve toplumların ontolojik güven(siz)liklerini analiz etmesi nedeniyle ulus inşa sürecinde farklı deneyimler yaşayan devletleri yeterli düzeyde değerlendirmekten uzaklaşmaktadır.⁴⁴ Bu bağlamda, ulus devlet inşa sürecinde Batılı devletlerden farklı deneyimleri olan Türkiye’nin ve Türk toplumunun ontolojik güven(siz)liklerinin ve bu güven(siz)liklerin şekillendirdiği politikaların etkilerini doğru değerlendirmek için Osmanlı Devleti’nin parçalanma sürecinin, bu sürecin doğurduğu ve kronikleşen beka endişesinin, büyük toprak kayıpları üzerine inşa edilen bir ulusun ve bu ulusun inşa sürecinde alınan politik kararların ve sonrasında demokrasiyi birçok kez kesintiye uğratan travmatik deneyimlerin etkilerinin ifade edilmesi önem arz etmektedir.

Osmanlı Devleti, I. Dünya Savaşı’nda başlangıçta kazandığı kısmi başarılar bir tarafa, birçok cephede savaşarak ağır yenilgiler vermiştir. 30 Ekim 1918’de imzalanan Mondros Mütarekesi ile Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nun silahlarına el konulmuş, orduları terhis edilmiş ve İtilaf Devletleri’nin kendi güvenliklerine tehdit olarak gördükleri yerleri işgal edebileceklerinin karara bağlanması ile fiili işgallere başlanmıştır. 1919 yılı bu anlamda, yaşanan siyasal, sosyal, toplumsal olaylar ve salgın hastalıklar gibi sorunlar ile birlikte Türkiye tarihinin tecrübe ettiği en ağır travmaların ve belirsizliklerin yaşandığı yıl olarak tarihe geçmiştir.⁴⁵ I. Dünya Savaşı’nın sonunda Osmanlı hükümeti ile müttefikler arasında imzalanan ve yabancı devletlere büyük

⁴⁴ Zeynep Gülsah Çapan ve Ayşe Zarakol, “Turkey’s Ambivalent Self: Ontological Insecurity In ‘Kemalism’ Versus ‘Erdoğanism’”, Cambridge Review of International Affairs, (2019), 1(20), s.4.

⁴⁵ Mehmet Ö. Alkan, “Cumhuriyet’in Siyasal Dönemeçleri”, Cumhuriyet Asırlık Bir Muhasebe içinde, ed. Mehmet Ö. Alkan, 1. bs (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2023).



miktarda Osmanlı toprağı tahsis etme gibi ağır maddeler içeren Sevr Antlaşması ise, toplumun içinde bulunduğu krizi daha fazla dramatik hale getirerek, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun parçalanmasının sembolü haline gelmiştir.⁴⁶ Bununla birlikte, Avrupalı devletlerin azınlıkları koruma iddiasıyla İmparatorluğun iç işlerine müdahale ederek egemenliği zedeleme girişimleri, Batılı devletlere karşı oluşan mevcut güvensizliği önemli bir noktaya taşımıştır.⁴⁷

Kurtuluş Savaşı (1919-23) ise, “bütün dünyaya karşı tarihin en büyük imparatorluklarından birini I. Dünya Savaşı sonrası “kaybetmiş bir milletin” ve “hasta adam” olarak resmedilen Osmanlı'nın, “kendisini yepyeni bir ulus olarak ortaya koyabilmesinin zaferi” olarak tasvir edilmiştir. Böyle bir toplumsal ve siyasal kriz ortamında Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, “Türk milleti çalışkandır, Türk milleti zekidir”, “Bir Türk dünyaya bedel”, “Ne mutlu Türküm diyene” gibi görkemli ifadelerle halka güven ve umut aşılama ve kendini Türk milletinin ontolojik güvenlik sağlayıcısı olarak konumlandırmada başarılı olmuştur. Halk ise, işgal altında bulunan topraklarının yasını tutmak yerine, İmparatorlukların yıkıldığı ve ulus devletlerin inşa edildiğı bir dönemde, kendilerini bu belirsizlikten kurtaracak bir ulusun yeniden inşasına ve bunun teminatını veren güçlü bir lidere kuvvetle destek vermiştir. Bu anlamda Türk toplumu, Vamık Volkan'ın⁴⁸ ifade ettiği gibi “Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun kayboluşunun yasını ve üzüntüsünü yaşayamamış” bir zafer toplumdur.

Diğer taraftan, yeni kurulan Türkiye Cumhuriyeti, güçlü bir devlet geleneğine ve patrimonial bir devlet yapılanmasına sahip olması açısından Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ile benzer özelliklere sahiptir; ancak Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Osmanlıdan oldukça farklı ilkeler ve değerler üzerine inşa edilmiştir. Cumhuriyet kurulurken oluşturulan yeni bilinç ve pratikler, derin bir güvensizlik duyulan Batılı devletlere karşı hem bu güvensizliği aşmanın, hem de uluslararası toplum tarafından kabul edilmenin bir yolu olarak; Batılı değerler üzerine inşa edilmiştir. Daha açık bir ifade ile Cumhuriyet kurulurken, Türkiye'nin uluslararası siyasetten kaynaklanan güvensizliklerini aşmasının ve uluslararası sistemde bir saygınlık kazanmasının yolu; “geleneksel ve tarihsel” olanın geride bırakılması ve yerine “modern ve Batılı olanın” getirilmesi olarak görülmüştür.⁴⁹ Cumhuriyetin bu yeni bilinç ve pratikleri, toplumun siyasi

⁴⁶ Bora, Tanıl, “Yüz Yılda İdeolojik Akışlar”, Cumhuriyet Asırlık Bir Muhasebe içinde, ed. Mehmet Ö. Alkan, 1. bs (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2023).

⁴⁷ Ayşe Zarakol, Yenilgiden Sonra: Doğu Batı ile Yaşamayı Nasıl Öğrendi?, çev.B.Cezar, (İstanbul: Koç Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2012).

⁴⁸ Vamık Cemal Volkan, 1932- Osmanlı'nın yasından Atatürk'ün Türkiye'sine: onarıcı liderlik ve politik psikoloji: "söyleşi" / Vamık Volkan, s. 43.

⁴⁹ Ayşe Zarakol, “States and Ontological Security: A historical Rethinking”, Cooperation and Conflict, 52(1), s.8.



eylem ve ehliyete sahip olmadığı temel düşüncesi üzerinden, topluma tedrici bir şekilde aktarılmıştır. Ayrıca yeni kurulan ulusun kimliği; dini kimliği açısından Müslüman, resmi dili ve milli kimliği açısından Türk, sosyal ve siyasi kimlik açısından laik ve Batılı yeni bir homojen Türk millet tasavvuru üzerinden oluşturulmuştur.

Bununla birlikte, Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin kurucularını oluşturan ordu (kurucu elitler), kurumsal olarak “oyun kurucu” rolüyle siyaset üstü bir yerde kendini konumlandırmıştır. Erken Cumhuriyet Dönemi'nde ordu, aktif siyasette yer almak için üniformasını çıkarmış olsa da sonraki dönemlerde bir taraftan demokrasinin en iyi yönetim şekli olduğunu ifade ederek, diğer taraftan en iyi demokrasinin ancak kendilerinin gözetiminde ve denetiminde sürdürülebileceği temel düşüncesini koruyarak varlığını sürdürmüştür. Bu nedenle ordu için üstün ve tartışılmaz olan, egemenliğin korunması ve sürdürülmesi gereken bir hukuk devleti olarak, “Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Devleti”nin bekası değil; belirli bir toplum tasarımı, bir düşünce ve hayat tarzını, toplumun nasıl inanması ve düşünmesi gerektiğini de belirli ölçülerde tanzim eden ve bunu topluma siyaseten ve hukuken de kabul ettirmeye çalışan bir “devletçi” geleneğin sürdürülme yetkisini kendinde gördüğü “Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Devleti”nin bekası olmuştur⁵⁰ Bu saikle ordu, sivil yönetimi ele geçirme, askeri darbeler ve darbe sonrası sivil yönetime dair anti-demokratik düzenlemeleri ile siyasetin kendi istedikleri yolda yürümesini sağlamaya çalışmıştır.⁵¹

Bu şekilde uzun yıllar seçilmişlerin karar mekanizmalarında bulunmasını ve önemli kararların seçilmişlerce alınmasını gerekli kılan demokrasi derinleşemediği gibi, bir askeri vesayet altında sürdürülmüştür. Hatta askeri darbeler sonrası oluşturulan yasal düzenlemeler ile resmi olarak ayrıcalıklı hale getirdiği hayat ve düşünce tarzını tercih etmeyenlerin kamu görevlisi olma, eğitim ve kimi zaman serbest mesleğini icra etme hakları dahi ellerinden alınmıştır.⁵²

Yine, ordunun kendini konumlandığı bu ontolojik güvenlik sağlayıcısı rol nedeni ile 27 Mayıs 1960'da ilk defa halk tarafından seçilen bir başbakan ve parti vekilleri, askeri darbe ile görevden alınarak yargılanmıştır. Yargılama neticesinde Türkiye devleti başbakanı Adnan Menderes ile maliye ve dış işleri bakanları idam edilmiştir. Milli Birlik Komitesi, yeni

⁵⁰ Erdoğan, Mustafa, “Hikmet-i Hükümetten Hukuk Devletine Yol Var Mı?”, Doğu Batı Düşünce Dergisi, (2000), s.10.

⁵¹ Duygu Öztürk, “Türkiye’de Sivil-Asker İlişkileri”, Eleştirel Güvenlik ve Türkiye içinde, Editör: Berk Esen ve Başar Baysal, 1. bs (İstanbul: İletişim Yayıncılık, 2022), s.235.

⁵² Mustafa Erdoğan, “Hikmet-i Hükümetten Hukuk Devletine Yol Var Mı?”, Doğu Batı Düşünce Dergisi, (2000), s.10.



kurulacak partilerde “demokrat” adının kullanılmasını dahi yasaklamıştır.⁵³ Demokrat Parti’nin (DP) kapatılması ve idamların ardından toplumda oluşan tepkiyi en doğru şekilde değerlendiren Adalet Partisi (AP) ise, dini ve geleneksel yapıları korumak ile birlikte, dengeleyici bir siyaset yürütmüştür. Ancak tüm bu çabasına rağmen 1965 yılında tek başına hükümet kuran AP ve Demirel hükümeti, 1971 yılında ülkeyi iyi yönetemediği gerekçesi ile istifaya zorlanmıştır. 1970’li yıllarda kurulan koalisyon hükümetlerinde de söz sahipliği yapan AP, 12 Eylül 1980 Askeri Darbesi’nin ardından diğer siyasi partiler ile birlikte kapatılmıştır. 1971 Muhtırasından 1980 darbesine kadarki dönemde kurulan koalisyon hükümetlerinin hiçbiri kalıcı ve başarılı olamamıştır. 1982 yılına gelindiğinde ise, tekrar çok partili sisteme geçiş denemeleri yapılmıştır; ancak kurulan Büyük Türkiye Partisi (BTP) AP ile benzerliği gerekçesiyle Milli Güvenlik Konseyi (MGK) kararı ile kapatılmıştır.⁵⁴

1980’li yıllar da bir askeri darbe ile başlamış ve 28 Şubat 1997’de post-modern darbe olarak ifade edilen başka bir darbe ile daha sürmüştür. Bu süreç, Türkiye’nin yeniden yapılandırılması ve daha demokratik bir devlet formuna geçilmesi için sağın-sol ile kuvvetli hegemonya mücadelesi verdiği bir süreci de beraberinde getirmiştir. 12 Eylül Askeri Darbesi, birçok insanın idamı ve tutukluluğu ile siyasal etkinliği neredeyse durma noktasına getiren uygulamaları nedeniyle toplum nezdinde ciddi travmalara neden olmuştur. 12 Eylül Askeri Darbesi, siyasal etkinlik, ideoloji ve örgüt gibi bazı kavramların serinkanlı ve objektif anlamlarından tamamen uzaklaşarak ve bir suç olarak görülmeye başlayacağı güçlü ve uzun yıllar etkisini sürdürecektir bir depolitizasyona neden olmuştur.

12 Eylül Askeri Darbesi’nin ardından Atatürkçülük öğretisinin güçlü bir şekilde “devletin bekası” söylemine sıkıştırıldığı ve Atatürkçülük öğretilerinin Atatürk milliyetçiliği söylemi ile yeni bir formda varlık gösterdiği gözlemlenmektedir. Siyasi söylemlere yerleşmiş olan “devletin ülkesi ve milleti formülü”, “devlet milletindir değil, millet devletindir” kabulüne dayandırılmıştır. Bu anlamda, Türkiye’de Cumhuriyeti canlı bir vatandaş-kamusu olmaktan ziyade korunması gereken bir ulus-devlet statükosu olarak gören muhafazakâr Cumhuriyetçi anlayış zamanla dönüşüme uğrasa da farklı varyantları ve ordunun desteği ile varlığını sürdürmeye devam etmiştir.⁵⁵ Bu dönemde, Atatürkçülük bir taraftan 12 Eylül Askeri Darbesi’nin meşrulaştırıcı ideolojisi olarak kullanılırken, yeniden tanımlanan milliyetçilik de

⁵³ Metin Heper, Türkiye’nin Siyasal Hayatı, (İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2011), s.196.

⁵⁴ Nuray Mert, Merkez Sağın Kısa Tarihi, (İstanbul: Selis Kitaplar, 2007) s.57.

⁵⁵ Bora, Tanıl, “Yüz Yılda İdeolojik Akışlar”. Cumhuriyet Asırlık Bir Muhasebe içinde, ed. Mehmet Ö. Alkan, 1. bs (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2023), s.265.



mevcut tüm problemleri unutturacak bir unsur olarak kullanılmıştır. Bu bağlamda milliyetçilik, bir taraftan rejime tehdit olarak görülen Batılı devletlere karşı, diğer taraftan 12 Eylül Askeri Darbesi'nin yarattığı atmosferden faydalanarak güçlenen terör ve bölücülük tehlikelerine karşı reaksiyoner bir nitelik kazanmıştır. Bununla birlikte “ölkücü hareket dönemin İslamcılığı ile örtüşerek, 1980'lerin ortalarında “Türk-İslam Ölkücülüğü” olarak adlandırılan ve İslam'ı milli kimliğin birincil unsuru olarak kabul eden yeni bir akımın etkisi ile ortaya çıkmıştır.⁵⁶

Cumhuriyetin kuruluşundan 2000'lerin başına kadar meydana gelen tüm bu siyasi ve toplumsal gelişmeler, Türkiye'nin siyasetinin şekillenmesinde ve ontolojik güven(siz)liğin inşasında önemli kavşakları oluşturmaktadır. Bu yıllardan sonra Türk siyasetinde dönüşüme etki edecek aktörleri ortaya çıkaran gelişme ise, özellikle 28 Şubat sürecinden ve Türkiye'nin zorlu siyasi gündeminden oldukça etkilenen, bu sürecin yol açtığı gelişmeler ile pragmatikleşen genç İslamcı kuşağın önce Fazilet Partisi'ne (FP) siyasi bir derinlik kazandırarak siyaset yapmaya meyletmesi, sonrasında ise kendilerini yenilikçiler olarak adlandırarak FP'den ayrı bir yol tutmaları ile gelişme göstermiştir.

FP içerisinde kendilerini yenilikçiler olarak adlandıran ve FP'den ayrılan bu genç kuşak, AK Parti'yi kurarak öncelikle “Milli görüş gömleğini çıkardığını” ifade etmiş, bundan önceki İslam temelli partilerin parti politikalarından farklı olarak, dünya ekonomisi ve liberalizm ile daha uyumlu bir duruş sergilemiştir.⁵⁷ Bu bağlamda, AK Parti siyasi seçmen için bir taraftan İslamcılığın yeni bir evrenini ifade ederken, bir taraftan Türkiye'de milliyetçi-muhafazakâr nitelik taşıyan merkez sağ geleneğin eklemelenmesiyle oluşan ve kendini muhafazakâr-demokrat⁵⁸ olarak tanımlayan bir parti kimliğini temsil etmektedir. Ayrıca bundan önceki İslam temelli partilerin siyaseten kalkış noktası, Cumhuriyet rejiminin Batılı kimlik politikalarına tepkisi üzerinden gelişme göstermişken, AK Parti ilk zamanlar neredeyse tüm politikalarını Avrupa Birliği (AB) üyeliği sürecine endekslemiştir (Mert, 2007: 113).

Ak Parti'nin seçim başarısını tekrar elde ettiği 2007 yılından 2013'teki Gezi olaylarına kadarki süreçte elde ettiği en önemli başarı ise, gerek söylemleri gerek politikaları ile kendini Türk toplumunun önemli bir kesimi için ontolojik güvenlik sağlayıcısı olarak sunması olmuştur. Bunu ilk zamanlar, Türkiye'nin jeopolitik olarak hem Doğulu hem Batılı olduğu “arada kalmış” yerini kabul ederek, dünyada bir “köprü” olduğu vurgusu ve Türkiye'nin

⁵⁶ Tanıl Bora, Milliyetçiliğin Kara Baharı, 2. bs, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2021).

⁵⁷ Şerif Mardin, Türkiye, İslam ve Sekülerizm, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2018), s.196.

⁵⁸ AK Parti Resmi Sitesi, Muhafazakâr-demokrat siyasi kimlik.



Avrupa ile arasındaki zamansal farkın kapatıldığı iddiası üzerinden gerçekleştirmiştir.⁵⁹ Fakat gerek Gezi Olayları gerek Cumhuriyet Mitingleri ve Çözüm Sürecinin başarısızlık ile sonuçlanması gibi nedenler, bu retorik geride bırakılmasına neden olmuştur.

Tüm bu gelişmelere karşı oluşan gerginlik ve tepki AK Parti iktidarının sert söylemlerinde kendini göstermeye başlamıştır. 2013'te gerçekleşen Gezi Olayları ve 15 Temmuz 2016'da yaşanan darbe girişiminden sonra AK Parti iktidarına yönelik her türlü muhalefet bir tehdit olarak algılanmaya başlamıştır. Tehdit olarak algılanan her muhalif girişim, "milli iradeye darbe ve ihanet" söylemi üzerine oturtularak, toplumun önemli bir kesiminde kabul görmüştür.⁶⁰ Bununla birlikte, 2016 yılında gerçekleşen darbe girişiminin başarısızlıkla sonuçlanması, siyasetin büyük oranda sivilleşmesini sağlarken; AK Parti iktidarı ve lideri Erdoğan'ın toplumun önemli bir kesimi üzerinde "üst üste oluşan tehditler ile mücadele ederek, sırtını dayadığı milli iradeyi düşman güçlere karşı koruyabilen bir iktidar profili çizmeyi" başarmasına katkı sağlamıştır.

Tüm bu nedenler ile birlikte Cumhur İttifakının ve Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan'ın kendini Türk toplumunun ontolojik güvenlik sağlayıcı olarak konumlandırmasında, Ak Parti lideri Erdoğan'ın ve Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi lideri Devlet Bahçeli'nin, Türkiye'de kurulan seçim ittifakları ve ittifak sürecinin değişimindeki rolleri ve inşa ettikleri ittifak kimliğinin önemli bir yeri bulunmaktadır. Cumhur İttifakı ile birlikte bir taraftan milliyetçi söylem siyasette belirginleşirken, terör örgütlerine karşı liderlerin pozisyonlarının örtüşmesi neticesinde Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Devleti'nin ulusal kimliği, milliyetçi-muhafazakâr-Atatürkçü ittifakı ile yekvücut bir resmi devlet ideolojisi içerisinde kendine önemli bir yer edinmiştir.

Bu gelişmelerden sonra Batıya karşı duruşu ve söylemleri değişen Erdoğan, kendi iktidarını sadece milli iradenin muhafızı olarak değil; aynı zamanda "Avrupa'nın Türkiye'yi eleştirmek için uygun bir ahlaki duruşa sahip olmadığı" ve "Avrupa'nın ilerlemeyi ve demokrasiyi ölçmek için bir ölçüt olamayacağı"⁶¹ söylemleri üzerinden yegâne ontolojik güvenlik sağlayıcısı olarak sunmuş, bunu Türkiye'nin Osmanlı Devleti'nin parçalanma ve ulus inşa sürecinde Batıya karşı deneyimlediği güvensizlik kaynaklarını yeniden üreterek

⁵⁹ Zeynep Gülsah Çapan ve Ayşe Zarakol: Turkey's Ambivalent Self: Ontological Insecurity In 'Kemalism' Versus 'Erdoğanism', Cambridge Review of International Affairs, (2019), 1(20), s.13.

⁶⁰ Bahar Rumelili ve Güneş Uzunoğlu, "Ontolojik Güven(siz)lik ve Popülizm", Eleştirel Güvenlik ve Türkiye içinde, ed. Berk Esen ve Başar Baysal, 1. bs (İstanbul: İletişim Yayıncılık, 2022).

⁶¹ Zeynep Gülsah Çapan ve Ayşe Zarakol: Turkey's Ambivalent Self: Ontological Insecurity In 'Kemalism' Versus 'Erdoğanism', Cambridge Review of International Affairs, (2019), 1(20), s.13.



gerçekleştirmiştir. Emperyalizmin yeni sureti olarak ifade edilebilecek küreselleşmeyle birlikte dış güçler ile irtibat ve işbirliği halinde bulunan farklı odakların ve düşmanların ulus-devleti erozyona uğratacağı temel endişesi ise bu algıyı kuvvetlendirmiştir.

Bu tarihsel perspektiften, Türkiye’de seçimde oluşan ontolojik güven(siz)liğin ve bu güvensizliğin üzerine inşa edildiği “kaygı” duygusunun temelini, Batı’nın Türkiye’yi bölmeyi ve istikrarsızlaştırmayı ahdedtiği “Sevr sendromu” ile yani “beka endişesi” ile birleştiği değerlendirilmektedir. Bununla birlikte, Türk siyasi hayatında birçok kez ve benzer gerekçelerle tekrar etmiş darbe girişimleri ve bu darbe girişimleri neticesinde oluşan anti-demokratik uygulamalar, toplumun belli kesiminde önemli travmalara yol açmıştır. Bu travmalar, her toplumsal tepkinin ve muhalefetin ardından toplumsal karışıklıkların meydana geleceği, bu durumun bir darbe ile neticeleneceği ve temel hak ve hürriyetlerinin kısıtlanacağı endişesini doğurmaktadır. Aynı algı, AK Parti iktidarına karşı yapılan her kitlesel hareketin bir darbe girişimine yol açacağı düşüncesinin oluşmasında ve bunun toplum tarafından karşılık bulmasında da önemli etkenlerden birini oluşturmaktadır. Bu sebeple Türkiye Cumhuriyeti’nin kuruluşundan günümüze varıncaya kadar, yaşanan her belirsizlik ve kriz anlarında toplumun ontolojik kaygılarına karşı “umut, güven ve istikrar” vadeden her siyasi söylem ve lider(ler) toplumun önemli bir kesimi için çekim noktası haline gelmektedir.

4.2. 14 Mayıs 2023 Seçimleri

Muhalefet partileri, kararsız ve muhalif seçmenler; son dönemde yaşanan ekonomik koşullar, gelir dağılımındaki adaletsizlik, yönetimdeki eksiklikler, yargıdaki sorunlar ve çözümler, liyakatsizlik ve bir kısmı ihmaller nedeniyle binlerce kişinin yaşamını yitirdiği depremlerin ardından 14 Mayıs seçimlerinde Cumhur İttifakı adayı Erdoğan’a desteğin azalacağını beklemiştir. Tüm bu beklentilere rağmen, 14 Mayıs seçimlerinde, hem iktidar hem de muhalefet kanadında oy kaybeden partiler bulunmakla birlikte, Cumhur İttifakı gerek cumhurbaşkanlığı gerek milletvekili seçimlerinde çoğunluğu sağlarken, muhalefet kendisinden beklenen başarıyı elde edememiştir. Seçimlerde, Cumhur İttifakı’nın başarısında ve Millet İttifakı’nın arzu edilen başarıyı yakalayamamasında madun siyaseti, siyasal, sosyal ve toplumsal etkiler, Türkiye’nin güvenlik endişelerinin rolü, ittifak-ıç i ve ittifak-dış ı farklı dinamiklerin etkileri olabileceği değerlendirilmekte birlikte, tüm bu farklı dinamiklerin toplumun ontolojik kaygılarının krize çevrilmesinde ve sonrasında aktörlerin etkin çözüm



sağlayıcısı olarak kendini konumlandırmasında önemli yapısal ve tarihsel faktörlere dayandırılarak kullanıldığı anlaşılmaktadır.

Esmer'in de ifade ettiği gibi “siyaset; ekonominin, enflasyonun ötesinde, semboller ve algılar üzerinedir.” Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan'ın ve Cumhuriyet İttifakı'nın seçim tarihi olarak 14 Mayısı belirlemesi, sembolik olarak bu tarihin bir önemi olmasındandır. Seçim öncesi söylemlerinde 14 Mayıs 1950 seçimlerini referans gösteren Erdoğan: “rahmetli Menderes, 14 Mayıs 1950'de, ‘yeter söz milletindir’ diyerek milletin gönlüne girmiş ve sandıktan ezici bir zaferle çıkmıştır... milletimiz 73 yıl sonra bir kez daha, aynı gün ‘yeter’ diyecektir”⁶² diyerek, bu seçimlerin yaklaşık 22 yıllık iktidarına rağmen, Türkiye için yeniden bir dönüm noktası ve yol ayrımı olduğu algısını toplumda oluşturmaya çalışmıştır. Bununla birlikte, “mazinin yüce değerlerini âtinin aydınlık ufuklarına nakşetmiş... Siyasete, kaybettiği itibarını yeniden kazandırmış, milletin bağrından çıkıp yine ve her zaman milletinden güç almış...” ifadeleri ile uzun tarihsel bir geçmişi olan elit-gerçek halk ikililiğini gün yüzüne çıkararak; mağdur olmuş bir halk tasavvuru ile halka varoluşsal bir önem atfetmiştir.

Buna karşı Millet İttifakı'nın “güçlendirilmiş parlamenter sistem”, “demokratikleşme ve çok kültürlülük” söylemlerine rağmen ittifak liderlerinin kendi aralarındaki anlaşmazlıkları ve zaman zaman gündem olan söylemleri⁶³, toplumda muhalefete duyulan inancın zedelenmesine neden olmuştur. Mesaisinin büyük çoğunluğunu yeni anayasa ve güçlendirilmiş parlamenter sistem tartışmalarına ayıran muhalefetin; cumhurbaşkanı adayını geç açıklaması, belirlenen adayın kararsız seçmenin oylarını belirleyecek ve muhalefette güven oluşturacak güçte bir lideri temsil etmemesi ve muhalefetin toplumun endişelerini giderecek somut adımlarda bulunarak toplumun kaygılarını iyi yönetememesi⁶⁴ iktidarın, muhalefetin cumhurbaşkanı adayı Kılıçdaroğlu'nun seçilmesi durumunda ülkenin bekasını tehlikeye düşereceği⁶⁵ endişesini topluma başarı ile yerleştirmesine katkı sağlamıştır.

Ayrıca Millet İttifakı'nın seçim gündemini ve söylemlerini; ekonomi, iyi yönetim, ehliyetli kadro, siyasi geleneklerin birliği, depremin hasarlarının giderilmesi, yargıdaki eksiklikler gibi öncelikli meselelere harcayarak ve topluma “umut ve değişim” aşılayarak belirlemek yerine, mevcut durumu ve meydana gelebilecek daha kötü senaryoları resmetmesi,

⁶²Günce Akpamuk, “14 Mayıs 1950'de ne olmuştu, AKP neden bu tarihi referans alıyor?”, BBC, 11 Nisan 2023.

⁶³“6'lı Masada Yetki Karmaşası”, TRT Haber, 12 Ocak 2023; “6'lı masa millet iradesini kararlarına yansıtma kabiliyetini kaybetmiştir”, TRT Haber, 3 Mart 2023.

⁶⁴Mert Hüseyin Akgün, Millet İttifakı Umduğunu Neden Bulamıyor?, www.setav.org, 4 Mayıs 2023.

⁶⁵“Bizim Milletimiz Bunların Peşinden Gitmez”, Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Cumhurbaşkanlığı, 5 Mayıs 2023.



helalleşme söylemi ve çözüm vaatlerinde zayıf kalması, toplumun “değişim umudu” beklentisini “istikrarsızlık” endişesine bırakmasına neden olmuştur.

Özellikle 28 Şubat sürecinde ağır travmalar yaşamış muhafazakâr seçmene dair Kılıçdaroğlu'nun “helalleşme” söylemi; Kemalist çizgideki seçmenler, partiler ve gruplarca desteklenmediği için samimi görülmemiştir. Helalleşme söylemi ile Kılıçdaroğlu bir taraftan mağdur olmuş bir seçmen kitlesinin travmalarını kuvvetli bir şekilde uyandırmış, diğer taraftan helalleşeceği kitlenin beklentilerini karşılayacak söylemler inşa edememiştir. Bu durum hem helalleşmeyi hedeflediği kitlede “yanılsama” ve “sahicilik” arasında bir seçim yapma zorunluluğu doğurmuş, hem de kendi seçmeninin kendi değer ve inanış dayanaklarını ilk sıraya koyarak tepki vermesine neden olmuştur. Bu durum bir şekilde, iktidar seçmeni ile muhalefet seçmeninin karşı karşıya gelmesine, kimliklerini ön plana çıkarmasına ve “biz-öteki” ayrımının keskinleşmesine zemin hazırlamıştır.⁶⁶ Bununla birlikte, kararsız seçimde Millet İttifakı'nın değişimin adresi olmadığı algısı güçlenmiştir. Çoğunlukla Atatürkçü, seküler, solcu ve sosyalist seçmenin oylarına hitap eden CHP'nin, daha heterojen bir seçmen kitlesine hitap etmeye çalışması neticesinde yürüttüğü eylemler, kendi seçmen tabanı üzerindeki güvenin dahi azalmasına neden olmuştur.⁶⁷

Bununla birlikte, Kılıçdaroğlu'nun “helalleşme” söyleminin⁶⁸ halkta güven oluşturmaması yeniden iktidara destek kazandırmıştır. İktidara geldiği 2002 yılından günümüze kadar “muhafazakâr ve dindar halkın” “sekülerler” tarafından ötekileştirildiği ve mağdur edildiği söylemleri ile imam hatip ve başörtüsü tartışmaları üzerinden yeniden aktive edilen demokratik hak temelli mağduriyetler⁶⁹, Erdoğan'ın iktidarı kaybetmesi durumunda toplumun dindar kesiminin elde ettiği hakları yeniden kaybedeceği endişesine dair kaygıları körüklemiştir. Bu durumda muhafazakâr ve dindar seçmen Erdoğan'ı haklarının ve hürriyetlerinin garantörü olarak konumlandırmıştır.

Muhalefeti temsil eden Millet İttifakı'nın içinde yer alan ve muhafazakâr blok olarak ifade edilebilecek Gelecek, Deva ve Saadet Partileri'nin de AK Parti'ye dair seçmenin memnuniyetsizliklerine karşı güçlü ve tutarlı bir adres oluşturamaması ve Erdoğan'ın

⁶⁶Onur Erkan, “Kimlerle Helalleşilmez: Kılıçdaroğlu'nun Helalleşme Çağrısına Sosyal Medyada Konulan Kriterler”, Serbestiyet, 15 Kasım 2021.

⁶⁷Mehmet Ali Güller, “Kılıçdaroğlu'nun Helalleşme Açılımı”, Cumhuriyet, 18 Kasım 2021.

⁶⁸Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, “CHP Genel Başkanı Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, Helalleşme Buluşmasına Katıldı”, 14 Ağustos 2022.

⁶⁹Bahar Rumelili ve Güneş Uzunoğlu, “Ontolojik Güven(siz)lik ve Popülizm”, Eleştirel Güvenlik ve Türkiye içinde, Editör: Berk Esen ve Başar Baysal, 1. bs, İstanbul: İletişim Yayıncılık, 2022.



uzaklaşmaya meyyal muhalif seçmenleri durdurmak yerine muhalif seçmeni ittifakta tutacak yolları doğru analiz ederek “birlik ve beraberlik” vurgusu yapması, kararsız seçmenin desteğini Cumhuriyet İttifakı’na yönlendirmiştir. Erdoğan, İslami ve Osmanlı geçmişine ait referansları liberal ve çoğulcu bir toplum imgesi üretmek üzere kullanarak⁷⁰ ve bu motifleri özellikle muhafazakâr-demokrat çerçeveye koyduğu parti kimliğine yerleştirerek halka sunmuştur.

Cumhuriyet İttifakı’nın kararsız seçmenin desteğini kazanmasının ve Millet İttifakı’nın bu desteği kaybetmesinin diğer önemli bir nedeni, muhalif kesimde seçim süresi boyunca “iktidar kaybediyor” söylemlerinin⁷¹ verdiği özgüvenle⁷² FETÖ ve PKK destekçilerinin sosyal medyada yaptıkları paylaşımlar ve yürüttüğü kampanyalar sonucunda toplumun teröre karşı duyarlılığının ve hassasiyetlerinin tırmanmış olmasıdır. Bu süreçte Millet İttifakının pasifize olmasına karşı; toplumun güven duygusunu arttırmak, istikrar ihtiyacını gidermek, terör ve kaos karşıtlığını arttırmak, devletin kimliğini vurgulayarak beka endişesini gidermek amacıyla Cumhuriyet İttifakı’nın ortaya koyduğu etkin söylemler⁷³, seçimin büyük ölçüde belirleyicisi olmuştur. Erdoğan, bütün siyasi rakiplerini “ortak bir düşman bloğunun parçası” olarak sunmuş, seçmenleri ise ülkede meydana gelen ve gelebilecek bütün olumsuzların sorumlusu olarak tanımladığı muhalefete karşı, seferberliğe davet etmiştir.⁷⁴

Erdoğan, “beke endişesi” ve “istikar” söylemleri ile bir taraftan kendi seçmenine bir taraftan kararsız seçmenin oylarına hitap ederken, bir taraftan “değişim” isteyen genç seçmenin duygularına hitap edecek adımlara yönelmiştir. “Yerlilik ve millilik” söylemleri ve attığı somut adımlar neticesinde seçmenleri ülkenin kronikleşmiş işsizlik ve enflasyon gündeminden uzaklaştırmayı başarmıştır. Öğrenim kredisi burslarının artırılması, kredi faizlerinin silinmesi, şehir hastaneleri projeleri ile salgın döneminde sürdürülen hizmetler, uzay projeleri, İHA’lar (İnsansız Hava Aracı), SİHA’lar (Silahlı İnsansız Hava Aracı) ve teknoloji festivalleri (Teknofest), Türk Deniz Kuvvetleri’ne ait gemilerin (TCG) tanıtılması, yerli doğalgaz üretimi, deprem konutlarının en geç bir yıl içinde teslimine başlanacağı gibi somut adımlar ile genç ve kararsız seçmenlerin seçim tercihlerinin yönlendirilmesinde etkili olmuştur. Bu durum aynı

⁷⁰ Onur Özger, “AKP Siyasetinde Popülist Bir İnşa Pratiği Olarak Milli İrade Söylemi”, Hacettepe Üniversitesi İletişim Fakültesi Kültürel Çalışmalar Dergisi, (2021), 8(1): s.344.

⁷¹ Deniz Zeyrek, Erdoğan Neden Kaybedecek?, Sözcü, 1 Mayıs 2023; Mehmet Tezkan, CHP İlçe Başkanlığı, 2 Haziran 2022.

⁷²“Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu Fetö’ye Desteğini Sürdürüyor!”, Sabah, 22 Temmuz 2022; “Kılıçdaroğlu: Pkk Demediğimiz İçin Suçlanıyoruz”, Trt Haber, 6 Mayıs 2023.

⁷³Erdoğan’dan ‘Seçim’ Açıklaması: Artık Kaybedecek Çok Şeyimiz Var, Yeniçağ, 06 Temmuz 2022.

⁷⁴T.C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı, “2023 Seçimleri, Ülkemizin Ve Milletimizin Kaderi Bakımından Gerçek Anlamda Bir Yol Ayrımını İfade Edecektir”, 17 Mart 2022.



zamanda, Cumhur İttifakının “istikrar içinde deęişim” vurgusunu ön plana çıkarmasına katkı sağlamıştır.

Cumhur İttifakı ve lideri Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan’ın yürüttüğü siyasetin temel bileşenlerinin; ana akım siyaset, istikrar, kurulu düzen, elit karşıtlığı, yoğun bir beka ve milli irade, din ve değerler vurgusu üzerine kurulu olduğu anlaşılmaktadır. Özellikle Türkiye Cumhuriyeti’nin kuruluşundan bu yana süregelen darbe girişimleri, terör ve siyasal krizlerin yarattığı belirsizlik ve güvensizlikler ile toplumsal travmaları bir taraftan “tek vatan, tek millet, tek bayrak” gibi duygusal ifadeler üzerinden ve “biz” vurgusu ile teskin etmeye çalışırken; diğer taraftan devletin bekasına karşı birçok farklı dış ve iç tehdidin varlığından bahsederek “ötekiler”in varlığına dikkat çekmiş ve toplumun ontolojik kaygılarını beslemiştir.

Seçimlerden önce Türk-İslam kimliği temelli söylemleri ile biz-öteki vurgusunu körüklemiş olmakla birlikte, seçimlerin sonuna doğru birlik ve beraberlik vurgusu ile oluşabilecek tüm siyasal, toplumsal ve ekonomik krizlerin sadece kendi iktidarları ile çözülebileceğine dair söylemlerde bulunmuştur. İktidar ve lideri Erdoğan seçim öncesi söylemleri⁷⁵ ile kendi iktidarlarını, toplumdaki güvensizlikleri sonlandıracak tek çare ve yegâne ontolojik güvenlik sağlayıcısı olarak sunmuştur.

Bu bağlamda, Türkiye’de bir ontolojik güvenlik sağlayıcısı olarak, biz ve öteki vurgusunun kuvvetli olduğu, dini ve milli değerlere vurgu yapan, özcü anlayışa dayanan, tarihsel hikâyeleri güçlü bir dille ortaya koyan, siyasette istikrar vurgusu yaparak güvenlik sağlamayı hedefleyen sağ popülist söylemin; eşitlikçi fikirlere dayalı, çok kültürlülük yanlısı, gelir dağılımında adaletsizlik vurgusu ile toplumda güven inşa etmeye çalışan sol popülist söyleme galip geldiği söylenebilecektir.

Bununla birlikte, Türkiye’de bu sonucun ortaya çıkmasının nedeni seçim süreçlerinde halkın ikna edilmesinin kolaylığı ya da tek başına duygusal seçmen davranışı değildir. İnşa edilen söylem ve anlatıların toplumun ve hedef kitlenin sosyolojik ve tarihsel olarak geçmişte yaşadıkları güvensizliklere ve travmalara birebir seslenen bir anlam taşıması ve bunun başarı ile kullanılmasından ötürüdür. Türkiye’de sağ popülist söylemin milli ve manevi kavramları kullanarak siyasal davranışları yönlendirme gücü, inşa edilen güvensizliklerin tahayyüllere değil, geçmişte yaşanmış ve tekrarı mümkün olabileceği düşünülen tutarlı ve bütünleşik hikâyeler üzerinden aktarılmış olmasına bağlıdır.

⁷⁵ AK Parti 2023 Seçim Beyannamesi.



Bu sebeple Türkiye’de seçmenlerin, seçim süreçlerinde birçok farklı dinamiğe ve olumsuz koşullara rağmen bu dinamikleri kafasında başat bir duyguya dönüştürerek kararlarını belirledikleri değerlendirilmektedir. Bu duyguyu ortaya çıkaran nedenlerin maddi unsurlardan daha çok seçmenin ontolojik kaygılarına temas eden unsurlara dayandığı ifade edilebilecektir. Türkiye’de seçimde oluşan ontolojik güven(siz)liğin ve bu güvensizliğin üzerine inşa edildiği “kaygı” duygusunun temelini ise, Batı’nın Türkiye’yi bölmeyi ve istikrarsızlaştırmayı ahdedtiği “Sevr sendromu” ile birleştiği değerlendirilmektedir. Belirsizlik dönemlerinde ise, toplumun kaygılarına karşı umut vadeden her söylemin “Kurtuluş Savaşı”na dayandırılarak, Türk toplumunun bir yas toplumu değil, zafer toplumu olduğu algısı üzerinden güçlü bir lider arayışı ile birleştirildiği ifade edilebilecektir. Emperyalizmin yeni sureti olarak ifade edilebilecek küreselleşmeyle birlikte ise, dış güçler ile irtibat ve işbirliği halinde bulunan farklı odakların ulus-devleti erozyona uğratacağı temel endişelerinin bu düşünceleri kuvvetlendirdiği anlaşılmaktadır.

5. Sonuç

Nasıl ki bireylerin genetik yapısı, çevresi, içerisinde bulunduğu ortam ve yaşanmışlıkları, hastalıkların teşhis edilmesinde geriye dönük olarak incelenmesi gereken önemde ise, toplumların davranışları incelendiğinde de davranışları üzerinde etkili olan/olabilecek travmatik olaylar ve duygular üzerinde durmak, toplumların siyasi davranışlarını analiz etmek adına önemli görülmüş ve dikkate alınmıştır. Ontolojik güven(siz)liği tanımlayan duyguların bireylerin siyasal davranışları üzerindeki rolünü anlamaya yönelik bu bilimsel arayış son dönemde Siyaset Bilimi ve Uluslararası İlişkiler disiplini içerisinde de kendine önemli bir yer edinmiştir.

Siyaset Bilimi ve Uluslararası İlişkiler disiplini içerisinde gelişme gösteren kavram, güvenlik çalışmalarının politik davranışları açıklamada yetersiz kaldığı konulara alternatif bir bakış açısı sağlayarak, kimliği güvenlik analizine dâhil etmektedir. Bunu, aktörlerin “fiziksel” veya “maddi” güvensizlikleri söz konusu olduğunda dahi kimliklerine uyumlu davranışlar gösterebilecekleri temel vurgusu ile ortaya koymaktadır.

Bu kuramsal zeminde yürütülen çalışmada, Türkiye’de seçmen davranışlarının şekillenmesinde ve Türk siyasetini anlamada ontolojik güven(siz)liğin etkili bir faktör olduğu değerlendirilmektedir. Bu doğrultuda, Türk siyasal hayatında ulus devletinin oluşumu sürecinden itibaren süregelen beka endişesinin, darbelerin, 1980 sonrasında oluşan toplumsal travmaların,



sorunlar ve açmazlar ile uyumlu gelişen ontolojik kaygıların, Türkiye’de seçmenin davranışlarını mevcut iktidarın korunması noktasında nasıl yönlendirdiği analiz edilmeye çalışılmıştır. Bu argüman ile çalışmada ontolojik güven(siz)lik, 14 Mayıs 2023 seçimlerini Cumhur İttifakı’nın kazanmasının tek başına temel nedeni olarak görülmemekte; siyasetin inşasında ve seçmen davranışlarının yönlendirilmesinde güçlü bir faktör olduğu kabul etmektedir. Bununla birlikte, Türkiye’de toplumun çoğunluğunun siyasi davranışlarının ontolojik kaygılardan önemli ölçüde etkilendiği, bu ontolojik temelin inşasında “kaygı, korku ve umut” duygularının önemli bir yerinin olduğu, ontolojik güven(siz)liğin inşasında ve krizlerin güvene dönüştürülmesinde bu duyguların başat duygular olduğu değerlendirilmektedir.

Türkiye’de ontolojik güven(siz)liğin inşa sürecinin dini ve milli söylemler üzerine oturtulduğu gibi dış düşmanlar ve dış tehditler üzerinden yüceltilmiş bir geçmiş ile de ilişkilendirildiği anlaşılmaktadır. Bununla birlikte, kimliklerin birbirine dair tehdit algılamalarının, tecrübe edilen ve yeniden üretilen anlatılara dayandığı anlaşılmaktadır. Bu sebeple Türkiye’de seçmenlerin yoğun kaygı ve belirsizlik dönemlerinde, ontolojik güvenlik ihtiyaçlarını karşılamak için öz kimliklerinin güvenliklerini sağlayabileceklerine inandıkları herhangi bir kolektif kimlik çatısı altına sığınma eğiliminde oldukları değerlendirilmektedir.

Özellikle istikrarsızlığın yoğun güvensizliğe yol açtığı dönemlerde kitlesel travmaya maruz kalan bazı kesimlerde, ontolojik güven(siz)liklerine karşı politik davranışlarını şekillendirmede kimliklerin daha etkili bir değişken olduğu değerlendirilmektedir. Böyle dönemlerde bireylerin değişime daha az açık, belirsizliklere karşı ise daha az toleranslı davrandığı; bu sebeple seçmenlerin 14 Mayıs seçimlerinde Cumhur İttifakına, kendilerini olumlayan siyasi aktöre karşı güvenini ve desteğini sürdürme eğiliminde olduğu anlaşılmaktadır.

Bununla birlikte, 14 Mayıs 2023 seçimlerinde sağ popülist söylemin sol popülist söyleme oranla bireylere yeniden güven duygusunun aktarılması noktasında; varoluşsal kaygılara, kayıplara ve umutsuzluklara karşı güvenli, istikrarlı ve sağlam bir zemin sağladığı ve çözümlere ilişkin daha net bir tablo sunduğu için daha başarılı olduğu değerlendirilmektedir. Bu değerlendirmeler bağlamında, 14 Mayıs seçimlerinde seçmen davranışlarına; toplumun ontolojik kaygılarını doğru analiz ederek ve bu kaygıları teskin edecek eylem ve söylemlerde bulunarak, halkta “güven, güvenlik ve istikrar” duygularını beslemeyi başaran iktidarın, Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan’ın ve Cumhur İttifakı’nın yön verdiği sonucuna varılmıştır.



Extended Summary

The concept of ontological security, first used by Scottish psychiatrist Laing in his book “The Divided Self: An Existential Study in Sanity and Madness” and further elaborated by the British sociologist Anthony Giddens in his book “The Constitution of Society,” is expressed at the individual level based on the fundamental idea that “social actors need a sense of a core identity (narrative) to sustain their continuity.” This core identity is built upon a state of security where individuals desire stability and continuity in “who they are, where they come from, and where they will be in the future.” Therefore, ontological security is built upon the security of individuals' autonomous and unified identities, which have an inner existence. This alternative perspective contributes significantly to various disciplines and security studies by defining the security of individuals not only as “survival” but also as “a degree of freedom and scope for making choices among the threats that determine life.” The concept, which has also gained importance in the field of Political Science and International Relations, attempts to demonstrate the significant effects of the core identities and the socio-psychological dynamics underlying these identities on the shaping of the political behaviors of states and societies, just like individuals. In this way, the concept provides an alternative perspective to security studies, including identity in security analysis, by highlighting that actors can exhibit behavior consistent with their identities even when “physical” or “material” insecurities are at stake. The influential studies on ontological security in the literature suggest that during periods of intense anxiety and uncertainty, individuals tend to seek refuge under any collective identity framework that they believe can provide security for their core identities. It is emphasized that in societies exposed to mass trauma, instability leads to intense insecurity, and in such situations, identities become a more effective variable in shaping individuals' political behavior against insecurities. During such periods, individuals tend to be less open to change and less tolerant of uncertainties.

The purpose of this study is to demonstrate the significant role of ontological security (in)stability in shaping voter behavior in Türkiye and understanding Turkish politics. In this context, the study argues that ontological security (in)stability can be both a positive and negative force in shaping political behavior in Türkiye. Therefore, the study aims to first introduce the main arguments and emotions of ontological security. Subsequently, it will analyze how the relationship between ontological security and identity shapes the attitudes and behaviors of voters in Türkiye. The theoretical section of the research, based on secondary data,



will be built upon a theoretical framework derived from the definitions in the national and international literature concerning ontological security. The fundamental argument that ontological security (in)stability is an influential factor in shaping the political behavior of Turkish voters will be analyzed through the lens of how the ongoing concerns of national survival since the formation of the nation-state, coupled with the ontological anxieties that have evolved in harmony with social traumas, problems, and dilemmas following the military coups, have directed the behavior of Turkish voters towards the preservation of the current regime. In line with these ontological anxieties, the study seeks to answer how the “pragmatic” politics pursued by the ruling party during the elections on May 14, 2023, triumphed over the “passive” politics pursued by the opposition, and how it increased the pursuit of national stability provided by a strong leader in the society. Qualitative research methods are employed in the study, while an inductive research approach is adopted with logical reasoning.

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Cartel to Player: OPEC Dynamics in the Global Oil Market

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Abstract

Since its formation in the 1960s as a regime, OPEC has primarily controlled the world's energy supply and price regulations. The journey of the organization as an energy cartel to the regional geopolitics and to face climate change challenges has been difficult. Although OPEC has undergone various changes in the coming time, its role in the energy market and process cannot be ignored. Despite the shifting energy market, OPEC will remain the dominant force in the coming year, even with the ongoing situation in the current global world order. This research paper intends to understand the various aspects within and outside OPEC, how its role plays a vital role in the current status of OPEC, and how much climate change will impact the organization as a whole.

Keywords: *Dissent, Energy Security, Energy Transition, OPEC, Russia-Ukraine war, Shale*

1. Introduction

In the era of the expanding economy, the world's dependence on fossil fuels like oil or natural gas has been the economy's driving force. However, in a world where oil has become a significant commodity, the demand and supply of "Black Gold", as some scholars have coined, has played a crucial role in oil and natural gas geopolitics. However, it is being observed that in the current scenario, the dominance of OPEC is slowly reducing rather than increasing due to the prominence of fractions within the grouping and the growing emphasis on shifting to clean and renewable energy resources. Studies earlier on the new challenges on OPEC by Fattouh and Sen (2016) have indicated that OPEC, due to its internal challenges and external factors, will lose relevance in the coming few years.¹ Reed (2021) has also added that OPEC has become irrelevant with the rise of the OPEC+, that OPEC must reinvent itself and find a way to, and that soon, there will be a need for more control over the organization.² Another

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¹ Fattouh, Bassam & Sen, Anupama. (2016). The Past, Present, and Future Role of OPEC. 10.1057/978-1-137-55631-8_3.

² Reed, Stanley. "OPEC and Allies Hold the Cards as Prices and Demand Rise." The New York Times, June 29, 2021. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/29/business/opec-plus-meeting-preview.html>.



study by Srisipurapu and Chatzky (2022) has shown that OPEC's relevance will be challenged. However, the organization's dominance will remain in the international market³. Slav (2024) stated that OPEC will undergo a significant transformation in the coming days, facing multiple challenges and a critical transition. Still, it will be able to adapt to the coming changes at large.⁴ The various views talking about the fall and substance of OPEC now beg the question, what is the future of OPEC? Will OPEC remain a relevant body in the current scenario, or will the organization be unable to bear the weight of the changing wind and become obsolete in the coming times?

In the scope of understanding OPEC, through the lens of global geopolitical dynamics and geopolitics of energy security, the paper attempts to analyze whether oil and OPEC lose their prominence due to the energy transition and shale boom across the globe, growing geopolitical concerns with rising factionalism within the OPEC. Furthermore, All these aspects have been analyzed through the exploratory method, where secondary sources like articles and organizational data data such as IEA, E.I.A., and I.S.A. are used to create an understanding and analysis of the topic.

2. Herald of a New Era

Before the establishment of the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) in 1960, the global energy market was primarily regulated by the 'Seven Sisters', the major multinational oil companies which included Anglo-Persian Oil, Gulf Oil, Standard Oil of California (SOCAL), Texaco, Royal Dutch Shell, Standard oil company of New Jersey and Standard Oil company of New York⁵ The seven sisters used to determine the oil flow exclusively to control and have a monopoly on the oil prices in the international energy market. However, this monopoly infuriated the countries where the oil was produced and exported. Despite possessing vast petroleum resources, they were forced to purchase them from the companies at a prohibitive rate compared to their Western counterparts. It is congruent with the fact that since the discovery of massive oil blocks in the 1920s in Saudi Arabia, these companies

³. Anshu Siripurapu and Andrew Chatsky, "OPEC in a Changing World," Council on Foreign Relations, March 9, 2022, <https://www.cfr.org/background/pepec-changing-world>.

⁴ Irina Slav, "OPEC's Influence on Oil Prices to Remain Significant in 2024," OilPrice.com, December 29, 2023, <https://oilprice.com/Energy/Crude-Oil/OPECs-Influence-on-Oil-Prices-To-Remain-Significant-In-2024.html>.

⁵ Adam Hayes, "Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)," Investopedia, accessed March 17, 2024, <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/o/opec.asp>.



attempted to gain access to oil-rich countries. The first commercial exploration of oil at Dammam (now Dhahran) by American company SOCAL in Saudi Arabia in 1938 heralded a new phase of global energy exploration. Soon, many other companies, like vultures, started venturing into the West Asian energy resource market, monopolizing the multinational companies. By depriving the oil-rich countries of their resources and say on production, refining, and the price mechanism, the major global oil companies led the ground for dissent and discontent in their backyard, and this led to the establishment of OPEC as an intergovernmental organization or cartel in 1960 and the consequent gradual decay of the 'Seven Sisters'.⁶

As signed in Baghdad in 1960, the OPEC Charter began with the core objectives to regulate oil production and supply and price mechanisms. In a broader spectrum, the objectives included: "Co-ordinate and unify petroleum policies among the member countries, to secure fair and stable prices for petroleum producers; an efficient, economical and regular supply of petroleum to consuming nations; and a fair return on capital to those investing in the industry." During the transitional period in the 1960s, OPEC established its footprint in the global energy market by gradually overthrowing the 'Seven Sisters' in decision-making and price regulations⁷. In the 1970s, OPEC became more prominent as its member countries took complete control of domestic petroleum industries and the world energy market. However, the decade witnessed several impactful events that caused volatility in the global oil market, specifically the Arab oil embargo against the U.S. and its allies for supporting and assisting Israel in the Israel-Arab war. The embargo had spiraling effects that caused hardship for developing countries that had already experienced economic challenges, even in their transition from decolonization to development. So, OPEC broadened its mandate at the Algiers Summit in 1975, which addressed the necessity for taking care of the plight of the lower-economic states for their economic development and political stability; consequently, the establishment of the OPEC Fund for International Development in 1976⁸. However, the global economic recession in the early 1980s did not make headway for oil, and the energy demand slumped.

⁶ India , Government of. "Formation of OPEC." Ministry of External Affairs. Accessed September 22, 2023. <https://eoi.gov.in/eoisearch/MyPrint.php?8874%3F001%2F0029>.

⁷Albert Danielsen, "OPEC," Encyclopædia Britannica, January 10, 2017, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/OPEC>.

⁸ OPEC. "Brief History of OPEC." OPEC. Accessed September 22, 2023. https://www.opec.org/opec_web/en/about_us/24.htm.



Nevertheless, in the late 1980s, the OPEC oil market recovered, and its share of newly growing world output began to heal due to the revival of global economic growth. The first Gulf War in 1991 created a panic in the global energy market. The growing economic liberalization and a high economic growth rate worldwide in the aftermath of the Cold War necessitated more energy requirements, and crucially, Brent crude oil reached an all-time high of \$147.50 in July 2008. OPEC today produces about 45% of the global oil and constitutes over 80% of "proven" reserves in the international oil market. However, since the beginning of the 21st century, the OPEC cartel has faced various challenges in its market regulations, which can be analyzed through the issue of Saudi dominance, the price war and the emergence of OPEC+, the shale boom, the quest for alternative sources of energy and OPEC-IPCC debate on net-zero emission.⁹

3. Dissent and Discontent from within

The global crude oil price is much affected by the supply and demand theory of economics, i.e., the greater the demand, the higher the price, and the more the supply, the lesser the demand and price. Hence, it is evident that OPEC uses this simple theory to control the arteries of the international energy market. The global demand directly impacts member countries' produce and supply, primarily set by a "Quota system" in the OPEC regime. A quota is a set of production and supply rules usually based on the economic condition of each country concerned. A member country's GDP and economic output are vital in determining how much the state can handle production. It is based on the assumption—that the lesser the G.D.P., the lesser the capacity to produce oil and export.¹⁰

The quota-determining formula is relatively insignificant here. The paradox of the quota system is that a member country can only produce a little even when it is in dire need of revenue generation to pay back the external borrowings and raise its economic growth level. For most OPEC countries, energy constitutes the most significant chunk of revenue. The quota system has adverse ramifications for the low-level economies in cartels.

⁹ Fattouh, Bassam, and Andreas Economu. "OPEC at 60: The World with and without OPEC." OPEC Energy motion, May 7, 2021. https://www.opec.org/opec_web/en/906.htm.

¹⁰ Ghoddusi, Hamed, Masoud Nili, and Mahdi Rastad. "On Quota Violations of OPEC Members." *SSRN Electronic Journal*, 2017. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3050369>.



First, as each country is assigned to produce a particular amount of crude in a period, its failure due to an economic crisis will cause a loss of membership, which is a significant setback to a member country. Second, a country overburdened with external borrowing wants to increase its production level, which the cartel allows as it exceeds the quota. Therefore, Ecuador left the cartel in 2020 as it could not produce enough to repay external borrowings. Other member countries like Iran, Libya, and Venezuela are unhappy with the system as the system benefits those who have higher G.D.P. and robust economies like Saudi Arabia and U.A.E.

Third, for these countries, the quota system has a detrimental effect as it does not allow them to grow to their production level due to economic hardships. Oil is not the only sector of these countries that concentrates on their multi-faceted growth and development process¹¹. As Qatar felt it could not produce the oil to the quota level because of its shifting focus on mammoth natural gas resources, the country left the cartel, anticipating it could not meet the oil production quota.

Likewise, Bahrain is unhappy with how the bigger states like Saudi Arabia have treated members of the OPEC. It has asked Riyadh to change OPEC's increasing and decreasing oil production system. Bahrain accuses Saudi Arabia of having its way of dictating the terms of the quota system to maximize its benefits. The small countries (in terms of economic growth) have little role in production, supply, and price determination[5]. More mention, in the wake of the 'price war' (2014-2016), there was a drastic crude price decline, and Saudi Arabia opted for an indefinite war to survive OPEC stakes in the energy market. Still, the low-performing economies, which had faced severe economic hardship, opted for a production cut, which was unfortunately unmet. Frontline countries in this regard included Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Algeria, Congo, Libya, and Venezuela. Therefore, the quota system and the dominant role of Saudi Arabia (and the U.A.E.) created division and inequality from within the cartel. As there is intense geopolitical competition between Iran and Saudi Arabia, Tehran is a vehement critic of the dominant role of Saudis, both within and outside the OPEC. On the same line, Qatar also

¹¹ OPEC's Challenge: Rethinking its Quota System - oil & Gas Journal. Accessed September 22, 2023. <https://www.ogj.com/drilling-production/production-operations/article/17239967/opecs-challenge-rethinking-its-quota-system>.



had geopolitical and policy discomfort with the Saudis and OPEC before it left OPEC in 2019.¹²

4. Price War and Emergence of OPEC+

In recent times, "price war" has become a standard tool to shape energy geopolitics at the regional and international levels. A price war is a strategy to control oil prices to ensure that an organization, a group of countries, or a country's prominence is felt internationally. In extremity, it is a destabilizing development in the market based on the whims and fancies of a country or group of countries, establishing footprints in the existing markets and consolidating the existing market. Sometimes, the strategy acts as a "weapon" to punish the adversary. Today's price war is between OPEC and emerging non-OPEC oil-supplying nations—crucially led by energy power Russia. This group counterbalances the hegemony of OPEC and de-cartelize oil in the international oil market by excessively releasing their crude oil reserves. Though agreements have been made between the two sides, agreements on production and supply have created situations where OPEC price in the mid-2010s was reduced to the level of 'no profit' in the garb of a "price war."¹³ Since the last decade, external factors have made it challenging for OPEC to regulate the energy market alone due to a slump in global energy demands, competition from non-OPEC suppliers, and other related factors.

The major oil slump that led to the 'price war' in the twenty-first century dates back to 2014 and ended in 2016. Where various factors attributed to that outcome: First, the economic slowdown in the West and China and the resulting decline in oil demand; second, fast and large-scale pumping of Russian energy for its economic boom; third, the largest importing country of the world—the U.S.A.—turned as a net exporter of energy due to its shale boom; fourth, war-ravaged Iraq and civil-war-ridden Libya unexpectedly recovered from their economic slowdown and thus increased its oil production; and fifth, the ever-increasing share of renewables in the global energy basket. Consequently, international Brent crude oil prices were reduced drastically by an average of \$55 in the three years of price decline in 2015. Fortunately, this situation ended with an agreement signed between OPEC and non-OPEC oil suppliers,

¹² Bahrain, Government of. "Minister of Oil: OPEC Decision Key for Market Stability." Ministry of Public Information, October 16, 2022. <https://www.bna.bh/en/>.

¹³ Fattouh, Bassam, and Andreas Economou. "OPEC at the Crossroads." Oxford Institute for Energy Studies, 2018. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep33952>.



better known as the OPEC+ Deal 2016, in which the countries agreed to a production cut. The price war was based on the assumption that if OPEC cuts production but non-OPEC suppliers do not, then the former's price will rise, and the latter's price will go down. Consequently, global demand will favor non-OPEC oil, and they will capture the market. This assumption also makes excellent sense as Russia's oil sector has been on the boom to recover its lost past, and the country is now looking for more export destinations than before¹⁴

Nevertheless, it is pertinent that OPEC will face tough competition from the non-OPEC players in the future since they are not bound by any international law on their production, supply, and price determinations. Nevertheless, the mutual understanding and cooperation in the 1910s and recently in the Russia-Ukraine war testifies to how OPEC+ countries regulate the global oil market.

5. Russia-Ukraine war and OPEC geopolitics

Russian President Vladimir Putin's "Special Military Operation" on February 24, 2022, and the Russia-Ukraine war have created unprecedented development in the international energy market, particularly in Europe. As the war broke out, prices skyrocketed to \$140 a barrel in March 2022, the highest since 2008, thus worsening inflationary pressures.¹⁵ Under this compelling situation, the U.S. approached OPEC, specifically Saudi Arabia and the U.A.E., to increase crude production. However, they remained defiant to the American call, taking into account "volatility in the oil market"-caused by war. However, this is a half-truth. Other factors also caused an increasing gap in the relationship between OPEC and Saudi Arabia, on the one hand, and the West, on the other.

First, Western interference in the international oil market has much perturbed Saudi Arabia and other OPEC countries. Second, member countries are much disturbed by the U.S. and Europe's continuous attempts to discard oil in the energy transition efforts to guard against climate change. Third, the shale boom of the U.S. reduced dependence on OPEC oil and OPEC's drastic decline of oil supply to the U.S. market. Fourth, Americans' criticism of human rights

¹⁴ Pineda, Mathew Emmanuel. "Why Are Oil and Gas Prices Going up: Impact of Russia-Ukraine War." Profolus, March 29, 2022. <https://www.profolus.com/topics/why-are-oil-and-gas-prices-going-up-impact-of-russia-ukraine-w>

¹⁵ Khan, Sarmad. "OPEC Keeps 2022 Oil Demand Forecast Unchanged despite Inflation and Ukraine War." The National, September 13, 2022. <https://www.thenationalnews.com/business/energy/2022/09/13/opec-keeps-2022-oil-demand-forecast-unchanged-despite-inflation-and-ukraine-war/>.



issues in Saudi Arabia, explicitly questioning the murder of Jamal Ahmad Khashoggi, the dissident journalist of Saudi Arabia, has created a public, political, and diplomatic outrage among Americans against the Saudis¹⁶. Fifth, there is a possible resumption of Washington's nuclear deal with the strategic competitor and historical arch-rival of Riyadh—Tehran. Sixth, Saudis view Russia as a more critical strategic partner than the U.S. today. Seventh, OPEC+ wants to keep Russia in orbit where Moscow is very comfortable.

Instead of increasing production to meet the wartime crisis, as requested by the West, OPEC+ went with a more radical production cut of 2 million barrels per day, starting from November 2022. Justifying the move, the OPEC+ countries stated that the step is due to sagging oil prices stemming from ongoing geopolitical tensions, renewed pandemic in China, supply chain issues, rising inflation, high sovereign debt levels in many regions, and expected monetary tightening by the U.S., European Union, and the U.K. central banks. To counter this justification, Biden, the U.S. president, called it "moral and military support" for Russia in its war against Ukraine¹⁷. Nevertheless, Moscow wants to keep the supply level down so that demand drives the price up. Russia benefits the most from this 2 million barrel cut per day[i], as it has come down heavily to its supply level because of Western sanctions. Russia's supply cut intends to punish the adversaries and use energy as a tool of coercive diplomacy against the West for Ukraine's surrender.

Along with this, Russia wants an oil shortage and price rise in Europe so that the NATO countries will pay heavily to support Ukraine, and the increased price and European discontent against NATO will lead to Russian leverage on war. Most recently, despite the E.U. and G-7 Price Cap of \$60 per barrel on Russian oil, OPEC has tightened to its earlier production cut of 2mbd, which signifies how OPEC and Russia have a mutual understanding to keep their market interest intact despite challenges. Nevertheless, production cuts and a "price cap" will affect the global oil market. This can be illustrated by the fact that while the 2023 forecast indices global

¹⁶ BBC NEWS, "OPEC: What Is It and What Is Happening to Oil Prices?," BBC News, June 5, 2023, <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-61188579>.

¹⁷ Hernandez, M G. "US Says Opec Cuts 'moral and Military Support for Russia's Ukraine War.'" Anadolu Ajansı. Accessed September 22, 2023. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/americas/us-says-opec-cuts-moral-and-military-support-for-russias-ukraine-war/2711068>.



oil demand growth of 2.7mbd¹⁸, The 2mbd production cut by OPEC+ implies how OPEC has set the strings and how the price cap will adversely affect the international oil demands further.

6. Shale vs OPEC: Competition ahead?

With growing research on shale energy exploration and the shale boom in the US, it is expected that it could be a potential alternative to OPEC energy. The arrival of shale energy has posed a revolution in the energy sector, with significant shale deposits being found in the US, Canada, France, Brazil, Argentina, and China. Many countries have already started exploration in their countries since it is available in their territorial zones and is a cheaper alternative for the countries possessing it. Since the early 2010s, shale has been the primary supplier to the American energy basket. The exploration has increased from 0.4 billion barrels in 2007 to 4 million barrels in 2014. ¹⁹In 2018, shale energy production touched 1,00,000 barrels per day²⁰. In 2012, shale constituted 39 percent of all natural gas produced in the US and is likely to reach 49 percent by 2035²¹

Further, the IEA has predicted that the US will be the lead crude oil producer by 2030 and the net global exporter shortly. Following the success of shale in the USA, many nations that had their shale deposits extended their production missions. Australia and China are the two nations that are considering creating shale exploration companies²². India, the third largest energy consumer after the US and China, has six central shale reserves and has successfully started commercial exploration.²³ Thus, OPEC must face challenges in rising shale energy production and a drastic decline in USA dependency on OPEC resources and other countries striving in this sector. However, the question now arises: Will this shale be substantive enough to dent OPEC dominance?

¹⁸ Khan, Sarmad. "OPEC Keeps 2022 Oil Demand Forecast Unchanged despite Inflation and Ukraine War." *The National*, September 13, 2022. <https://www.thenationalnews.com/business/energy/2022/09/13/opec-keeps-2022-oil-demand-forecast-unchanged-despite-inflation-and-ukraine-war/>.

¹⁹ Kilian, Lutz. "How the Shale Oil Revolution Has Affected US Oil and Gasoline Prices." CEPR, January 14, 2015. <https://cepr.org/voxeu/columns/how-shale-oil-revolution-has-affected-us-oil-and-gasoline-prices>.

²⁰ Owyang, Michael T., and Hannah Shell. "The Rise of Shale Oil." *Saint Louis Fed Eagle*, December 9, 2021. <https://www.stlouisfed.org/on-the-economy/2018/may/rise-shale-oil>.

²¹ Pradhan, Sanjay Kumar. *Shale Gas in Indo-US Cooperation. Geopolitics*. 2020th ed. Vol. 1, n.d.

²² Scott Weeden, "Australia Pushes Boundaries on Shale Development," *Hart Energy*, January 7, 2014, <https://www.hartenergy.com/ep/exclusives/australia-pushes-boundaries-shale-development-20234>.

²³ Pathak, Kalpana. "Cairn Bets on Shale, Sees 10% Drop in India's Oil Imports at Peak Output." *The Economic Times*, April 18, 2022. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/energy/oil-gas/cairn-bets-on-shale-sees-10-drop-in-indias-oil-imports-at-peak-output/articleshow/90899540.cms>.



Shale energy is contested on various counts. First, in fracking, vast amounts of water and chemicals bring the shale to the ground. Consequently, there has been a decline in the water table, and water flow is contaminated. Although there are arguments that contaminated water can be reused or recycled, there has yet to be a satisfactory conclusion. Countries like Germany, France, Spain, Tunisia, and some states or Provinces of the USA and Canada (Quebec.) have banned the fracking process and shale exploration. Second, the price of shale energy could be more cost-effective. Third, the infrastructure has not been developed to a level where the shale energy can be transported in a viable way. Fourth, fracking technologies and equipment are costly and not readily available.²⁴

Nevertheless, whether the problems related to shale extraction arise if the shale industry can overcome the initial issues, will shale pose a competitor to OPEC?

The growing popularity of shale is also due to rising geopolitical issues—conflicts across the world. The end of the shale revolution in the United States has already alleviated the fear of future price spikes, with most shale being extracted from the nation.²⁵ The growing conflict between the U.S and Russia over Ukraine has already led to the fear that there will be a significant rise in shale production by other nations like China, and the availability of Chinese shale will lead to a vast drop in shale prices, making shale a viable source of energy in the future.²⁶ As discussed earlier, the current tussle between OPEC and OPEC+ on oil production will lead to OPEC facing a challenge from shale on grabbing market potential in the future.

An important assumption can be cited here. If there is an era of shale in the future, then the US, the leading shale producer, will play a role in shaping the global energy market as Saudi Arabia does today in OPEC. However, the arguments assumed here do not clearly explain how shale will stride into the international energy basket—as it is best with many challenges today. Nevertheless, if the shale boom happens shortly, OPEC must create a new order in the oil market to sustain itself. However, this prospect seems a remote possibility as the world is

²⁴ Wihbey, John. "Pros and Cons of Fracking: 5 Key Issues " Yale Climate Connections." Yale Climate Connections, April 26, 2022. <https://yaleclimateconnections.org/2015/05/pros-and-cons-of-fracking-5-key-issues/>.

²⁵ Browser , Derek, and Myles McCormick. "What the End of the US Shale Revolution Would Mean for the World." Financial Times . Accessed March 13, 2024. <https://www.ft.com/content/60747b3b-e6ea-47c0-938d-af515816d0f1>.

²⁶ Salygin, Valery, Igbal Guliev, Natalia Chernysheva, Elizaveta Sokolova, Natalya Toropova, and Larisa Egorova. 2019. "Global Shale Revolution: Successes, Challenges, and Prospects" *Sustainability* 11, no. 6: 1627. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11061627>



looking for more energy today that is available at the doorstep and is affordable—either from OPEC or OPEC+ or non-OPEC suppliers.

7. Climate Change and Urge For Energy Transition

Climate change refers to a long-term shift in temperature and weather patterns, mainly caused by human activities, especially the burning of fossil fuels, including oil. Global warming and climatic change have made nations think of ways to minimize carbon emissions and boost energy transition, primarily shifting to renewable and new energy sources. Many countries have started taking steps to reduce their dependence on fossil fuels. Intense debate on global warming and climate change issues, along with diversification of resources, have taken place in many United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) summits, such as Paris (2015), Glasgow (2021) and Sharm El-Sheikh (2022). According to an IEA report, it is expected that by the end of 2023, about 300-320 GW of renewable energy will be generated, a 7-10% rise from the 2022 level.²⁷

In addition, it is predicted that there will be a significant increase in the production of Solar energy by 2023, thanks to the various efforts made by the International Solar Alliance and steps taken by the responsible countries. However, according to a report of the International Non-Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), the demand for fossil fuels is expected to increase by 2035 and decline afterward, i.e., a 10-20 percent reduction by 2050. It is also likely that by 2050, many states will have partially or banned the usage of cars and vehicles that use carbon-based fossil fuels as a source of energy²⁸. The new climate action plans, such as Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) and review and revision of the NDCs every five years, imply that many nations have taken pledges to reduce climate change to avoid a global catastrophe.²⁹ Accordingly, some countries have amended their climate change policies to meet the goals set in COP21 (2015). For example, China announced that in 2017 it had already met

²⁷ Iea. “World Energy Outlook 2012 – Analysis.” IEA. Accessed September 22, 2023. <https://www.iea.org/reports/world-energy-outlook-2012>.

²⁸ Global Energy Review 2021 - .NET framework. Accessed September 22, 2023. <https://iea.blob.core.windows.net/assets/d0031107-401d-4a2f-a48b-9eed19457335/GlobalEnergyReview2021.pdf>.

²⁹ Nation , United. “The Paris Agreement.” United Nations. Accessed September 22, 2023. <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/paris-agreement>.



its goals which were set for 2020, making an enormous leap in climate change, and in 2018, France, Portugal, and Sweden reached the track to achieve their target on time.³⁰

As there is progress in renewable, it is expected that OPEC will gradually lose its market share in the global energy basket. Therefore, OPEC must consider making the oil regime relevant due to the demand for renewable energy.³¹ The OPEC must ensure that the world's dependency on oil never weans, look forward to a climate change mitigation strategy, or create a non-renewable energy sector within its organization, which he analyzed later.³² Nevertheless, there are some impediments to the growth of the renewable industry. For example, Europe, which is looking much for renewables, has yet to be able to meet the demands. And expectations of COP21. Except for France, Portugal, and Sweden, achieving the 2022 target under the COP21 protocol seems bleak for all European nations.

OPEC shall face a challenge, but the question remains: will it be enough? Will OPEC face enough challenges from the renewable sector where its longstanding dominance could be undermined? The answer to these questions would be that OPEC is expected to see a minor challenge in its production shortly, mainly because the renewable sector has not reached the level of replacement oil. The slow growth can be attributed to the: First, technology, and equipment are not available at an affordable price; Second, there is no universalization of the availability of equipment; Third, as an investment at the initial level, is expensive, the least developed and developing countries find it challenging to go for renewables; Fourth, lack of enthusiasm for the nations. For instance, although the International Solar Alliance was established in 2015, there is no headway in policy framework and execution. Fifth, the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war have caused unexpected burdens on the global economy, which may push all the nations' pledges and reports of the international agencies to extend the timeframe to meet the demands for renewable and net-zero emissions. And

³⁰ IEA. "Renewable Energy Market Analysis." Renewable Energy Market Analysis, January 1, 2022. <https://www.irena.org/publications/2022/Jan/Renewable-Energy-Market-Analysis-Africa>.

³¹ Daukoru, Edmund Maduabebe. "OPEC's Strategy in Facing the New Energy Challenges." OPEC. Accessed September 22, 2023. https://www.opec.org/opec_web/en/1098.htm.

³² Sengupta, Ahona. "International Solar Alliance Could Replace OPEC for World's Energy Needs, Says PM Modi." News18, October 2, 2018. <https://www.news18.com/news/india/international-solar-alliance-could-replace-opec-for-worlds-energy-needs-says-prime-minister-narendra-modi-1896267.html>.



expectations of COP21. Except for France, Portugal, and Sweden, achieving the 2022 target under the COP21 protocol seems bleak for all European nations.³³

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8. Energy Transition: Debate between OPEC and IPCC

While American President Joe Biden advocates stoutly for a net-zero emissions[i] goal by 2050 to slow down global warming and most of the countries in the world are embracing renewables, contrarily, OPEC and the leading OPEC nation Saudi Arabia claims a bright prospect for oil. The OPEC sees that the demand for oil resources will increase for at least the next two decades. The Saudi Energy Minister, Abdulaziz bin Salman, equated the International Energy Agency's (IEA) urge to transition to renewable energy with the La La Land movie, as the global demand for oil consumption is increasing steadily.³⁵ The OPEC disputes the global campaign for net-zero emission timelines by citing the argument that this effort will go drastically against new and renewed investment in oil exploration and supply. If there are investments in the oil sector, there will be a halt in production, and thus, there is the risk of a severe energy deficit in the world, which even the alternative resources cannot compensate for. OPEC seeks the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) to remove the references to “phase out of fossil fuels” and “urgent and accelerated mitigation” of these resources from various reports. Likewise, it urges IPCC to omit “decarbonization” and “rapid shifting to zero-

³³ Elleberek , S. (2022). *Explainer: What is OPEC?*. World Economic Forum. <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2022/11/oil-opec-energy-price/>

³⁴ Koshty, Miriam. “<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/News/Energy/Renewable-Energy-Use-Is-Growing-but-at-a-Slow-Pace-60935>.” Down to earth , n.d.

³⁵ Wald, Ellen R., and Jonathan H. Ferziger. “Climate Policies Could Hand Power and Profits Back to OPEC.” *Foreign Policy*, June 16, 2021. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/06/16/climate-goals-opec-oil-prices-energy-crisis-shortages-fossil-fuels/>.



carbon sources” while advocating for “Transitioning”[ii] to low-carbon economies through planned interventions and transitioning options”[2] Saudi Arabia even discards the referencing of “transformation” in global environment reports as it has policy implications for immediate execution under COP21 agreement, which pledges for reducing global warming to the level below 2 degrees Celsius, and preferably to 1.5°C. Iran questions the feasibility of reducing global warming to 1.5°C; instead, it talks of 2°C due to the pressing demand for fossil fuels to meet developmental goals. Iran also upholds that “given the current trends and technologies, a continuous annual reduction of more than 5% greenhouse emission between 2021 and 2030 is highly unlikely.”³⁶. It is evident that even developed nations have not yet successfully and consistently reduced emissions to this level. If global warming is restricted by two °C, about 30% of oil, 50% of gas, and 80% of coal reserves must remain unburnt on Earth. So, from where will the energy come to meet the present demand and future requirements? OPEC forecasts that oil consumption will rebound above 100 million barrels daily in 2023 and advance to 107.9 million in 2035. Although renewables are the fastest-growing energy sources, they will constitute a mere 10 percent of the global needs by 2045.³⁷ Therefore, the question arises of how the remaining demand would be met. Taking stock of the complex realities and energy necessities, Mohammed Barkindo, the former Secretary General of OPEC and a vehement critic of “Transition”, argued for the prominence of oil in the global energy architecture. He says, “The narrative of the energy transition from fossil fuels to renewable is misleading. A rapid transition from oil and natural gas is not only impractical but also can cause potential damage to poor countries and the global economy.”. Saudi Arabia outrightly questioned the international conventions for “undermining all carbon removal technologies such as Carbon Capture and Utilisation (CCU)[iv] and Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) and thus limiting the scope for rethinking on ‘carbon neutrality’ and ‘carbon sequestration’.”[vi] Substantiating this, Saudi Arabia’s preferred stand for tackling climate change includes the burning of hydrocarbons and the use of technologies to suck the emissions, which is well known as the Circular Carbon Economy. In line with this, it complains that the IPCC does not give sufficient

³⁶ Whitaker, Brian. “Climate Change: Saudi Arabia and OPEC Resisting Action on Fossil Fuels.” al. Accessed September 22, 2023. <https://al-bab.com/blog/2021/10/climate-change-saudi-arabia-and-ope-resisting-action-fossil-fuels>.

³⁷ Smith, Grant. “OPEC Sees Oil Demand Growth to 2035 Unchecked by Climate Fight.” Bloomberg.com, September 28, 2021. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-09-28/ope-sees-oil-demand-growth-to-2035-unchecked-by-climate-fight>.



attention to the feasibility of Direct Air Capture (DAC), a technology that is at the initial phase of research that can extract carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, store and use those gases in the various industrial processes; and thus stop contributing to global warming. The OPEC cartel also complains that CCU, CCS, and DAC technologies are excluded while discussing sustainability. However, on the other hand, taking advantage of these technologies and processes, the countries will go for more GHG emissions now than before with an assumption that these gases could be drawn out of the air later, thus opening up the possibility of bringing the temperature back to what the nations achieved so far since COP21 conference. Further, according to Professor Robert Howarth of Cornell University, “There is no scientific evidence that humanity can rely on carbon capture or direct air capture this way.” Although the IPCC report refers to DAC and CCS, there are no detailed outlines, and uncertainty on the feasibility of the technologies and mechanisms looms large. Further, climate activists discard these innovations as they are expensive, unproven at scale, and polluting³⁸

On another count, the cartel delineates that resources need not be blamed; how they are explored and utilized is essential³⁹. Nevertheless, the issue of extraction and refinement has its challenges, and OPEC still needs to create a cohesive strategy. This has led many states to ask OPEC to take responsibility for their actions, especially the US, which has passed a Bill in Congress titled “OPEC Accountability Act” that requests the OPEC, mainly the significant producers ‘allies to the United States, to hold themselves accountable and start developing a better green program for the organization. The claims are in unity to the fact that how the Gulf, the largest oil-producing region in the world, has turned itself into a hotspot of frequent weather change. OPEC’s indifference to oil challenges has led them to a climate emergency, at least in their region. Despite all the evidence pointing toward a climate catastrophe, there has not been much reaction or response from many oil companies in the cartel's production cycle.

Many of these companies have called for better solutions for the future rather than taking immediate and concrete steps to reduce pollution. Therefore, OPEC now has to take steps to

³⁸ Nasralla, Shadia. “OPEC Makes Case for Fossil Fuels at UN Climate Conference.” Reuters, November 10, 2021. <https://www.reuters.com/business/cop/saudi-minister-says-climate-fight-shouldnt-shun-any-particular-energy-source-2021-11-10/>.

³⁹ Naimoli, Stephen, and Sarah Ladislav. “Front Matter.” *Oil and Gas Industry Engagement on Climate Change: Drivers, Actions, and Path Forward*. Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), 2019. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep23551.1>.



ensure they can control the damage they are causing to the environment before it is very late and the environmental damage reaches a point of no return⁴⁰. So, the question now arises: what has OPEC done to address the situation? The answer, perhaps, is that, for its part, it has done lip service only to the issues rather than taking any concrete actions on the same. No doubt, OPEC has created its environmental policy to have its stakes alongside oil; it is an active participant in climate conferences for a better world and brighter future and is conducting multiple seminars, discussions, and debates in the aegis of OPEC. However, the cartel has not taken visible steps to tackle the climate change challenge and promote renewables cohesively.

9. Conclusion

The OPEC cartel has ended the corporate exploitation of Seven Sisters and acts as an energy player in the global energy market. Since its establishment, despite having erratic setbacks due to geopolitical dynamics and international economic factors, OPEC virtually had a monopoly over the flow of petroleum resources in the energy market till the mid-2010s when it faced the challenges of different types—characterized by competition from the non-OPEC oil exporting countries especially Russia, shale boom in the US and increasing production of renewables. However, the mutual understanding in the form of OPEC+ nations survived the profit margin of OPEC members. The Russia-Ukraine war brought the prominence of OPEC to the forefront, and the production of OPEC+ delineated the fault line that OPEC has with the West. Once guided by the West, OPEC today has more autonomy in its decision-making process. However, the production quota system and ‘Saudi hegemony’ are the major bones of contention within the OPEC for which the cartel is paying. The shale exploration and its boom in the US promise a lot to meet global requirements, at least in the countries where it is available. However, technological and environmental issues limit growth, and it does not seem that shale will work as an alternative to OPEC, at least shortly. The OPEC cartel is dominant today, although it has no monopoly on the global energy flow.

Climate change and energy poverty are two sides of energy consumption, and it has brought OPEC and IPCC to a debate on oil vs. climate change and renewable options. OPEC has its arguments against the “transition” and “net-zero” emissions as these steps will create

⁴⁰ Rizwan Nawaz Researcher in Climate and Water, and Adel Sharif Professor of Water and Process Engineering. “Fossil Fuel Extraction Could Be Contributing to Climate Change by Heating Earth from Within.” *The Conversation*, May 30, 2023. <https://theconversation.com/fossil-fuel-extraction-could-be-contributing-to-climate-change-by-heating-earth-from-within-121331>



chaos in the energy market. Rapid transition may lead to a shortage of energy resources due to inadequate investment in the oil sector and consequent energy poverty, as there is no potential alternative today and soon. Recognizing the diversity of climate solutions and the concern over emissions without bias towards or against any particular energy source is imperative. The delicate balance between reducing emissions, energy affordability, and energy sustainability requires comprehensive and sustainable policies where all voices will be heard. Focusing on only one of these over the others can lead to unintended consequences: market distortions, heightened volatility, and energy shortfalls. Thus, it is evident that OPEC will have to roll up its sleeves and ensure that it takes cohesive work to consider the climate change challenges. Nevertheless, OPEC today is the foremost cartel in the global energy architecture, and the demand for petroleum will remain at least till the mid-2030s until renewable and new resources are available on a large scale to meet the growing energy demand requirements.

Nevertheless, OPEC's presence in the global market will stay, but significant challenges and changes will evolve with the shifting geopolitical and ecological fronts. The OPEC nations will have to take stock of the situation and make policy changes to build their trust in international energy and remain a dominant force in the coming times.

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