

Journal of Humanity, Peace and Justice

Volume 1, Issue 1, 2024



Owner

Prof. Dr. Yaşar Onay

*Istanbul University International Institute for Genocide and Crimes Against
Humanity*

Responsible Manager

Assist. Prof. Dr. Apak Kerem Altıntop

*Istanbul University International Institute for Genocide and Crimes Against
Humanity*

Correspondence Address

**Istanbul University International Institute for Genocide and Crimes
Against Humanity**

Address: Kalenderhane Mah.Prof. Ümit Yaşar Doğanay Caddesi (16 Mart
Şehitleri Caddesi) No:12 Vezneciler , 34134 Fatih İstanbul Türkiye

Phone: +90 (212) 440 00 00 ext. 12184-12185

e-mail: hupej@istanbul.edu.tr

URL: <https://hupej.istanbul.edu.tr>

Publisher

Istanbul University Press

Address: İstanbul Üniversitesi Merkez Kampüsü, 34452 Beyazıt, Fatih, Türkiye

Phone: +90 (212) 440 00 00

e-mail: iupress@istanbul.edu.tr

URL: <https://iupress.istanbul.edu.tr/>

Authors bear responsibility for the content of their published articles

The publication language of the journal is English

This is multi-disciplinary, international, open access and peer-reviewed journal, publishes
electronically twice a year (April-October)

Publication Type: Periodical

Editor-in-Chief

Assoc. Prof. Pınar Akarçay *İstanbul University, İstanbul, Türkiye*
pinar.akarçay@istanbul.edu.tr

Co-Editor-in-Chiefs

Assist. Prof. Apak Kerem Altıntop *İstanbul University, İstanbul, Türkiye*
kerem.a@istanbul.edu.tr

Assist. Prof. Selin Başer Özgen *İstanbul University, İstanbul, Türkiye*
selinbaser@istanbul.edu.tr

Editorial Management Board Members

Prof. Yaşar Onay *İstanbul University, İstanbul, Türkiye*
yasaronay@istanbul.edu.tr

Prof. Abdurrahman Bozkurt *İstanbul University, İstanbul, Türkiye*
abdurrahman.bozkurt@istanbul.edu.tr

Prof. Aylin Ece ÇİÇEK *İstanbul University, İstanbul, Türkiye*
aylin.cicek@istanbul.edu.tr

Assoc. Prof. Pınar Akarçay *İstanbul University, İstanbul, Türkiye*
pinar.akarçay@istanbul.edu.tr

Assoc. Prof. Ramazan Erhan Güllü *İstanbul University, İstanbul, Türkiye*
ramazan.gullu@istanbul.edu.tr

Publicity Managers

Assist. Prof. Apak Kerem Altıntop *İstanbul University, İstanbul, Türkiye*
kerem.a@istanbul.edu.tr

Res. Assist. Ömer Çetin *İstanbul University, İstanbul, Türkiye*
omer.cetin@istanbul.edu.tr

Editorial Board Members

Prof. Kyoko Cross	<i>Kyoto Sangyo University, Kyoto, Japan</i> kcross@cc.kyoto-su.ac.jp
Prof. Lucian Nastasă Kovács	<i>Cluj-Napoca, Cluj-Napoca, Romania</i> lucian.nastasa@gmail.com
Prof. Paul Finkelman	<i>Gratz College, Melrose-Park, USA</i> pfinkelman@gratz.edu
Prof. Qasım Hacıyev	<i>Azerbaijan National Academy of Science, Baku, Azerbaijan</i> gasimh@mail.ru
Prof. Zhidas Daskalovski	<i>University of Kliment Ohridski, Bitola, Macedonia</i> daskalovski@hotmail.com
Prof. Eyal Ginio	<i>The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Jerusalem, Israel</i> eyal.ginio@mail.huji.ac.il
Prof. Yaşar Onay	<i>İstanbul University, İstanbul, Türkiye</i> yasaronay@istanbul.edu.tr
Prof. Abdurrahman Bozkurt	<i>İstanbul University, İstanbul, Türkiye</i> abdurrahman.bozkurt@istanbul.edu.tr
Prof. Haydar Burak Gemalmaz	<i>İstanbul University, İstanbul, Türkiye</i> haydar.gemalmaz@istanbul.edu.tr
Prof. Hasret Çomak	<i>İstanbul Kent University, İstanbul, Türkiye</i> hasret.comak@kent.edu.tr
Prof. Sevtap Demirci	<i>Boğaziçi University, İstanbul, Türkiye</i> sdemirci@boun.edu.tr
Prof. Selçuk Hasan Köni	<i>İstanbul Kültür University, İstanbul, Türkiye</i> hasankoni@gmail.com
Prof. Barış Özdal	<i>Bursa Uludağ University, Bursa, Türkiye</i> ozdalb@uludag.edu.tr
Prof. Burak Gümüş	<i>Trakya University, Edirne, Türkiye</i> burakgumus@trakya.edu.tr
Assoc. Prof. Christopher L. Gunn	<i>Coastal Carolina University, Conway, USA</i> cgunn@coastal.edu
Assoc. Prof. Jessica Wai Yee Yeung,	<i>The University of Hong Kong, Hong-Kong, China</i> jyeung@hkbu.edu.hk
Assoc. Prof. Ermin Kuka	<i>Sarajevo University, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina</i> ermin.kuka@hotmail.com
Assoc. Prof. Jorge Marco	<i>University of Bath, Bath, United Kingdom</i> j.marco@bath.ac.uk
Assoc. Prof. Rustam Atadjanov	<i>KIMEP University, Almaty, Kazakhstan</i> r.atadjanov@kimep.kz
Assoc. Prof. Yoshiaki Furuzawa	<i>Hiroshima City University, Hiroshima, Japan</i> yfuru@hiroshima-cu.ac.jp

Assoc. Prof. Ramazan Erhan Güllü

Istanbul University, İstanbul, Türkiye
ramazan.gullu@istanbul.edu.tr

Assoc. Prof. Derya Aydın Okur

Istanbul University, İstanbul, Türkiye
deryaaydinokur@istanbul.edu.tr

Assist. Prof. Gökhan Ak

Istanbul Topkapı University, İstanbul, Türkiye
gokhanak@topkapi.edu.tr

Assist. Prof. Emir Suljagic

International University of Sarajevo, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina
esuljagic@ius.edu.ba

Dr. Vuslat Nur Şahin

Waseda University, Tokyo, Japan
vuslatnur@akane.waseda.jp

Contents

Research Article	
Political Polarization and Human Rights Violations	01
Adil Yıldız	
Research Article	
Ottomanist Infrastructures: A Path to Colonialist Resource Extraction or Imperial State Building and Territorial Integrity?	18
Orhan Hayal	
Research Article	
Navigating Fragility: Unraveling Intergroup Relations in South Sudan's Peace-Building Process	37
Melek Aylin Özoflu	
Research Article	
Revisiting Ethnic Framing in Conflicts: Challenging the Concept of Ethnic Conflict	49
İbrahim Fevzi Güven	
Research Article	
"Crime of the Century": Israel's State Terrorism and International Law Violations in Gaza Strip	65
Gökhan Ak	

Foreword for the Inaugural Issue of the Journal of Humanities, Peace, and Justice

We are delighted to present the inaugural issue of the Journal of Humanities, Peace, and Justice. This journal was created out of our belief in the crucial role of the humanities in promoting peace and justice.

The humanities provide deep insights into the human condition, cultural diversity, and the complexities of justice. Through fields such as literature, history, philosophy, and the arts, we gain broader and more profound perspectives on the world.

Our aim is to create an interdisciplinary platform for scholars, practitioners, and activists to engage in meaningful dialogue. We seek to bridge the gap between theory and practice to develop innovative and effective solutions.

In this first issue, we feature articles that make significant contributions to the fields of peace and justice. These works offer valuable insights both academically and practically. We extend our gratitude to the authors, reviewers, and editorial board members who made this issue possible.

We invite our readers to explore the rich world of the humanities presented in this journal and to draw inspiration for creating a more just and peaceful future.

Welcome to the Journal of Humanities, Peace, and Justice.

Sincerely,

Prof. Dr. Yaşar ONAY

Journal of Humanities, Peace, and Justice

Director of the Institute for International Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity



Journal of Humanity, Peace and Justice

Research Article

 Open Access

Political Polarization and Human Rights Violations



Adil Yıldız¹  

¹ The University of Mississippi, Department of Political Science, Oxford, Mississippi, United States

Abstract


Building on the extant literature, this study contends that higher political polarization, wherein opposing individuals or groups engage in hostile interactions over political differences, promotes vilification and a dehumanizing discourse. This in turn leads to an antagonistic and perilous political environment, putting human rights at risk. In such an environment, governments become better capable of prioritizing their political agenda over the rights of particular opposition groups, as these governments are also often supported by their polarized (i.e., entrenched) constituent base. To provide practical insights, this study illustrates Türkiye and Brazil as case examples, as both countries have experienced recent increases in political polarization with potential implications for the erosion of human rights due to a climate of hostility. The study tests the potential relationship between political polarization and human rights violations by employing time-series and cross-national data from the Varieties of Democracy Project (V-Dem) and the CIRI Human Rights Data Project, encompassing over 4,250 observations across more than 165 countries from 1981-2011. Additionally, the study utilizes the recent Human Rights Measurement Initiative (HRMI)'s Physical Integrity Rights Index, which provides data from 2017-2023. Both analyses reveal statistically significant correlations between increased political polarization and reduced respect for human rights. An upward change in political polarization results in lower levels of physical integrity rights. These findings imply that political polarization should be recognized as a serious factor contributing to the potential risks of human rights violations.

Keywords

Political polarization · Human rights · Physical integrity rights · Human rights violations · Human rights abuses



“ Citation: Yıldız, A. (2024). Political polarization and human rights violations. *Journal of Humanity, Peace and Justice*, 1(1), 1-17. <https://doi.org/10.26650/hupej.2024.10.1.1436810>

© This work is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License. 

© 2024. Yıldız, A.

✉ Corresponding author: Adil Yıldız ayildiz@olemiss.edu



Political Polarization and Human Rights Violations

Is political polarization associated with a higher risk of human rights violations? This question is crucial considering that many countries are presently dealing with increasing levels of political polarization. According to Piazza (2023, p. 477), the degree of political polarization surged by 26.2% within democracies worldwide between 2000-2018, as revealed using cross-national data from the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Project (Coppedge et al., 2021). For a specific example, Aydın Düzgüt (2019, p. 17) highlighted that Türkiye currently stands as one of the most polarized countries globally and underscored the consequential concerns and dangers of this polarization for the future of democracy within the nation. Similarly, the current article assumes the increasing trend of polarization to also pose risks to human rights. In highly polarized societies, individuals may not only become more entrenched in their political views, but this could also create a political climate where politicians exploit polarized sentiments to manipulate opposing groups. This can in turn lead to a slippery slope in determining legitimate policing practices without infringing upon individuals' rights.

Previous studies have associated polarization with several negative occurrences. For instance, individuals strongly aligned with polarized political factions tend to isolate, discriminate against, and penalize members affiliated with opposing parties. Additionally, they are inclined to avoid collaboration with members of rival political parties in joint endeavors aimed at tackling societal issues (Broockman et al., 2023; Lelkes & Westwood, 2017; Iyengar & Westwood, 2015; Carlin & Love, 2013). Moreover, Crimston et al. (2022) provided empirical evidence that political polarization predicts a heightened attraction to authoritarian and populist political leaders. For example, during the populist leadership of Jair Bolsonaro, Brazil was reported to have experienced a wave of violence with groups influenced by Bolsonaro's leadership (Boulos, 2022).

According to Piazza (2023, p. 484), Brazil witnessed a 33% increase in political polarization from 2000-2018. Given such a troubled political context with polarization, one might ask whether political polarization has potential implications for human rights in Brazil. In this regard, Brazil serves as a useful example for analyzing and illustrating insights into such a question. Similarly, Türkiye also has a political environment with serious political polarization (Aydın Düzgüt, 2019, p. 17). Both countries have entrenched political camps with constituent bases that perpetuate political rivalry and polarization. Therefore this article uses these countries as case examples to demonstrate how political polarization can lead to the erosion of human rights by fostering a climate of hostility, to the delegitimization of political opponents, and to violent tendencies. Through this, one can gain practical insights into the potential dangers political polarization poses to human rights.

The majority of studies on polarization have concentrated on examining the political, social, and economic factors contributing to polarization, as well as its impact on interpersonal relations and attitudes, such as lack of tolerance toward individuals from opposing groups (Yair, 2020). However, limited scholarly understanding is found regarding how political polarization correlates with outcomes such as human rights violations. No prior work has explored or tested the potential relationship between polarization and incidences of human rights violations on a global scale. To address this gap in the literature, this research article



examines the connection between political polarization and the incidence of human rights violations using time-series and cross-national data from the V-Dem Project (Coppedge et al., 2021) and the Cingranelli-Richards (CIRI) Human Rights Data Project (Cingranelli & Richards, 2012). This quantitative empirical analysis encompasses over 4,250 observations across 165 countries, spanning from 1981-2011. Top of Form Additionally, the article acknowledges the importance of using up-to-date data. In this regard, it includes an additional analysis based on the Human Rights Measurement Initiative (HRMI)'s Physical Integrity Rights Index. Together with V-Dem's political polarization measure, these datasets cover observations from 2017-2020 across 44 countries (Clay et al., 2023; Rains et al., 2023; Clay et al., 2020; Brook et al., 2020; Coppedge et al., 2021). This enables an analysis that provides more recent insights into trends regarding respect for human rights and regressed over political polarization.

The rest of the article has the following structure. The next section briefly discusses the literature on common conceptualizations of human rights and the factors explaining their violations. The article then proceeds to provide insights on how political polarization may facilitate a political environment where human rights violations are more likely. That section also briefly examines two cases (i.e., Türkiye and Brazil) to illustrate the political contexts experiencing high polarization with vilification and a dehumanizing discourse. This section leads to a positively directional hypothesis on the relationship between political polarization and the likelihood of human rights violations. After that, the article presents the research design of the empirical analysis, including descriptions of the variables used and their sources. Next, the article lays out the results of the empirical analysis, followed by a conclusion section with some brief remarks on the implications the findings have for future research.

Literature Review: Human Rights and Explanations for Their Common Violations

The common understanding of human rights suggests that every person possesses inherent, inalienable rights simply by virtue of their humanity (Donnelly, 2008, p. 1). In other words, these rights are inherent, cannot be surrendered, and hold equal validity for all individuals. These terms are employed by global legal bodies such as the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), which is tasked with upholding the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR; United Nations [UN], 1948), as well as the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). These organizations characterize human rights as "...the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family..." (UN, 1948, pmb.), and "...inherent to all human beings, irrespective of nationality, sex, gender, ethnicity, religion, language, or any other status" (USAID, 2016, p. 6). While differing interpretations of human rights principles may occur, the concept is widely acknowledged and generally clear. However, numerous analytical discussions exist regarding the essence of rights, the prevalence of human rights abuses, and the empirical approaches utilized to assess and investigate them.

Although a wealth of literature covering a range of rights deemed fundamental is found on human rights, certain rights, particularly those concerning physical integrity, receive greater emphasis. These rights pertain to the absolute safeguarding of individuals from harm. For instance, governments are prohibited from subjecting individuals to physical violence, and individuals have the right to be free from injury or violence. In particular, actions such as political imprisonment, torture, extrajudicial killings, and disappear-



ances are frequent violations that breach the sanctity of the physical body (Cingranelli & Richards, 1999, p. 403). These behaviors resulting in physical suffering or affliction are commonly acknowledged by scholars (e.g., Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998; Sundstrom, 2005; Cordell et al., 2022) as typical interpretations of human rights infringements.

While recent research (e.g., Yildiz, 2023) has occurred focusing on the causes of leaders (as a unit of analysis) violating rights, the literature on human rights violations generally centers on violations committed by states and governments (countries as the unit of analysis), as these authorities possess the capacity to exert control over individuals. Resultantly, examining the factors behind human rights violations mirrors the inquiry into why certain authorities engage in more violations than others. Scholarly research has revealed numerous empirical insights that forecast the likelihood of governments violating human rights. For instance, Poe and Tate's (1994, p. 863) seminal piece provided empirical evidence of the presence of an inverse relationship for the rate of economic development and level of democracy in a country with its occurrence of human rights violations.

The rationale behind the finding regarding economic development appears straightforward. Governments experiencing extreme poverty where economic deprivation has led to notable social and political unrest are likely to be the most volatile and are thus more prone to employing authoritarian tactics to retain control (Mitchell & McCormick, 1988, p. 478). On the flip side, the ruling elites in highly developed countries where the majority of people are typically more satisfied can be assumed to need less suppression to maintain their authority (Henderson, 1991, p. 1226). Furthermore, electoral democracy provides citizens with the ability to punish potentially detrimental governments and leaders from office before they can become a significant menace. In addition, the freedoms intrinsic to democracy may facilitate citizens' ability to unveil instances of repression, prompting either the majority or the global community to oppose such governments and leaders who seek to misuse their authority (Poe & Tate, 1994, pp. 855–856).

Poe and Tate (1994) also discover the size of the population and the presence of armed conflicts to be positively correlated with human rights violations. A greater population enhances the likelihood of potential incidents of coercion from a mathematical standpoint, as well as imposes pressure on a country's resources and environment, ultimately resulting in a decrease in fundamental resources (Henderson, 1993, pp. 323–325). Alternatively, when confronted with the prospect of armed conflict, governments might turn to repression. The challenge to their power increases the probability of resorting to coercive tactics such as violence to address these challenges (Poe & Tate, 1994, p. 859). Moreover, these governments might exploit the chaos and unrest as a chance to bolster their power and silence dissenting opinions. By implementing such things as state-of-emergency regulations or military tribunals, they can bypass the usual legal procedures and suppress political opponents (see Gurr, 1986; Tilly, 1985; Davenport, 1995). Additionally, governments frequently prioritize or invoke national security to justify their actions, claiming that such measures are essential for safeguarding national security. This can potentially result in a lack of accountability for any misconduct by government forces at the expense of individual human rights (Wolff & Maruyama, 2023; Bae, 2022).



The Rationale Behind the Danger for Human Rights Amid Political Polarization

This article explores the potential influence political polarization has on human rights violations. As the preceding section has demonstrated, violations of rights are often perpetrated by states, governments, and the elites in power. In highly polarized political contexts and societies, governmental intimidation, which has the potential to result in violations, may escalate more easily. Before delving into how such escalations may occur, conceptualizing political polarization will be important. This study draws upon the definitions provided by Coppedge et al. (2021, p. 224), as it utilizes their measure for a statistical analysis. This framework illustrates how the degree of political differences between opposing groups affects political discourse. In a highly polarized political context, one should observe a reluctance among these groups to engage in friendly interactions and a willingness to adopt hostile behaviors. Thus, the study views political polarization as intergroup dissimilarities that may potentially culminate in antagonistic behavior toward out-groups.

How does political polarization potentially impact human rights? Polarization can potentially enable the vilification and devaluation of individuals associated with opposing groups (Piazza, 2023). In a scenario, particularly one where supporters of the incumbent government target rival groups, this can embolden the government to escalate its actions against those groups. That government may also initiate targeting, and support from its advocate groups can further reinforce the government's agenda against specific opposition factions. For instance, Martherus et al.'s (2021) and Piazza's (2020) studies illustrated how elite rhetoric facilitates the dehumanization of opposing groups, which is a pivotal aspect of polarization. Dehumanization diminishes tolerance toward members of opposing political groups, thus creating a pathway for the violation of social norms, which may include a government's adoption of violent strategies (Cassese, 2021). Consequently, dehumanized individuals are often met with distrust and become the targets of violent strategies and discriminatory actions (Vezzali et al., 2012; Kteily et al., 2015). In summary, political polarization can normalize a government's use of violent actions, as vilification and dehumanization have been made more acceptable for governments and their advocating constituents. Subsequently, this can result in a hostile and vulnerable political environment, potentially endangering human rights.

This discussion requires at least a few real-world examples, and this article concurs that the highly polarized political environments of Türkiye and Brazil could yield practical insights into how polarization might potentially implicate dangers for human rights. The first example is the polarization in Türkiye, where the split between religious and secular groups has resulted in polarization regarding the country's religious-versus-secular identity. For example, these groups are mirrored along the bases of the ruling (religious) Justice and Development Party (AKP) and the main opposition (secular) Republican People's Party (CHP; Aydın Düzgüt, 2019). The current political landscape in Türkiye has exhibited numerous characteristics similar to those found in other highly polarized electoral democracies, including zero-sum power politics, delegitimizing language toward political rivals, and online disinformation campaigns. Consequently, Türkiye's polarized political environment has fostered a vilifying and dehumanizing discourse (McCoy & Somer, 2019). Two separate surveys conducted by the TurkuazLab project in 2017 and 2020 offer support for this assertion. In both surveys, more than 70% of participants characterized opposing partisans as a threat to the nation, with between 30%-50% expressing support for limiting the political involvement of rival partisans and subjecting them to police surveillance (TurkuazLab, 2017, 2020).



Another example of political polarization with potential implications for human rights comes from Brazil. Based on data from V-Dem, Piazza (2023, p. 484) revealed that, between 2000-2018, Brazil had experienced a 33% increase in political polarization, which was further exacerbated during the tenure of the conservative President Jair Bolsonaro from 2018-2022. Throughout Bolsonaro's presidency, the political contrast between secular Brazilians and supporters of the conservative government intensified. Bolsonaro promoted this contrast by spreading online disinformation, making provocative comments on women's rights and sexual assault and demonizing LGBTQ people (Mignozzetti & Spektor, 2019). Even after losing his presidency, Bolsonaro maintained his vilifying attitude toward rival groups, labeling them as fraudsters and further polarizing Brazilian citizens (Wirtschafter, 2022). This led to his supporters storming the Congress building in the capital of Brazil in January 2023 (Roy & Baumgartner, 2023). However, this incident was just a small part of the violent assaults. According to the Brazilian NGO Observatory of Political and Electoral Violence, over 200 politically motivated assaults resulting in 21 deaths had occurred during the 2022 election season (Faiola & Sá Pessoa, 2022). The above discussion on the potential implications of political polarization for human rights leads to the following hypothesis (H1): *Human rights violations are more likely to be observed in countries with greater political polarization.*

Deepening the Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

Perhaps expanding on the previous section would be useful for providing a clearer elaboration on the theoretical framework behind the hypothesis and the mentioned concepts. The previous section has discussed two main concepts: vilification and dehumanization. These concepts serve as theoretical links connecting political polarization to an increased likelihood of human rights violations. Therefore, to first elaborate on these concepts would be highly relevant and practical before integrating them into a theoretical framework that offers deeper insight into the reasoning behind the hypothesis, thus helping predict a potential relationship between political polarization and human rights violations.

According to the Queensland Human Rights Commission (QHRC, n.d.), vilification manifests in varying degrees and can have significant adverse implications for human rights. It fosters feelings of hatred and contempt toward individuals and groups, potentially subjecting them to discrimination, harassment, and other forms of harm and thereby degrading their rights. On the other hand, the European Center for Populism Studies (ECPS, n.d.) has identified dehumanization within the realm of political science as the discourse and actions that diminish the humanity of individuals or groups. Several scholars, including Hellström (2019), Bruneau et al. (2018), Lindén et al. (2015), Volpato and Andrighetto (2015), and Maoz and McCauley (2008), have highlighted the severe repercussions of dehumanization on human rights. They concur that dehumanizing attitudes can compel individuals to take aggressive actions against those they dehumanize, to endorse acts of violence, and to exhibit indifference when dehumanized groups are in need of assistance. Such perspectives may justify retaliatory measures, including violence and unequal treatment, even toward vulnerable populations. Consequently, the acceptance of differential treatment can normalize human rights violations that are evident within one's society.

Theoretically speaking, political polarization can exacerbate vilification and dehumanization in several ways. In an environment of heightened vilification and dehumanization, human rights are more likely to



be endangered. Polarization breeds a clear us-versus-them mentality, wherein individuals view those with differing political beliefs as adversaries rather than fellow citizens with valid differences of opinion, thus facilitating the dehumanization and vilification of opposing views (Dagnes & Dagnes, 2019; Holst, 2020). In such polarized environments, people tend to gravitate toward sources of information and social circles that reinforce their existing beliefs, creating echo chambers that amplify negative perceptions of the opposing political group. This type of environment also fosters in-group loyalty, leading individuals to justify negative attitudes and behaviors toward the out-group, including vilification and hostility (Barberá, 2020; Gillani et al., 2018; Terren & Borge-Bravo, 2018; Nguyen, 2020). Moreover, political polarization often engenders distrust and demonization of the opposition, attributing malicious intent or moral flaws solely based on political affiliation, thus exacerbating dehumanization and vilification (Aydın Düzgüt, 2019; Schedler, 2023; Vallier, 2023). With the intensification of political polarization, extreme viewpoints can become normalized, further legitimizing dehumanizing language and attitudes toward the opposing group, thus exacerbating vilification and animosity (Harel et al., 2020).

Research Design

The CIRI Physical Integrity Rights Index

Are highly polarized political contexts associated with instances of human rights violations? Offering an empirical response to this examination requires data across countries regarding human rights, which serves as the dependent variable in the empirical analysis, and the level of political polarization, which functions as the independent variable. As discussed earlier in the literature review, rights pertaining to physical integrity have been pivotal within the realm of human rights, with their breaches typically described in scholarly works as instances of extrajudicial killings, disappearances, political imprisonment, and torture. These types of violations are the standard variables in the CIRI Physical Integrity Data spanning from 1981-2011 and as outlined by Cingranelli and Richards (2012). Therefore, this study employs these variables for an empirical examination of human rights. Within this dataset, the Physical Integrity Rights Index (ranging from 0 to 8) is derived by aggregating the ratings for extrajudicial killings (ranging from 0 to 2), disappearances (ranging from 0 to 2), political imprisonment (ranging from 0 to 2), and torture (ranging from 0 to 2). Higher scores indicate greater respect and fewer or no occurrences of such violations.

In order to have a measure for the independent variable, the variable of political polarization from the V-Dem data has been merged into the data used in this study (Pemstein et al., 2021). This variable measures the degree to which political disparities impact political and social interactions. Countries exhibit high levels of polarization when advocates of opposing political factions are hesitant to participate in amicable engagements. More precisely, political polarization is an ordinal variable gauging the degree to which supporters of rival political groups interact in either friendly or hostile manners, ranging from “not at all,” “mainly not,” “somewhat,” and “yes, to a noticeable extent,” to “yes, to a large extent.” Higher degrees indicate a more hostile manner, whereas lower degrees indicate a friendlier manner (Coppedge et al., 2021, p. 224).

Because the dependent variable is assessed on a continuous scale and numerous independent and control variables are found as detailed in the subsequent paragraph, this study has employed a multiple



regression analysis. More specifically, utilizing country-year as the units of analysis, the study examines 165 countries over a timeframe spanning from 1981-2011, encompassing a total of 4,251 observations. This makes the first model specification in which a regime type measure has been employed as a control, serving as an alternative to a civil society measure. When incorporating V-Dem's Core Civil Society Index as a control variable in the second model to replace the variable of polity used in the initial model from the Polity IV data, the number of countries analyzed and observations increase to 169 countries and 4,300 observations (Coppedge et al., 2021; Marshall & Jaggers, 2009). Employing country-year as the units of analysis, the study also employs country-fixed effects to accommodate country-level differences (i.e., to address unit heterogeneity), as guided by the results of the Hausman test (Amini et al., 2012).

The empirical models incorporate several control variables. As elucidated in the literature review, factors such as population size, GDP per capita, indicators of conflict, and regime type (e.g., indices of democracy) have been shown to influence human rights violations. Hence, this study encompasses all of these indicators, with population and GDP per capita data being sourced from the World Bank (2012) dataset, active armed conflicts and number of armed conflicts being retrieved from the UCDP/PRIO armed conflict dataset (Themner & Wallensteen, 2012), and regime type measures (e.g., polity) being obtained from the Polity IV dataset (Marshall & Jaggers, 2009). Civil society groups and organizations are also taken into account due to evidence suggesting these to be associated with human rights, as they play a crucial role in advocating for, safeguarding, and overseeing human rights (Buyse, 2018; Renshaw, 2012). To gauge the robustness of civil society, the study utilizes V-Dem's Core Civil Society Index (Coppedge et al., 2021).

Finally, to account for temporal dependence, the models incorporate a lagged dependent variable with a one-year delay, as determined by the findings of the serial correlation test conducted for the panel data. The empirical analysis utilizes the Stata command `xtserial`, which applies the Wooldridge test to identify serial correlation within panel data (Drukker, 2003, pp. 169–171). Lastly, two different model specifications are produced by taking into account the variance inflation factors (VIF), which signify the extent of multicollinearity in regression analysis (Marcoulides & Raykov, 2019). As indicated by the VIF analysis, a linear relationship exists between the variables of the Civil Society Index and polity, prompting their inclusion in separate models.

The Human Rights Measurement Initiative's (HRMI) Physical Integrity Rights Index

The data this article retrieved from the CIRI Physical Integrity Rights Index only exists up to 2011 (Cingranelli & Richards, 2012), raising the question of whether more up-to-date data could yield different results and insights. Therefore, this article has also obtained data from the Human Rights Measurement Initiative's (HRMI) Physical Integrity Rights Index, which provides data from 2017-2023 (Clay et al., 2023; Rains et al., 2023; Clay et al., 2020; Brook et al., 2020). However, the political polarization measure from the V-Dem data covers up to 2020 (Coppedge et al., 2021), which means that together they can provide matching measures through a country-year unit analysis from 2017-2020. This still provides results and insights from a much more recent time compared to the CIRI data.

The HRMI provides a variable called the physical integrity rights, which perfectly fits the needs of this article. This variable is a composite variable similar to the one from the CIRI database. Its measure is



aggregated based on arbitrary or political arrests and imprisonments, disappearances, death penalty executions, extrajudicial executions, and torture. The HRMI provides data on the intensity of respect for physical integrity rights, which yields mean values ranging between 2-9, with higher values indicating higher respect for physical integrity rights. For instance, Australia typically has values above 7, indicating high respect for rights, whereas Kazakhstan has values around 3, representing low respect (these two countries were chosen randomly just to illustrate). The data include a total of 44 countries (Clay et al., 2023; Rains et al., 2023; Clay et al., 2020; Brook et al., 2020).

Methodology

The empirical analysis of the CIRI Physical Integrity Index in this article utilizes the ordinary least squares (OLS) regression as its research method. A regression analysis appears reasonable to use considering that the Physical Integrity Index as the dependent variable is measured as a continuous variable on a scale ranging from 0-8. To elaborate further on OLS regression, it is a statistical method used for estimating the relationship between one or more independent variables (predictors) and one dependent variable (outcome) by minimizing the sum of the squared differences between the observed and predicted values of the dependent variable (Hanushek & Jackson, 2013, pp. 39–40). In addition to the continuously measured dependent variable, this article has also included several predictors, including both independent and control variables, in its empirical analysis, as discussed in the previous section.

Moreover, OLS regression assumes a linear relationship between the independent and dependent variables, as well as independence among the predictor variables, meaning that they do not significantly affect each other (Hanushek & Jackson, 2013, pp. 47–51). In other words, this is referred to as multicollinearity, which occurs when two or more independent variables in a regression model are highly correlated with each other (pp. 86–93). To ensure this is not the case, the empirical analysis utilizes variance inflation factor (VIF) analysis, which is a statistical technique used to assess multicollinearity among independent variables in regression analyses (Shrestha, 2020, pp. 40–41). As such, the VIF analysis is used to ensure that none of the independent variables are correlated to a concerning degree with each other, thus ensuring that the OLS assumptions are met.

Lastly, due to the analysis using panel data, the study uses a combination of the characteristics of both the cross-sectional and time-series data with fixed effects based on the results of the Hausman test (Bell & Jones, 2015, p. 138) to ensure that time-invariant differences are captured and to control for unobserved heterogeneity across countries. To elaborate on this, country-specific effects might have influenced the dependent variable but had remained constant over time for each country. These effects could be unobserved characteristics regarding such as things as innate country characteristics, culture, or geography. Fixed effects alleviate the concern that such characteristics function as exogenous effects (Bell & Jones, 2015, pp. 135–136).

Additionally, in order to visualize the relationship between HRMI's variable of physical integrity rights and V-Dem's variable of political polarization, this article uses the twoway scatter and lowess commands in Stata (v17). The first command creates scatterplots, which are graphs showing the relationship between two variables (i.e., political polarization and physical integrity rights). These plots help one see patterns

and compare different groups of data (Tibbles & Melse, 2023, p. 266). The second command smooths out scatterplots to facilitate spotting trends or patterns in the data. It adjusts how much smoothing (this article applied 80% for a balanced illustration) is applied, letting one tailor it to get the best view of any underlying patterns. Overall, the `lowess` command provides a smoothed representation of the trend presenting the relationship between variables (Cox, 2015, p. 577).

Empirical Results

This article hypothesizes that countries with greater political polarization are more likely to witness human rights violations. Table 1 displays the outputs of the OLS regression models concerning physical integrity rights, disclosing significant findings regarding the likelihood of rights violations across two models. In support of the article’s hypothesis, both models demonstrate that countries with higher political polarization are more likely to exhibit less respect for human rights or more occurrences of violations of physical integrity rights. In other words, higher political polarization is statistically significantly correlated with less respect for human rights and the possibility of more occurrences of extrajudicial killings, disappearances, political imprisonment, and torture.

Table 1
The Effect of Political Polarization on Physical Integrity Rights (PIRs): 1981-2011

	Model1 Polity	Model2 Civil Society Index
Political Polarization	-0.302**	-0.294**
	-0.05	-0.049
Active Armed Conflicts	-0.896**	-0.881**
	-0.128	-0.128
Number of Armed Conflicts	-0.251**	-0.246**
	-0.086	-0.084
Polity/Regime Type	0.031**	-
	-0.008	-
Robustness of Civil Society	-	0.680**
	-	-0.178
Population	-0.599**	-0.618**
	-0.146	-0.15
GDP per capita	-0.203**	-0.189*
	-0.077	-0.076
One-year lagged DV	0.413**	0.414**
	-0.021	-0.021
Constant	14.519**	14.337**
	-2.345	-2.317
<i>N</i>	4251	4300
<i>R</i> ²	0.364	0.363
<i>Log-likelihood</i>	-6071.3	-6132.44
<i>SE adjusted for</i>	165 clusters	169 clusters



	Model1 Polity	Model2 Civil Society Index
--	------------------	-------------------------------

** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$.

Note: To address autocorrelation effects, a lagged dependent variable is incorporated into each model. Additionally, to mitigate heteroscedasticity, robust standard errors are clustered by country utilizing Huber-White heteroskedastic-robust standard errors (Huber, 1967; White, 1980).

Source: This table was compiled using data from multiple sources, including the CIRI Physical Integrity Data (1981-2011) provided by Cingranelli and Richards (2012), population and GDP per capita data from the World Bank (2012), the UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict dataset by Themner and Wallensteen (2012), the Polity IV data by Marshall and Jaggers (2009), and the V-Dem dataset by Coppedge et al. (2021). The analysis was performed using Stata and R software packages. All the data utilized in this study are publicly available.

To understand the magnitude of the statistical findings from Models 1 and 2, the high political polarization across more than 160 countries evidently indicates on average a statistically significant adverse impact on the respect for physical integrity rights. The coefficients of -0.302 and -0.294 (rounded to -0.3) indicate that, on average, increased political polarization correlates with a decrease of 0.3 points in the respect for rights, with other variables held constant. Physical integrity rights have been assessed on a scale ranging from 0-8, with 8 representing a higher level of respect. To grasp the extent of the change, importance is had in considering this full range. Hence, a decline of 0.3 could be deemed relatively minor in statistical terms, accounting for roughly 4% of the scale’s range (i.e., $0.3 / 8 = 0.0375$ or 3.75%). However, this should still amount to a substantive impact when considering the essence of physical integrity rights, which encompass extrajudicial killings, disappearances, political imprisonment, and torture. A one-unit increase in political polarization, indicating a shift toward more hostile interactions within countries, leads to approximately a 4% increase in these severe violations. Similarly, two units correspond to an 8% increase, three units to a 12% increase, and so forth.

Figure 1

Physical Integrity Rights (PIRs) Regressed on Political Polarization: 2017-2020

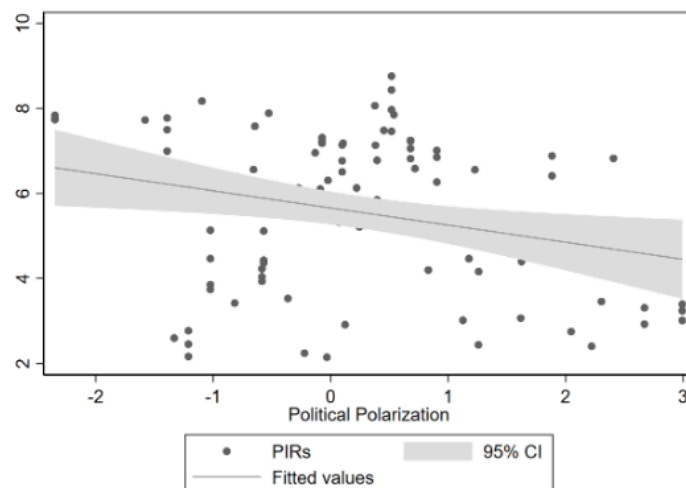


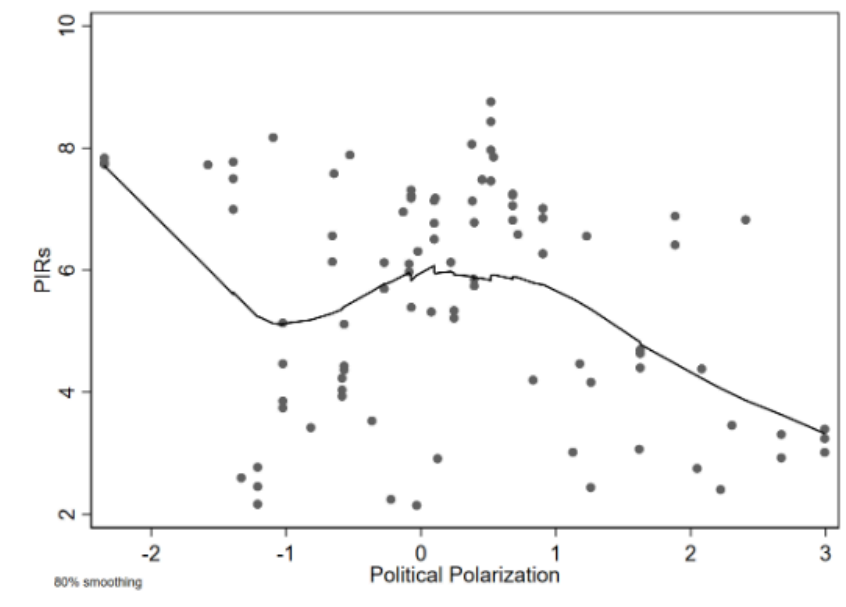
Figure 1 and Figure 2 visualize the relationship between political polarization (on the x-axis) and physical integrity rights (on the y-axis) using two different types of graphs. These are a scatter plot and a locally estimated scatterplot smoothing (LOWESS) plot. The scatter plot (Figure 1) shows a negative relationship



to exist between political polarization and physical integrity rights, indicating higher levels of polarization to be associated with lower human rights levels. However, the figure also demonstrates the slope as being not very steep, meaning that the relationship is not strongly linear. At a political polarization level of -2, the physical integrity rights level is around 7, and at a political polarization level of 3, the physical integrity rights level decreases to around 5. This suggests a negative trend, but the change in physical integrity rights for each unit change in political polarization is marginal.

Figure 2

Physical Integrity Rights (PIRs) Regressed on Political Polarization with LOWESS Smoothing Line: 2017-2020



In Figure 2, the trend seems to be smoothed out by ignoring outliers from datasets with an aim to enhance the visibility of underlying patterns within the data using the LOWESS technique. This reflects a more nuanced relationship between political polarization and physical integrity rights. Figure 2 presents a steeper slope at the extremes of polarization (from -2 to -1 and from 1 to 3), indicating that the relationship between political polarization and physical integrity rights is more pronounced in these ranges. However, when political polarization is between -1 and 1, the slope appears to flatten out, suggesting that a weaker relationship or even a plateau in physical integrity rights might occur within this range of political polarization.

More substantively and theoretically, one can more confidently assume that extreme political polarization may heighten the likelihood of human rights abuses. In highly polarized environments, a tendency might exist to prioritize other considerations over respect for human rights, potentially resulting in increased repression, violence, and suppression of dissenting voices (see Piazza, 2023). Conversely, very low levels of political polarization may render a society more susceptible to the influence of increased polarization compared to countries that are already moderately polarized. This susceptibility could be attributed to the sensitivity to changes in political dynamics or a lack of resilience in the face of heightened tensions (see Sørensen & Ansell, 2023; McNeil-Willson et al., 2019). In contrast, moderate polarization may be seen as less concerning. In such cases, a balancing act might occur between competing political interests, leading

to a more stable environment for the protection of human rights. However, this does not necessarily mean that human rights are fully upheld; rather, a plateau might be present at the moderate levels where the level of polarization does not significantly impact the level of physical integrity rights.

Conclusion

This study proposes that countries with greater political polarization tend to show lower respect for physical integrity rights. This more specifically means that these countries are more likely to experience violations such as extrajudicial killings, disappearances, political imprisonment, and torture. The study has used cross-national and time-series data covering over 165 countries from 1981-2011 for its statistical analysis employing two models over physical integrity rights. The analysis supports this correlation, indicating a significant relationship between higher political polarization and diminished respect for human rights. More specifically, a unit increase in polarization (signifying a shift towards more intense and aggressive interactions among individuals and groups) results in roughly a 4% rise in human rights violations. Similarly, a two-unit increase corresponds to an 8% rise, three units to a 12% increase, and so on. While this effect might appear modest, its significance should not be underestimated, given the gravity of physical integrity rights, which include extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, political imprisonment, and torture. The findings of both empirical models reveal political polarization to not merely be a distressing extant phenomenon that renders political interactions less good-natured, less respectful, and less fruitful but to also make these interactions more perilous, possibly leading to dangers for human rights. Thus, political polarization should be considered as a crucial driver of the potential risks posed for human rights violations. By its nature, it is worthy of notice from decision-makers and the general public.

Additionally, this article has presented two different graphs based on the recent HRMI's Physical Integrity Rights Index. Regressing this index on political polarization has consolidated the findings from the OLS analysis. These plotted regression graphs also show a negative relationship between the levels of political polarization and physical integrity rights, although several refined insights come to light. While the scatter plot indicates a negative linear relationship between polarization and physical integrity rights, the relationship is not strongly linear. In contrast, the LOWESS plot shows a more nuanced relationship, with a steeper slope at extreme polarization levels and a flattened slope at moderate levels. This article concurs that extreme political polarization has dangers, as it can potentially more effectively increase the likelihood of human rights abuses. Similarly, very low polarization levels may also pose adverse implications if, for example, a mounting polarization occurs. These countries might be more vulnerable to increased polarization as they may be caught off guard, lacking resilience in the face of unusual levels of polarization. Moderate polarization appears to present a more stable environment, implicating a steadier environment for human rights maintenance. All in all, an upward change in political polarization results in lower levels of physical integrity rights.

Future studies should explore how political polarization may be alleviated for the purposes of diminishing human rights risks. Recent scholarship has offered several insights that deserve attention. Through social media platforms in particular, political elites play key roles in polarizing public opinion, often seeking to manipulate the general public according to their interests (Fine & Hunt, 2023). For example, Judge et al.'s

(2023, pp. 491–492) recent review article suggested that one strategy for coping with polarization would be to reframe issues that create polarization in line with certain political values that may bring individuals closer. Another effective method they offered was public participation, wherein people come together and openly and directly discuss polarizing issues. This deliberative bottom-up process might eliminate manipulations by the elite. More specifically, Combs et al.'s (2023) recent experimental study showed that well-designed social media platforms sensitive to the nature of polarization can indeed mitigate political polarization. After developing a mobile social media chat platform, they discovered that individuals participating in anonymous discussions about political issues experience significant reductions in polarization. Future research should investigate additional devices and mechanisms that could mitigate the level of political polarization, thus potentially reducing the threats posed to human rights and fostering a more peaceful political environment.



Peer Review	Externally peer-reviewed.
Conflict of Interest	The author have no conflict of interest to declare.
Grant Support	The author declared that this study has received no financial support.

Author Details **Adil Yıldız**

¹ The University of Mississippi, Department of Political Science, Oxford, Mississippi, United States

 0009-0005-0020-3726  ayildiz@olemiss.edu

References

- Amini, S., Delgado, M.S., Henderson, D.J. & Parmeter, C.F. (2012). Fixed vs Random: The Hausman Test Four Decades Later. In Baltagi, B.H., Carter Hill, R., Newey, W.K. & White, H.L. (Eds.) *Essays in Honor of Jerry Hausman* (Advances in Econometrics, Vol. 29), Emerald Group Publishing Limited, Bingley, pp. 479-513. [https://doi.org/10.1108/S0731-9053\(2012\)0000029021](https://doi.org/10.1108/S0731-9053(2012)0000029021)
- Aydın Düzgit, S. (2019). The Islamist-Secularist divide and Türkiye's descent into severe polarization. In T. Carothers & A. O'Donohue (Eds.), *Democracies Divided: The Global Challenge of Political Polarization* (pp. 17-37). Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.
- Bae, J. (2022). Human Rights Versus National Security in Public Opinion on Foreign Affairs South Korea Views of North Korea 2008-2019. *KDI School of Pub Policy & Management Paper*.
- Barberá, P. (2020). Social media, echo chambers, and political polarization. *Social media and democracy: The state of the field, prospects for reform*, 34.
- Bell, A., & Jones, K. (2015). Explaining fixed effects: Random effects modeling of time-series cross-sectional and panel data. *Political Science Research and Methods*, 3(1), 133-153.
- "Boulos, G. (2022, September 16). *Brazil is suffering a wave of violence. It's Bolsonaro's fault*. Time. <https://time.com/6214070/bolsonaro-political-violence-brazil-election/>
- Broockman, D. E., Kalla, J. L., & Westwood, S. J. (2023). Does affective polarization undermine democratic norms or accountability? Maybe not. *American Journal of Political Science*, 67(3), 808-828.
- Brook, A. M., Clay, K. C., & Randolph, S. (2020). Human rights data for everyone: Introducing the human rights measurement initiative (HRMI). *Journal of Human Rights*, 19(1), 67-82.
- Bruneau, E., Kteily, N., & Laustsen, L. (2018). The unique effects of blatant dehumanization on attitudes and behavior towards Muslim refugees during the European 'refugee crisis' across four countries. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 48(5), 645-662.
- Buyse, A. (2018). Squeezing civic space: restrictions on civil society organizations and the linkages with human rights, *The International Journal of Human Rights*, 22:8, 966-988, DOI: 10.1080/13642987.2018.1492916



- Carlin, R. E., & Love, G. J. (2013). The politics of interpersonal trust and reciprocity: An experimental approach. *Political Behavior*, 35, 43-63.
- Cassese, E. C. (2021). Partisan dehumanization in American politics. *Political Behavior*, 43, 29-50.
- Cingranelli, D. L., & Richards, D. L. (1999). Measuring human rights, 1945-1998. *Human Rights Quarterly*, 21(2), 410-461.
- Cingranelli, D. L., & Richards, D. L. (2012). The CIRI human rights dataset. In *Human Rights in the United States* (pp. 107-128). Springer, Dordrecht.
- Clay, K. C., Bakker, R., Brook, A. M., Hill Jr, D. W., & Murdie, A. (2020). Using practitioner surveys to measure human rights: The Human Rights Measurement Initiative's civil and political rights metrics. *Journal of peace research*, 57(6), 715-727.
- Clay, K. C., Rains, M., Brook, A.-M., Kehoe-Rowden, T., Singh, P., LaVelle, M., Parker, A., & Randolph, S. (2023). HRMI 2023 Annual Survey & People Data Report (Version 2023.7.5). Retrieved from <https://humanrightsmeasurement.org/methodology-handbook/>.
- Combs, A., Tierney, G., Guay, B., Merhout, F., Bail, C. A., Hillygus, D. S., & Volfovsky, A. (2023). Reducing political polarization in the United States with a mobile chat platform. *Nature human behaviour*, 7(9), 1454-1461. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-023-01655-0>
- Coppedge, M., Gerring, J., Knutsen, C. H., Lindberg, S. I., Teorell, J., Alizada, N., ... & Ziblatt, D. (2021). V-Dem Codebook v11.1. *Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Project*.
- Cordell, C., Finan, F., Kramon, E., & Robinson, A. (2022). *Elections, violence, and human rights in sub-Saharan Africa*. Cambridge University Press.
- Cox, N. J. (2005). Speaking Stata: Smoothing in various directions. *The Stata Journal*, 5(4), 574-593.
- Crimston, C. R., Selvanathan, H. P., & Jetten, J. (2022). Moral polarization predicts support for authoritarian and progressive strong leaders via the perceived breakdown of society. *Political Psychology*, 43(4), 671-691.
- Dagnes, A., & Dagnes, A. (2019). Us vs. them: Political polarization and the politicization of everything. *Super Mad at Everything All the Time: Political Media and Our National Anger*, 119-165.
- Davenport, C. (1995). Multi-dimensional threat perception and state repression: An inquiry into why states apply negative sanctions. *American Journal of Political Science*, 39(3), 683-713.
- Donnelly, J. (2008). Human Rights. In J. S. Dryzek, B. Honig, & A. Phillips (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Political Theory* (pp. 601-20). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Drukker, D. M. (2003). Testing for Serial Correlation in Linear Panel-data Models. *The Stata Journal*, 3(2), 168-177. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1536867X0300300206>
- European Center for Populism Studies (ECPS). (n.d.). Dehumanization. Retrieved March 3, 2024, from <https://www.populismstudies.org/Vocabulary/dehumanization/#:~:text=Dehumanization%20is%20the%20act%20of,is%20an%20act%20of%20dehumanization.>
- Faiola, A., & Sá Pessoa, G. (2022, October 28). The Cannibal vs. the Satanist: Toxic Politics Is Poisoning Brazil. *Washington Post*. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/10/28/brazil-election-lula-bolsonaro/>
- Fine, J. A., & Hunt, M. F. (2023). Negativity and elite message diffusion on social media. *Political Behavior*, 45(3), 955-973. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11109-021-09740-8>
- Finnemore, M., & Sikkink, K. (1998). International norm dynamics and political change. *International organization*, 52(4), 887-917.
- Gillani, N., Yuan, A., Saveski, M., Vosoughi, S., & Roy, D. (2018, April). Me, my echo chamber, and I: introspection on social media polarization. In *Proceedings of the 2018 World Wide Web Conference* (pp. 823-831).
- Gurr, T. R. (1986). The political origins of state violence and terror: a theoretical analysis. pp. 45-71 in M. Stohl and G. A. Lopez (eds.) *Government Violence and Repression: An Agenda for Research*. New York: Greenwood.
- Hanushek, E. A., & Jackson, J. E. (2013). *Statistical methods for social scientists*. Academic Press.
- Harel, T. O., Jameson, J. K., & Maoz, I. (2020). The Normalization of Hatred: Identity, Affective Polarization, and Dehumanization on Facebook in the Context of Intractable Political Conflict. *Social Media+ Society*, 6(2).
- Hellström, J. (2019). *Dehumanization in Everyday Politics: A study of discursive dehumanization of beggars on social media* [master's thesis]. Uppsala University. <https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2%3A1282776&dsid=-456>
- Henderson, C. (1991). Conditions Affecting the Use of Political Repression. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 35:120-42.
- Henderson, C. (1993). Population Pressures and Political Repression. *Social Science Quarterly* 74:322-33.
- Holst, P. (2020). *Us and Them: Experiences with Polarization Dynamics from the Perspective of Black Migrant Communities in The Netherlands* [master's thesis]. Radboud University. <https://theses.ubn.ru.nl/items/34c91b08-6852-46f8-bc91-fa37ebfd978a>
- Huber, P. J. (1967). Under nonstandard conditions. In *Proceedings of the Fifth Berkeley Symposium on Mathematical Statistics and Probability: Weather Modification*; University of California Press: Berkeley, CA, USA (p. 221).



- Iyengar, S., & Westwood, S. J. (2015). Fear and loathing across party lines: New evidence on group polarization. *American journal of political science*, 59(3), 690-707.
- Judge, M., Kashima, Y., Steg, L., & Dietz, T. (2023). Environmental Decision-Making in Times of Polarization. *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*, 48, 477-503. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-environ-112321115339>
- Kteily, N., Bruneau, E., Waytz, A., & Cotterill, S. (2015). The ascent of man: Theoretical and empirical evidence for blatant dehumanization. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 109(5), 901.
- Lelkes, Y., & Westwood, S. J. (2017). The limits of partisan prejudice. *The Journal of Politics*, 79(2), 485-501.
- Lindén, M., Björklund, F., & Bäckström, M. (2016). What makes authoritarian and socially dominant people more positive to using torture in the war on terrorism?. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 91, 98-101.
- Maoz, I., & McCauley, C. (2008). Threat, dehumanization, and support for retaliatory aggressive policies in asymmetric conflict. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 52(1), 93-116.
- Marcoulides, K. M., & Raykov, T. (2019). Evaluation of Variance Inflation Factors in Regression Models Using Latent Variable Modeling Methods. *Educational and psychological measurement*, 79(5), 874-882. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013164418817803>
- Marshall, M. G., & Jagers, K. (2009). Polity IV project, political regime characteristics and transitions, 1800-2007, dataset users' manual. *Center for Systemic Peace*.
- Martherus, J. L., Martinez, A. G., Piff, P. K., & Theodoridis, A. G. (2021). Party animals? Extreme partisan polarization and dehumanization. *Political Behavior*, 43, 517-540.
- McCoy, J., & Somer, M. (2019). Toward a theory of pernicious polarization and how it harms democracies: Comparative evidence and possible remedies. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 681(1), 234-271.
- McNeil-Willson, R., Gerrand, V., Scrinzi, F., & Triandafyllidou, A. (2019). *Polarisation, violent extremism and resilience in Europe today: An analytical framework*. BRaVE Project. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1814/65664>.
- Mignozzetti, U., & Spektor, M. (2019). Brazil: When Political Oligarchies Limit Polarization but Fuel Populism. In T. Carothers & A. O'Donohue (Eds.), *Democracies Divided: The Global Challenge of Political Polarization* (pp. 228-256). Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.
- Mitchell, N. J., & McCormick, J. M. (1988). Economic and Political Explanations of Human Rights Violations. *World Politics* 40:476-98.
- Nguyen, C. T. (2020). Echo chambers and epistemic bubbles. *Episteme*, 17(2), 141-161.
- Pemstein, D., Marquardt, K. L., Tzelgov, E., Wang, Y. T., Krusell, J., & Miri, F. (2018). The V-Dem measurement model: latent variable analysis for cross-national and cross-temporal expert-coded data. *V-Dem working paper*, 21.
- Piazza, J. A. (2020). Politician hate speech and domestic terrorism. *International Interactions*, 46(3), 431-453.
- Piazza, J. A. (2023). Political polarization and political violence. *Security Studies*, 32(3), 476-504.
- Poe, S. C., & Tate, C. N. (1994). Repression of Human Rights to Personal Integrity in the 1980s: A Global Analysis. *American Political Science Review* 88, no. 4: 853-72.
- Queensland Human Rights Commission (QHRC). (n.d.). Vilification. Retrieved March 3, 2024, from <https://www.qhrc.qld.gov.au/your-rights/discrimination-law/vilification>
- Rains, M., Clay, K. C., Bakker, R., Brook, A.-M., Hill, D. W., LaVelle, M., & Murdie, A. (2023). HRMI Civil and Political Rights Metrics 2023 Technical Note (Version 2023.7.5). Retrieved from <https://humanrightsmasurement.org/methodology-handbook/>
- Renshaw, C. S. (2012). National Human Rights Institutions and Civil Society Organizations: New Dynamics of Engagement at Domestic, Regional, and International Levels. *Global Governance*, 18(3), 299-316.
- Roy, D., & Baumgartner, S. (2023, January 12). Images show the extent of Brazil's Capitol Riots. *Council on Foreign Relations*. Retrieved from <https://www.cfr.org/article/images-show-extent-brazils-capitol-riots>
- Schedler, A. (2023). Rethinking Political Polarization. *Political Science Quarterly*, 138(3), 335-359.
- Shrestha, N. (2020). Detecting multicollinearity in regression analysis. *American Journal of Applied Mathematics and Statistics*, 8(2), 39-42.
- Sørensen, E., & Ansell, C. (2023). Towards a concept of political robustness. *Political Studies*, 71(1), 69-88.
- Sundstrom, L. (2005). Physical integrity rights and the international criminal court. *The American Journal of International Law*, 99(2), 460-482.
- Terren, L., & Borge-Bravo, R. (2021). Echo Chambers on Social Media: A Systematic Review of the Literature. *Review of Communication Research*, 9, 99-118.
- The World Bank. (2012). The World Bank Development Indicators (WDI).



- Themner, L., & Wallensteen, P. (2012). Armed Conflicts, 1946–2011. *Journal of Peace Research* 49 (4): 565–75.
- Tibbles, M., & Melse, E. (2023). A note on creating inset plots using graph twoway. *The Stata Journal*, 23(1), 265-275.
- Tilly, C. (1985). *War making and state making as organized crime*. Cambridge: Blackwell.
- TurkuazLab. (2017). Dimensions of Polarization in Türkiye in 2017. *Strategies for Mitigating Polarization*. Retrieved from <https://www.turkuazlab.org/en/dimensions-of-polarization-in-Türkiye-2017/>
- TurkuazLab. (2020). Dimensions of Polarization in Türkiye in 2020. *Strategies for Mitigating Polarization*. Retrieved from <https://www.turkuazlab.org/en/dimensions-of-polarization-in-Türkiye-2020/>
- United Nations. General Assembly. (1949). *Universal declaration of human rights* (Vol. 3381). Department of State, United States of America.
- USAID. (2016). *Human Rights Landscape Analysis Tool: Guidance on Identifying Key Issues and Entry Points for Human Rights Programming*. Washington, DC: USAID.
- Vallier, K. (2023). The Emotional Decay of Liberalism: Trust, Polarization, and Affective Looping. In *Realism, Ideology, and the Convulsions of Democracy* (pp. 65-81). Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland.
- Vezzali, L., Capozza, D., Stathi, S., & Giovannini, D. (2012). Increasing outgroup trust, reducing inhumanization, and enhancing future contact intentions via imagined intergroup contact. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 48(1), 437-440.
- Volpato, C., & Andrighetto, L. (2015). Dehumanization. In Wright, J.D., *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences* (pp. 31-37). Amsterdam: Elsevier, Inc.
- White, H. (1980). A heteroskedasticity-consistent covariance matrix estimator and a direct test for heteroskedasticity. *Econometrica: journal of the Econometric Society*, 817-838.
- Wirtschafter, V. (2022, November 9). After a victory for democracy, what is Brazil's road ahead? *Brookings*. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/after-a-victory-for-democracy-what-is-brazils-road-ahead/>
- Wolff, A. W., & Maruyama, W. (2023). Saving the WTO from the National Security Exception. *Peterson Institute for International Economics, Working Paper*, No. 23-2.
- Yair, O. (2020). A note on the affective polarization literature. Available at SSRN 3771264. <https://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3771264>
- Yildiz, A. (2023). Prior Rebel Experience of Leaders and Its Influence on Physical Integrity Rights. *Aurum Journal of Social Sciences*, 8(2), 173-196. <https://doi.org/10.62393/aurum.1329167>



Journal of Humanity, Peace and Justice

Research Article

 Open Access

Ottomanist Infrastructures: A Path to Colonialist Resource Extraction or Imperial State Building and Territorial Integrity?



Orhan Hayal¹  

¹ Independent Researcher, Istanbul, Türkiye

Abstract



The paper examines the interaction between the Ottoman imperial center and periphery during late Ottoman modernization with a focus on infrastructure and public works. It questions the idea that modernization has been exclusively driven by Western-influenced elites and criticizes the tendency to overly reify the state. In particular, the paper takes a critical stance against recent debates that align the Sublime Porte's will to improve the peripheral populations, which were categorized as uncivilized and impoverished, with Western-style colonialism. Ottoman infrastructures were power technologies related not just to resource extraction but also to imperial state-building that evolved in tandem with local actors, demands, power dynamics, traditions, urban landscapes, and rural environments. The paper draws upon recent provincial, infrastructural, and environmental studies within Ottoman historiography and also looks into newspapers, professional journals, parliamentary minutes, and foreign consular reports to gauge public sentiment on infrastructure and public works. The study defines a biopolitical and governmental rationality intended for improving agriculture, commerce, and the general well-being of imperial subjects in Foucauldian terms, suggesting that local actors may have occasionally embraced, adjusted, or challenged this rationale. Lastly, it argues that unequal infrastructural development or neglect among Empire's populations cannot be interpreted as evidence of colonial rule, which separates the colonizer and the colonized through the categories of civilized and uncivilized.

Keywords


Colonialism · Ottoman Orientalism · Imperial center · Frontier provinces · Infrastructure · Mesopotamia



Citation: Hayal, O. (2024). Ottomanist infrastructures: A path to colonialist resource extraction or imperial state building and territorial integrity?. *Journal of Humanity, Peace and Justice*, 1(1), 18-36. <https://doi.org/10.26650/hupej.2024.10.11447664>

 This work is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License. 

© 2024. Hayal, O.

 Corresponding author: Orhan Hayal orhanhyl@gmail.com



Ottomanist Infrastructures: A Path to Colonialist Resource Extraction or Imperial State Building and Territorial Integrity?

The Ottoman Empire's vast and challenging geography with its high mountain ranges, deep valleys, and barren deserts posed significant obstacles to efficient travel and communication. These natural barriers acted as dividing lines between the fertile inland regions and coastal gateways, impeding the transportation of goods and people. Due to the lack of extensive railway networks and well-constructed roads and engineering structures for wheeled horse-drawn carriages and wagons, transportation relied heavily on pack animals such as camels, mules, donkeys, and oxen carts, which incurred high costs and made long-distance travel cumbersome. The introduction of steam power had the potential to transform rivers into viable transportation routes to the interior, but it would require extensive and costly engineering efforts including dredging riverbeds, excavating islets and meanders, regulating flow, and preventing silt accumulation. These rivers also flowed in vain, the potential for irrigation and transit having remained unused. Furthermore, periodic floods wreaked havoc on settlements and cultivated areas. The vast marshlands were breeding grounds for diseases and posed a persistent danger to public health and well-being. The forests remained wild and untapped. Underdeveloped transportation and hydraulic infrastructures constrained the cultivation of fertile soil and the exploitation of its vast resources, leading to sparse settlements and low population density. Ultimately, these challenges limited economic development and prosperity, with the state failing to generate sufficient revenues from its population and nature.

Ottoman-Turkish modernization was an early instance of how modern infrastructures could have been deployed to pave the way for civilization and progress in a non-Western environment. It was the contentious history of an emergent state striving to improve the well-being of its populace and expand its power across different socio-natural settings. The Ottoman Empire became a player in inter-imperial confrontations, the scientifically informed international society, and expanding techno-political networks. The imperial realm was physically engineered and outfitted with infrastructural technologies and expertise. Railways, well-paved carriage roads, and telegraph lines crisscrossed the rural landscape. The coasts were equipped with ports, lighthouses, coal depots, and quarantine posts. Rivers and lakes were improved for navigation. Swamps were drained and reclaimed for cultivation. Irrigation canals also converted arid regions into productive agricultural basins. A recent surge has occurred in scholarly attention examining the complex interaction of modernization, state formation, and nation-building through the lens of a broader political-ecological geography and has led to studies in the fields of infrastructure and environmental history. Scholars have gone further in understanding how the Ottoman state's emergent infrastructural power had manifested in the natural landscape and engaged in interventionist practices, moving beyond classic notions of state-society relations. On one hand, these scholars depicted an emergent state aimed at improving living conditions, cultivation, resource extraction, and fiscal revenues, as well as increased visibility in the daily lives of local communities and the natural landscape, while on the other hand depicting the role of bureaucrats, experts, foreigners, local actors, newspapers, and the wider public (Adak, 2022; Akpınar, 2021; Gratien, 2022; Ozkan, 2014; Petriat, 2014).



The evolution of the imperial infrastructure and public works was driven by an urge for equilibrium among the European colonial interests, the growing demands of emergent urban and rural notables to participate in public policymaking, the state's efforts toward political integration and fiscal consolidation, and the Sublime Porte's will to improve the well-being of the population and land. This evolution did not simply mean the Western economic and political influence over the Empire or its integration into world capitalism. Nor was it the imposition of the central authority onto the periphery under the guise of Ottoman colonialism. To describe imperial state-building as colonialism would be a mistake, even though the civilizing discourse and governmental technologies deployed by high-ranking officials in the peripheries could have had similarities to Western colonial administration. The paper focuses on infrastructural development to show how Ottoman technocrats envisioned the empire as a united entity despite its many facets. This means the vision of a unified empire was not limited to officials but was occasionally embraced by local actors, underscoring the difference between Ottoman improvement policy and Western-style colonialism. The paper draws on a variety of materials to support its argument, including parliamentary minutes, foreign consular reports, newspapers, and engineering journals.

From Dissolution to Consolidation: Considering the Decline Paradigm and Elite-Driven Modernization

Ottoman modernization is perceived to have originally commenced with Selim III's Nizam-ı Cedid reforms at the turn of the century and to have become more radicalized under Mahmud II's reign, as evidenced by the abolition of the Janissary corps. It culminated in the Gülhane Edict, which acted as a manifesto, and had broad consequences for imperial governance, economy, social structures, and daily life in the subsequent decades. Ottoman modernization was widely recognized as a set of policies crafted by elites, influenced by the West, and disseminated from the imperial center to provincial peripheries. Modernization theorists argued that reforms resulted from a concerted effort to consolidate power in reaction to military defeats, territory losses, separatist revolts, declining central authority, and the rise of local notables in the 17th and 18th centuries. Ottoman modernization followed a historical order of legislative and administrative progress whose dosage and intensity gradually increased. Türkiye had just one path forward: Modernization and Westernization. Despite interruptions and challenges, the fundamental course remained constant, and there was no going back (Lewis, 1993, p. 127). Its success was dependent on the elites' enlightened ambition and determination in the face of regressive resistance. Given that Türkiye was a non-Western Eastern society, modernization had to have been revolutionary. It was considered unachievable unless culturally alienated elites acted authoritatively. The adoption of scientific and technological advancements was insufficient. Türkiye had to embrace the West as a whole (Berkes, 2012, pp. 524, 526). After 1980, growing interest in democracy and civil society led to condemnation of the authoritarian characteristics of modernization. Accordingly, it was "a patriarchal and anti-democratic imposition from above that has negated the historical and cultural experience of the people" (Bozdoğan & Kasaba, 1997, p. 4). Post-Kemalist scholars considered modernization as social engineering, militarist modernization, a civilization project, and the will to civilize, as well as being for the people despite the people (Belge, 2012; Göle, 2011, p. 14; Kadioğlu, 1996; Keyman, 1995; Köker, 2007, p. 175). Paradoxically, these scholars confirmed modernization theorists' basic assumptions of



a strong state, the supremacy of the imperial center, and enlightened elites in power. As a result, the image of a powerful and paternalistic state, which the Republic was assumed to have inherited from the Ottoman Empire, has remained popular in the modernization literature. For scholars, the state was a categorical imperative, a universal and a priori form that was above and beyond society. It was consistent and integrated, as well as rational and authoritative. The classical Ottoman state was fixed in terms of criteria such as merit, public service, equity, and the rationality of a modern nation-state (Abou-El-Haj, 2000, pp. 30, 34; Piterberg, 2017, p. 172). Decentralization was equated with disintegration, while modernization was associated with centralization and the consolidation of the state. Recent studies on provinces and local actors call into question the idea that decentralization inevitably leads to dissolution (Faroqhi, 2006, p. 11). Barkey (2011) offered one of the best-known explanations. In the 18th century when the central authority over the periphery was considered to be eroded, the Ottoman Empire attempted a type of centralization different from the Western model. Bandits, not peasant or aristocratic revolts, challenged the order. These events were mainly triggered by recruitment and the demobilization cycle. The state settled the issue through negotiation while simultaneously exploiting it to justify further centralized measures. Although Barkey contended the Ottomans as having pursued a different route to centralization, she shared the concerns of state-centered ideas in state theory. The state was reified as a rational agent. Furthermore, she offered a structural explanation for center-periphery relations. Intermediary bodies, networks, and elites mediated state-society relations rather than direct exchanges with individual subjects. Authority flowed from the central state to local elites and ultimately to the local populace. Imperial power relations formed as a “hub-and-spoke network,” with each spoke tied to the center but having less direct connection with others, letting central control expand over peripheral entities through vertical integration and limited communication among peripherals (Barkey, 2008, p. 10). A more argumentative analysis focuses on the 18th century and the tax farming system, which is regarded as one of the most common examples of the fall of imperial authority and the emergence of centrifugal regional actors. As outlined by Salzman (1993, p. 406), with the collapse of the *timar* system (fief, land grants)¹, the granting of the tax revenues of a specific region with a contract of advance payment to meet increasing cash needs led to the expansion of the monetary economy throughout the Empire, and the process regarded as decentralization actually resulted in a much closer relationship between the center and the periphery. Contract-based financial networks and monetization facilitated a bottom-up reorganization of the imperial authority. In a more recent study of a successful application of environmental history to the Ottoman Egypt during a period when the Sultan’s rule was supposed to be just nominal, Mikhail (2011) posed a significant challenge to the center-periphery model, which claims the center as having had little interest in forming an imperial identity or establishing permanent relations and institutions other than extracting resources from peripheral provinces. The model oversimplified “the complex and mutually determinative relationships between component parts” (pp. 25-26) of the Ottoman Empire. The empire was not organized with various peripheries around a single center. Rather, it was an assemblage of multiple centers and multiple peripheries that interacted with one another through ecological processes, roads, ships, irrigation works, food chains, energy flows in the form of calories, timber, and other strategic items.

¹It was an Islamic taxation and land tenure system that benefited timaroit, or high-ranking provincial officials.



From Imperial Core to Frontiers: Governed in Difference - Colonialist or Not?

The center-periphery model made similar assumptions to the modernization school and the post-Kemalist literature described previously. It reified the state as the driving force of modernization while emphasizing the role of elites. Expanding on this model, some scholars have asserted such concepts as Ottoman Orientalism or borrowed colonialism, arguing the elites who controlled the Turkish core of the empire to have embraced both the European civilizing rhetoric as well as the use of colonial tactics to govern territories perceived as backward, notably the Arab provinces. In this view, the Tanzimat was a centrally planned project imposed on the periphery using a top-down approach. Ottoman citizenship was just an empty vessel designed by the central authority and reshaped by the state's modernizing might. Makdisi (2002, p. 770) claimed that, during an era dominated by Western modernity, each nation created its own Orient, and the Ottoman modernization was no exception. It prioritized the imperial Turkish core, which was entrusted with proving equivalency with Europe in terms of political structure, military might, technological advancement, and civic conduct, all while retaining its sovereignty and cultural distinctiveness as a Muslim empire. This demanded a restructuring of the relationship between the Turkish core and its subject peoples, particularly the Arabs. Ottoman reformers regarded them not just as potential citizens but also as backward and not yet Ottoman, providing both impediments and objectives for imperial reform. As the state consolidated and homogenized its core territories, Arab provinces were increasingly envisioned as a quasi-colonial space characterized by "nomadism and savagery," and Ottoman authorities had a "civilizing motif" regarding their periphery as a colonial setting (Deringil, 2003, p. 318). The primary subject in both historians' arguments was the widespread use of derogatory language in official records when referring to the people living in these regions. It seemed to draw a gap between the so-called civilized Ottoman authorities and the uncivilized population (Minawi, 2015, p. 77).

Provincial studies have refined the notion of Ottoman colonialism as a rule of difference in which the imperial center adapted to varying local realities. Kuehn (2011, p. 135) referred to "colonial Ottomanism" as a hybrid form of provincial administration that acknowledged some colonial but ambiguous and contradictory aspects of late Ottoman rule in Yemen. It differed from European colonialism in that it didn't establish separate political structures or legal codes and avoided discourses of racial or sexual segregation, instead suggesting a "hierarchy of subjects" and designating Yemenis as "Ottomans of a lesser kind". Hanssen (2005, pp. 4-5) explored a comparable dynamic in Beirut, where conflicting European, Ottoman, and local "civilizing missions" influenced political domains including administration, infrastructure, urban planning, public health, education, public morals, media, and architecture. Beirut evolved into a product, object, and project of imperial and urban politics of difference, with discursive practices of social exclusion and inclusion molding urban space into a distinctively Ottoman form of Orientalism. Reforms in the Anatolian and Syrian provinces focused on integration, while the colonial language targeted nomadic populations in deserts and mountainous regions. Urban notables with economic, social, and cultural capital actively participated in the Ottoman state-building process through symbolic, ceremonial, and selectively participatory politics, seeking a political path to Istanbul that would affect financial capitalization at home.

The presence of tribal and autonomous power structures, foreign influences, and colonial threats, as well as local customs in distant provinces such as the Hijaz, Trablusgarb, Yemen, and parts of Iraq, rendered them



unsuitable for full incorporation into the imperial system envisioned by the Tanzimat's universalizing ideology. The lack of censuses, regular taxation procedures, cadastral surveys, land registration, conscription, and Western-style education and court systems suggested that the locals had remained beyond the scope of civilized Ottoman subjects. That kind of frontier governance separated Ottoman rulers from locals based on cultural rather than racial or ethnic characteristics. Unlike European colonialism, which established the gap between colonizers and colonized, it allowed for an adjustable division over time and was not an intrinsic prerequisite of Ottoman imperial rule (Minawi, 2016, p. 15). Certainly, reformers often saw imperial people as objects rather than actors in the process of imperial change. On the other hand, a strict focus on the official state mission ignores how Ottoman subjects engaged, refined, and challenged the state's initiatives. They'd learned to "speak Tanzimat" by negotiating between official and subaltern perspectives on reform and state power (Petrov, 2004, p. 733).

The Empire was not a blank slate for the Sublime Porte. For example, the cadastral surveys and land registrations didn't introduce wholly new terms into local land use practices. Instead, the administration negotiated the terms of the code with the established conditions. Officials met with local actors on site to register their property rights in accordance with the legislation, modern registration techniques, tax calculation methods, and local social production relations, resulting in various outcomes across the empire (Mundy & Smith, 2007, pp. 4-7). Local conditions mandated that they be governed in distinctive ways. It was not a strict enforcement of centrally planned policies but rather a process in which old practices were entwined with new processes; the locals were effective in policy formation, and the Tanzimat state had an important capacity to learn from local reactions and re-adapt reforms (Köksal, 2002, p. 108).

Ottoman state-building resulted in the emergence of a new class of educated professionals and intellectuals, as well as a popular press and civil society. All of these were critical in determining and disseminating various ideas about the imperial collective in the context of broader social, economic, and cultural transformations (Campos, 2011, p. 65). For example, Ahmed, a Basra notable, spent most of his adulthood in exile in Istanbul. He rebuilt his personal ties and family interests in Basra by taking advantage of the concession investments and bank loans available in Istanbul. He signed a contract with the government for a concession to drain the marshes around Praviçte Lake in Salonica for agricultural and irrigation purposes. He saw the Basra people as possible investors in his concession project. This revealed his vision of the Ottoman Empire as a unified sphere in which mobile capital could circulate without going through Istanbul. While he identified as Ottoman, his decisions and affiliations differed from the typical "hub-and-spoke model" (Cole, 2020, pp. 34-35).

The Sublime Porte governed the complexities of its ethnically and religiously diverse frontiers while seeking to keep a delicate balance between integration and heterogeneity. Ottoman state-building and civilizing practices must be distinguished from European colonialism because they went beyond merely adopting Western norms and enforcing uniformity from the center. These practices were related to modern governmentality, bureaucratic efficiency, and territorial sovereignty and required a nuanced approach involving actors from various geographical and socioeconomic backgrounds. Ottoman officials were aware that autonomous frontiers could lead to disparities and instability, making consolidating state power and imperial sovereignty difficult. They undertook ambitious initiatives to engineer these frontiers, relying on



modern technology and public works to overcome biopolitical and juridical deficiencies. With a “technocratic gaze” (Low, 2020, p. 34), they governed both human populations and natural resources and gradually replaced autonomous political structures with a more centralized territorial authority.

Public Works: A Way of Improving *Mülk-ü Millet* (Empire and Nation)

The emergent Ottoman state aimed to transform nature into resources for profitable enterprises. It had rivers running in vain and fertile soil that had never been cultivated, as well as inanimate forests, wetlands, and lakes. One region had plenty while another had famine. Soil, crops, and animals had no economic worth. Tanzimat policies meant to improve and alter nature to establish a strong and prosperous state, population, and land by adopting classical economics. In 1845, the Sublime Porte launched a comprehensive initiative to investigate and address local agricultural, commercial, industrial, and infrastructural requirements. A commission was formed with representatives from each province for gathering insights on their respective provinces. Ten public improvement commissions were appointed, five in Rumelia and five in Anatolia. They were charged with conducting on-site surveys to collect an economic inventory of the provinces. More specifically, they were to gather data on a variety of topics, such as the types of crops farmers cultivated, the goods merchants traded, and the products tradesmen manufactured, as well as the condition of existing infrastructure such as ports, roads and bridges, and navigability of rivers (Seyitdanlioğlu, 1992, pp. 328-329). Infrastructure and public works were intimately associated with a transition in political rationality during modernization. A novel form of governance emerged, finding its order not in any transcendental concept but in the regularities inherent in the collective existence of individuals, such as population-related phenomena (e.g., death, birth, famine, illness, wealth distribution). This paved way for a governmental interaction between the state and the populace. Individuals no longer appeared as merely legal subjects bound to the Sultan’s or the state’s sovereign order; instead, they were integral members of a general population category whose livelihoods, interactions, and living conditions were inherently dependent on the material environment in which they lived. This environment informed and organized the state’s activities while also serving as a setting for intentional and ongoing biopolitical interventions (Foucault, 2000a, 2000b; 2013, pp. 93-94). The infrastructural form of state power was meant to govern people through the “administration of things,” rather than exerting power through legislation and disciplinary measures on individuals (Foucault, 2007, p. 49; Lemke, 2021, pp. 85-89), and was dedicated to governing and conducting the circulation of vital substances. Having diverse forms, infrastructure was made up of materials and technologies that were meticulously planned, constructed, and monitored with knowledge, expertise, legal frameworks, budgets, and technical standards. It was a complex technical system that mechanized the movement of humans, animals, vehicles, goods, water, waste, energy, ideas, and information with minimum human involvement. Once mechanized, the infrastructure mediated state power. Modern urban infrastructure such as street lighting, well-maintained roads, piped water, sewers, and electric wires were regarded by Foucault-inspired scholars as the technologies of liberal rule in Victorian Britain and ensured that governmental bodies weren’t engaged in everyday affairs directly. These were meant to facilitate the way individuals adopted specific habits without direct authoritative oversight, allowing for the cultivation of self-governing subjects (Joyce, 2003, p. 11; Osborne, 1996, pp. 114-115; Otter, 2002, p. 6) and echoing early notions in science and technology studies, which depicted infrastructures as technical systems and background processes that were mostly



invisible and only became conspicuous when they malfunction (Star & Ruhleder, 1996, p. 113). Could an identical connection have existed between infrastructure and politics while moving from the metropole to the colonial world? Colonizers didn't treat each colony the same way. Colonial infrastructures materialized a sharp division between colonizers and the colonized. While their construction aimed to streamline the extraction of resources from the colonies to the metropole, they also solidified a narrative of racialization and dehumanization toward the colonized population. The autonomy granted by mechanized infrastructures to urban subjects, including the working classes, was not intended for the colonized people. Colonizers aimed not to create a regulated, uninterrupted, and liberated circulation milieu akin to the metropole but rather a fragmented and restricted one. Natives were racialized as incapable of self-government, uncivilized, and polluted bodies (McFarlane, 2008, p. 418). Colonial infrastructures also developed a visible form of monumentalism, serving as perpetual reminders of the gap between colonizers and colonized. They physically enforced colonial rule by superimposing existing structures, transforming territories and their political, economic, and social ties. Furthermore, the promises of science, progress, and authority inherent in their technology symbolized the colonial sublime (Larkin, 2008, pp. 47, 61, 247).

Ottoman technocrats sought to engineer a networked empire that extended from Rumelia to Anatolia, including the Levant, Mesopotamia, the Hejaz, and Yemen, in contrast to the European-deployed infrastructures that fractured the colonial realm and populace. The goal was to reanimate these regions by focusing on agriculture, which was deemed essential to state revenue and population welfare amid the Empire's vast and challenging terrain. It aimed to cultivate previously untapped fertile lands, increase agricultural output, encourage cash crop cultivation, and facilitate commerce with urban and overseas markets. It entailed improving transportation, communication, and public works. Scholars generally understand the development of modern infrastructure in the empire by looking at the urban environment. They concentrate on major port cities with strong commercial ties to Europe, underlining the effect of Levantine inhabitants and non-Muslim bourgeoisie in specific districts. Istanbul, Izmir, Salonica, Trabzon, Samsun, and Beirut became hubs for railways, roads, advanced port facilities, postal services, and telegraph networks. Furthermore, these cities experienced improvements in urban amenities such as well-paved streets, a centralized water supply, extensive sewage networks, street lighting, tramways, electricity, and telephone lines, all made possible by modern municipal governance (Çelik, 1998; Dinçkal, 2008). Scholars who've adopted the world-system perspective to understand the physical, economic, social, and cultural transformation of Ottoman cities considered these developments as the outcome of being incorporated into the global capitalist economy. As the Empire became entangled with Europe as a source of cheap raw materials and agricultural goods (Keyder et al., 1993, p. 532), it experienced significant changes in production relations, land tenure, and political structure. Port cities represented a weakening of the state authority and a growing foreign influence (Kasaba et al., 1986, p. 123). While this perspective provides a relational framework by placing the Ottoman Empire within the historical context of global capitalism (İslamoğlu-İnan, 1987), it privileges the international system, foreign trade, and the intermediary merchant class, ignoring the strengthening connections between port cities and their rural hinterlands (Fuhrmann, 2020, pp. 13, 298). Urban modernity was not only motivated by foreign economic interests or the centralization ambitions. Numerous local actors were active, and a public opinion focused on urban concerns had formed. Newspapers played an important role in de-



veloping urban imagination by disseminating both the conflicting interests of locals and complaints from urban citizens (Hanssen, 2005, p. 53; Zandi-Sayek, 2012, p. 138). They did more than just capture events and words or relay information; they also had a constructive role in imbuing Ottoman-ness with meaning while shaping and communicating the public imperial self (Campos, 2011, p. 133). These concerns went beyond the urban centers. The provincial councils as extensions of the Tanzimat reforms in charge of conducting economic development and public works worked alongside local officials, merchants, and entrepreneurs to construct physical infrastructure such as railways, factories, warehouses, roads, bridges, and port facilities. They also played a role in creating banking, insurance, municipal, and other urban institutions, as well as increasing access to and control over natural resources in rural hinterlands (İnal, 2019, p. 2).

Mapping an Integrated Realm and Paving Infrastructures

Following the devastating territorial losses in the 1877–1878 Ottoman-Russian war, Hasan Fehmi Pasha, Minister of Public Works under Abdulhamid II, introduced the Empire's first comprehensive public works program. It featured the construction of roads, railways, ports, and quays throughout the Empire's Anatolian, Mesopotamian, and Syrian provinces, as well as irrigation, swamp drainage, land reclamation, and river regulation projects. Firstly, having a well-maintained transportation network of roads, railways, and ports was determined to be essential for the consolidation of state power; the encouragement of commercial, industrial, and agricultural development; and the prevention of famines that would occasionally strike particular regions and severely damage the populace. Secondly, land reclamation, swamp drainage, and flood control were deemed vital to agricultural production, public health, and the general well-being of the rural population. Marshy areas and periodic floods forced the abandonment of settlements and vast fertile lands, causing a decrease in population and the eventual ruination of towns and villages. Thirdly, the program involved harnessing rivers for both transportation and irrigation. Dredging riverbeds and managing flows would make rivers navigable, allowing for easier transit to inland regions. Furthermore, constructing an irrigation network through the canals would boost agricultural output and the cultivation of non-arable lands (Dinçer, 1968). In fact, the program represented a new political rationale in Foucauldian terms. Its goal was to boost commerce and agricultural output within the imperial realm while also improving living conditions and general well-being. It had a biopolitical and governmental approach. Individuals were no longer considered merely subjects but rather equivalent inhabitants of the population, dependent on the physical conditions of their surroundings. Given the Empire's lack of fiscal and technical capabilities to carry out such a large endeavor, the program relied on foreign capital and expertise and reflected the liberal mindset that prevailed at the time.

Figure 1

Map detailing the roads, railways, and ports to be built, as well as lands to be irrigated and marshes to be drained attached to the Public Works in Anatolia Program drafted by Hasan Fehmi Pasha?





Infrastructure for transportation, communication, urban amenities, and public works advanced rapidly in provinces such as Salonica in Rumelia; Aydın (Izmir) and Adana in Asia Minor; and Beirut, Damascus, and Jerusalem in the Levant. This improvement was made possible by foreign concessions, as well as by direct investments from both central and provincial authorities. Many modern infrastructures such as railways, well-paved roads for horse-drawn carriages, deepwater harbors, and advanced port facilities appropriate for steamers and overseas commerce were not first introduced in the imperial center of Istanbul. For example, the Izmir-Aydın and Izmir-Kasaba lines were the first railways in Anatolia and became fully operational in 1867. The British got a concession to extend Izmir's docks in 1867, but the French were the ones who finished construction and operated the port in 1875. Galata quays were inaugurated in 1896. This period also included the construction of ports in Beirut (1887–1892) and Salonica (1888–1902). Gas and lighting facilities were established in Izmir (1857–1876), Beirut (1885–1888), and finally Istanbul (1888–1892). Izmir and Salonica were the Ottoman Empire's first two cities to be equipped with electricity (Geyikdağı, 2011). In 1836, the Chesney expedition surveyed the Euphrates River to facilitate steam navigation. In 1861, the Lynch Company was granted a concession to operate one boat, which was eventually raised to two in 1864 and three in 1907. A government-operated line was established in 1855, which was later reorganized and expanded in 1867 (Cole, 2016). Steam navigation considerably decreased the voyage time from Baghdad to Basra to 52–60 hours, as opposed to 5–8 days by sailing ship. Syria had one of the Empire's longest railway networks. Between 1889–1914, it underwent major railway expansion mostly financed with French capital, including the Jaffa-

²Note: COA, Y.EE.11-5; COA, HRT1603. The author has added red numbers to indicate: 1. Railways in operation 2. The planned major railway route from Izmit to Baghdad, with additional branches and secondary lines 3. Roads classified as first- and second-class 4. Major ports and sheltered ports 5. Lands to be irrigated 6. Marshes to be drained.

Jerusalem, Beirut-Damascus, Damascus-Muzayrib, Rayak-Aleppo, and Homs-Tripoli lines, which totaled 772 km in length and £5,600,000 in cost. By 1913, railways were playing a vital role in the region's internal transportation, possibly carrying up to half of Syria's trade. In addition, the Hijaz Railway, which served military and political goals, was constructed at a cost of over £4.5 million and had reached around 1,650 km in length by 1918 (Issawi, 1982, pp. 52-56).

The Hejaz Railway was one of the most significant public projects. Unlike previous railways, it was not built with foreign concessions but rather with donations from Muslims throughout the world and public funding. It had no clear economic goal; instead, it had been propagandized as a symbol of the Sultan's authority as caliph of all Muslims and his attempts to encourage pilgrimage to the holy land (US Department of Commerce and Labor Bureau of Manufactures, 1907, p. 10). The railway is generally regarded as a manifestation of Abdulhamid II's pan-Islamic policies. However, most pilgrimage voyages, notably those by steamer, originated in British-controlled India, implying that a railway project connecting the Red Sea port of Jeddah to Mecca could have been a more cost-effective option. Indian pilgrims voiced strong support for such a railway. It would have meant developing the overseas connections of the already autonomous Hijaz, which conflicted with the interests of the imperial capital and the rest of the Empire. The Hijaz and the Red Sea staged inter-imperial struggles. In particular, once Britain colonized India and occupied Egypt, the Suez Canal opened, steam navigation and overseas trade expanded, and pilgrimage traffic increased. It forced the Sublime Porte to take new measures to assert its previously nominal rule over the Hijaz (Low, 2020). During the cholera era, poor pilgrims traveling by steamer were major spreaders of the disease, leaving the Ottoman government in a precarious position in relation to Europeans. It internationalized the pilgrimage and provoked European involvement. Britain was also eager to monitor the conditions of its colonial people throughout the journey. The Sublime Porte considered each Indian pilgrim a symbol of Britain's expanding influence. The Muslim caliph couldn't possibly openly restrict their pilgrimages. The Sublime Porte did its best to control pilgrimage traffic and prevent British influence by adopting internationally recognized cholera prevention measures, such as mandatory inspections, quarantine stations, transit permits, and passports. It also expanded its power techno-politically through sanitation infrastructure and the Hejaz Railway, which would physically connect the region to the rest of the Empire.

The Constitutional Way of Infrastructural Development

The Young Turk Revolution restored the Constitution. Elections were held, Parliament was reopened, the press was liberated, and political parties and other organizations emerged. The constitutional regime allowed for unprecedented more open discussion with the public about the Empire's economic development and progress, as well as people's well-being and prosperity. It also faced challenges from the March 31 counter-revolutionary movement and the rebellions in isolated frontier provinces such as Albania, south-eastern Anatolia, Mount Lebanon, and Yemen, proving centralized governance difficult. The army was mobilized to restore order. Following that, arguments in Parliament and among the public emerged regarding the roots of the rebellions and potential non-military solutions. One article (Ucciani, 1910) on recent Albanian unrest had focused on sociopolitical factors. Albania was traditionally characterized by a fragmented society separated along tribal lines, with authority distributed among local leaders. The decentralized system



offered the Albanian community living under Ottoman rule a sense of autonomy. However, the taxation, compulsory military service, and centralized authority the Young Turks introduced were encroaching on their traditional way of life. While the army served to restore order, a merely military reaction was insufficient for the underlying issues. Many Albanians lived in abject poverty, with limited access to education and economic opportunities. To prevent further unrest, the article advocated for infrastructural improvements, including roads, railways, and irrigation systems, that would boost economic development and improve living standards, as well as promote education and establish fair jurisdiction.

Gabriel Noradounghian Effendi, the constitutional regime's first Minister of Public Works, presented a comprehensive public works program to the Grand Vizier. The primary goal was to boost agriculture, which was considered vital to both state revenue and to the population's welfare. The planned infrastructure network comprised 30,000 km of roads and 7,900 km of railways, as well as upgrades to existing ports and the construction of new ones along the Empire's coasts. The program predicted hydraulic projects over 17,600,000 hectares. Priorities included swamp drainage, flood prevention, and irrigation in the Adana Plain; regulation of the Vardar River and the drying up Lake Yenice in Rumelia; utilizing the Menderes River for irrigation in Aydın; draining marshes in Iskenderun, Beirut, and Jerusalem; and irrigating the plains in Kilis, Antep, Hama, Homs, and Jaffa (Noradounghian, 1 Decembre 1908). The program was a comprehensive development plan that covered the whole Empire both in terms of content and geographical reach. The state noticed infrastructure as a common good and a public duty and showed a desire for national unification and the Empire's commitment to all of its territories at a time when the Parliament included representatives from all provinces (Tekeli & İlkin, 2004).

Parliament was an arena of intense debates regarding investments. MPs competed for funds and staff allocation for road, bridge, port, swamp, and irrigation projects. Written and oral parliamentary questions were a usual way for MPs to bring infrastructural inadequacies in their provinces to the Parliament's attention and inform their colleagues. Table 1 outlines several motions submitted by MPs from different provinces during the Ministry of Public Works' budget negotiation. These involve the requests for funding and technical staff to develop public works. MPs emphasized that investment in infrastructure and public works would stimulate economic development and promote the overall well-being of their provinces and the Empire. Even though many motions were rejected or deferred to the Ministry of Public Works committee, they served as a means of drawing attention to the deficiencies and needs of distant provinces or frontiers, of informing MPs from other provinces, and of elevating these issues to the wider public.

Table 1

Motions Submitted by MPs in Budget Negotiations for the Ministry of Public Works: 1910-1911

MPs	Province/Sanjak	Motion Details	Year
Şükrü Şevki	Maras	A request for allocating funds from the Public Works budget to complete the Sivas Road, which connects the Fourth and Fifth Armies and serves as a major commerce route between Anatolia and Syria.	1910 (1326)
Ali Cenani	Halep		
Fehmi Ziya	Maras		
Davut Arif	Musul	A highlighting of the neglect of the key roads connecting Van to the Iranian border via Baskale, as well as routes	1910
	Bitlis		



MPS	Province/Sanjak	Motion Details	Year
Fevzi İlyas Sarmi Mehmet Emin Fazıl Papazyan Varteks Seyyit Taha Karakin Pastırmacıyan Mehmet Nuri İbrahim Salih Mehmet Ali	Diyarbakir Mus Genc Musul Van Erzurum Hakkari Erzurum Marmuretülaziz Ergani Kerkük	from Diyarbakir, Erzurum, Genc, and Mus to Palu and Bitlis. Despite their military and political significance, they had remained overlooked, whether owing to the previous administration's failure to undertake studies or the public's unwillingness to express their concerns due to harsh conditions. The motion requests that these routes be included and prioritized in the Ministry's general road program.	
Ömer Mansur	Bingazi	A request for the construction of bridges on the main road from Mosul to Kirkuk and Baghdad, as well as over rivers such the Great and Small Zab and the Tigris.	1910
Hızır Lütfi	Zor	A request to construct a regular road connecting Merc Kazasi to the Bingazi center and districts, given its strategic location and commercial importance.	1910
Emin Aslan	Lazkiye	A motion requesting additional funding, either through Agricultural Bank loans or Ministry allocations, to complete a 5-year-old bridge-building project in Zor over the Euphrates River.	1910
Ömer Mansur	Bingazi	A request calling for the completion of road projects connecting Merkab, Hama, Lazkiye, and Halep.	1910
Halit Berazi	Hama	A motion noting that a motion had been made for the Bingazi port last year, whose construction had begun but not been finished; the deputy minister stated that 50,000 liras were needed to complete the project. The motion requests that the port be completed through an open tender or directly by the state.	1910
Abdülhamit Zehravi Halit Berazi	Hama	A request for comprehensive hydraulic works along the Orontes River, including the construction of dams, levees, and irrigation canals to reduce floods, regulate water flow, and improve cultivation in the Hama province.	1911 (1327)
Sait El Hüseyini	Kudüs	A motion emphasizing how the Orontes River, which originates on the slopes of Mount Lebanon and flows through the plains of Homs and Hama, offers little benefit to the region despite being one of the area's major rivers. If properly studied and regulated through modern engineering, great benefits might be realized for both the country's development and the Treasury. The motion proposes that the Ministry assign qualified engineers to the area and commence efforts to improve it.	1911
Fehmi Şükrü	Maraş	A request for additional allocations to drain marshes for agriculture and public health.	1911
		A motion demanding preliminary studies and projects for the rehabilitation of rivers and lakes that devastate farmlands and endanger public health.	1911



MPs	Province/Sanjak	Motion Details	Year
Yusuf Şetvan Ömer Mansur	Bingazi	A motion underlining the water scarcity in Bingazi's agricultural sector, as well as how the government could benefit millions of liras from agriculture, people could have higher living standards, and the region could contribute to the national economy with adequate irrigation. The motion proposes continuation of the works for drilling artesian wells drilling works that had been funded last year and had successful results, as well as for additional funds to be granted.	1911

Notes: MMZC, Devre 1, İçtima 2, Cilt 6, İnikad 113, 1 Haziran 1326. MMZC, Devre 1, İçtima 3, Cilt 6, İnikad 98, 2 Mayıs 1327. The table has been formed using the parliamentary minutes (Meclisi Mebusan Zabıt Ceridesi).

The government sought to advance agriculture by establishing modern schools and creating an agricultural bureaucracy. Additionally, model farms were established across the Empire to educate farmers on scientific farming practices and promote the utilization of modern agricultural equipment. The Agricultural Bank was reformed to provide farmers with affordable loans and increase access to imported agricultural machinery. Agricultural technocrats were also assigned to regions with varying climates and soils in the Empire (Williams, 2023). These efforts were accompanied through public works. Many engineers were charged with preliminary studies on the Empire's rivers, lakes, wetlands, and marshes, with funds set aside for a variety of hydraulic infrastructures³. Improving agricultural infrastructure was also essential for supporting the extensive railway construction, which was typically built under foreign concessions with kilometer guarantees and agricultural revenues along the projected lines. The irrigation project on the Konya Plain, which was crossed by the German-built Baghdad Railway, was deemed successful. After completion, agricultural output rose, which contributed to financing the railway (Godard, 1909; US Department of the Interior, 1909, pp. 114-115).

While the Mesopotamian irrigation project was a similar undertaking, it was considerably more ambitious and extensive in scale. The project was particularly high on the new regime's public works agenda, drawing attention from foreign powers, businesses, and engineering circles (T. de Leandre, 1911). Given the German-controlled Baghdad Railway project and British interests in the region, it became yet another hotspot in the inter-imperial struggle. The periodic floods of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers harmed agriculture and public health. Despite abundant water sources, these were unable to be used for irrigation.

Figure 2

Preliminary project for irrigating the southern part of Mesopotamia⁴.

³In an article published in the journal *Le Génie Civil*, Louis Godard, Chief Engineer of the Bridges and Roads Directorate under the Ministry of Public Works, reviewed the pace of such projects under the new regime. Public works were carried out in various places, including the Meriç and Vardar deltas, the Adana and Menemen plains, the Menderes valley, and the Antakya and Iskenderun marshes (Godard, 1910). They were also regularly documented in periodicals, which were the publication organs of the engineering associations founded during the constitutional regime (Ed. Schneider, 1911; Engineer, 1911; *Revue Technique d'Orient*, 1911).





The government appointed William Willcocks, a British engineer with experience in Egypt and India. Willcocks' project was part of the abovementioned public works program and consisted of 12 sub-projects categorized into three sections with the purpose of irrigating a total of 1,285,000 hectares of land at a cost of approximately 7,500,000 liras. The aim was to construct dams, levies, and canals to prevent floods and reclaim agricultural land. The most urgent of these was to replace the old Hindiyya Dam on the Euphrates River with a new dam located a few kilometers upstream, along with the associated canal project. It was projected to cost 600,000 liras and, once completed, would irrigate 500,000 hectares of the surrounding area of Ancient Babylon (Noradounghian, 1 Decembre 1908, pp. 147-168).

The British Lynch Company, which held a steam navigation concession on the Tigris and Euphrates, would suffer if flood protection measures and irrigation canals were to lower water levels in the rivers. In response to British pressure, the government renewed the concession, which granted the company a monopoly over navigation between Basra and Baghdad. This sparked widespread annoyance across Mesopotamia and the Empire (L'Asie Française, 1910a; L'Asie Française, 1910b). Locals were concerned that the concession extension would interrupt the irrigation project and further entrench British influence. According to a manifesto published in Egypt by the Committee for the Defense of Iraq's Interests (L'Asie Française, 1910c), the Baghdad people were unanimously opposed to the agreement, viewing it as politically and economically dangerous. They were motivated by strong Ottoman feelings and convinced that safeguarding the Sultan's interests would serve to promote the Prophet's honor. An additional complaint was leveled against Willcocks' management and his actions regarding the long-awaited irrigation project, as he appeared to prioritize British interests above local needs. His plans to move water away from cultivated fields and into deserts, as well as the destruction of the Hindiyya Dam to improve water pressure, intensified worries, as this would increase the amount of flooded land and harm local agriculture (L'Asie Française, 1910d). In a series of articles published in *La Jeune Turquie*, engineer Santo Sémo described the project as a political, economic, and engineering disaster akin to the French Panama Canal venture. Willcocks' one-and-a-half-year mission had

⁴Note: Section 1 between Musseib and Samawa had first priority, with the construction of a new dam on the Euphrates River and an associated diversion canal. COA, HRT1710.

cost the government £130,000. He'd left behind just a costly and incomplete repair of the Hindiyya Dam and the useless Hilleh branch dredging. Aside from this £50,000 expenditure, which had done more harm than good, Wilcocks also had spent £80,000 pounds on salaries and travel expenses (Santo Sémo, 1910). While Willcocks' grandiose plan remained on paper, the government decided to only contract the international engineering firm Sir J. Jackson, Ltd. of London to construct the new Hindiyya Dam on the Euphrates, which would be completed before the outbreak of World War I. Mesopotamia Irrigation Project suffered the same destiny as the Baghdad and Hejaz Railways. In the latter days of the Empire, the infrastructural will to bind imperial subjects into an unified body politic while also improving them with their surroundings as fellow citizens in that whole eventually failed.


Conclusion

This paper argues that Ottoman modernization and state formation cannot simply be seen as Western-style colonialism aimed at just resource extraction by leading into a physical and social space that has been fragmented into civilized and uncivilized, colonizer and colonized, or center and periphery. Infrastructures were an effective means of imagining the physical space of a unified Empire. This imagining was shared not only by the ruling elites but also by local actors who'd become more involved in collective decision-making and public life. The imperial center adopted the techno-political aspects of modern infrastructures to materialize its rule over the frontiers, which had hitherto been largely nominal, amidst escalating inter-imperial conflicts. The state had to solidify its presence in both urban and rural landscapes while also consolidating its infrastructural and logistical power. Material networks performed as a substrate for integrating tribes and frontiers, which the Sublime Porte struggled to formally confront and centralize militarily and administratively, into the rest of the empire. Concurrently, infrastructures and public works gained popularity as a public benefit and regular means of progress and general well-being among the emergent urban bourgeoisie, landowners, and, at the very least, the literate people. They became conduits for attachment to the state and a rising sense of citizenship, particularly once the constitutional regime was restored and Parliament emerged as the main forum for addressing concerns about how to develop every corner of the Empire. MPs lobbied the government for infrastructure projects in their respective provinces. They informed other provincial MPs and the wider public about the lack of infrastructure during parliamentary sessions and submitted how the construction of railways, roads, and hydraulic systems would strengthen the state and boost the Empire's general prosperity. At last, the regime's legitimacy had become dependent on satisfying infrastructural desires that would improve people's lives and cement their allegiance to the state as fellow citizens of the Empire, particularly in remote provinces. Given the geographical and social heterogeneity, the Sublime Porte was compelled to strategically adopt a policy of recognizing differences in how to govern the Empire. All the same, the notion of a unified Empire progressively merged with the emergent collective imperial self and became somewhat concrete with a consensus on the common good and the visible manifestation of the public programs and infrastructure designed to accomplish it.



Peer Review	Externally peer-reviewed.
Conflict of Interest	The author have no conflict of interest to declare.
Grant Support	The author declared that this study has received no financial support.



Author Details **Orhan Hayal**¹ Independent Researcher, Istanbul, Türkiye 0000-0002-3542-0668  orhanhyl@gmail.com

References

- Abou-El-Haj, R. a. A. (2000). *Modern Devletin Doğası: 16. Yüzyıldan 18. Yüzyıla Osmanlı İmparatorluğu* (O. Özel & C. Şahin, Trans.). İmge Kitabevi.
- Adak, U. (2022). Water, Sewage and Sanitation: Infrastructure Projects and Public Health in Izmir in the Late Ottoman Empire. *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, 24(2), 263-284.
- Akpınar, Ö. (2021). Making Property of a Marsh: Environment, Property, and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Ioannina. *Middle Eastern Studies*, 58 (4), 487-503.
- Barkey, K. (2008). *Empire of Difference: The Ottomans in Comparative Perspective*. Columbia University.
- Barkey, K. (2011). *Eşkiyalar ve Devlet: Osmanlı Tarzı Devlet Merkezileşmesi* (Z. Altok, Trans.). Türk Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları.
- Belge, M. (2012). *Militarist Modernleşme: Almanya, Japonya ve Türkiye*. assets İletişim.
- Berkes, N. (2012). *Türkiye'de Çağdaşlaşma*. YKY.
- Bozdoğan, S., & Kasaba, R. (1997). *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey*. University of Washington Press.
- Campos, M. U. (2011). *Ottoman Brothers: Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Early Twentieth-Century Palestine*. Stanford University Press.
- Cole, C. L. (2016). Precarious Empires: A Social and Environmental History of Steam Navigation on the Tigris. *Journal of Social History*, 50, 74-101.
- Cole, C. L. (2020). *Empire on Edge: Land, Law, and Capital in Gilded Age Basra* [Dissertation, Yale University]. USA.
- Çelik, Z. (1998). *19. Yüzyılda Osmanlı Başkenti: Değişen İstanbul* (S. Deringil, Trans.). Tarih Vakfı Yurt.
- Deringil, S. (2003). 'They Live in a State of Nomadism and Savagery': The Late Ottoman Empire and the Post-Colonial Debate. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 45(2), 311-342.
- Diñçer, C. (1968-1971). Osmanlı Vezirlerinden Hasan Fehmi Paşa'nın Anadolu'nun Bayındırlık İşlerine Dair Hazırladığı Lâyiha. *Türk Tarih Kurumu Belgeler, V-VIII(9-12)*, 153-233.
- Diñçal, N. (2008). Reluctant Modernization: The Cultural Dynamics of Water Supply in Istanbul, 1885-1950. *Technology and Culture*, 49(3), 675-700.
- Ed. Schneider. (1911, Septembre). Une Région Malheureuse de l'Asie Mineure. La Plaine Marécageuse d'El Amouk et de Herren. *Revue Technique d'Orient*, 2(13), 2-4.
- Engineer. (1911, Aout). Les Travaux d'Irrigation de la Plaine de Konia. *Revue Technique d'Orient*, 1(12), 5-6.
- Eugène Ucciani. (1910, 4 Juin). La Révolte Albanaise. *La Jeune Turquie*
- Faroqhi, S. (2006). Introduction. In S. Faroqhi (Ed.), *The Cambridge History of Turkey Volume 3: The Later Ottoman Empire, 1603-1839* (pp. 3-17). Cambridge University Press.
- Foucault, M. (2000a). The Birth of Social Medicine. In J. D. Faubion (Ed.), *Power: Essential Works of Michel Foucault, 1954-1984, Vol. III* (pp. 134-156). The New Press.
- Foucault, M. (2000b). The Politics of Health in the Eighteenth Century. In J. D. Faubion (Ed.), *Power: Essential Works of Michel Foucault, 1954-1984, Vol. III* (pp. 90-105). The New Press.
- Foucault, M. (2007). *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the College de France, 1977-78* (G. Burchell, Trans.). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Foucault, M. (2013). *Güvenlik, Toprak, Nüfus: College De France Dersleri (1977-1978)* (F. Taylan, Trans.). İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları.
- Fuhrmann, M. (2020). *Port Cities of the Eastern Mediterranean Urban Culture in the Late Ottoman Empire*. Cambridge University Press.
- Geyikdağı, V. N. (2011). *Foreign Investment in the Ottoman Empire: International Trade and Relations 1854-1914*. I.B.Tauris Publishers.
- Godard, L. (1909, Septembre-Octobre). Note sur l'Irrigation de la Plaine de Konia (Asie Mineure). *Annales des Ponts et Chaussées*, 79(41), 177-188.
- Godard, L. (1910, 12 Février). Hydraulique: L'irrigation en Turquie (suite et fin). *Le Genie Civil*, 56(15), 282-285.



- Göle, N. (2011). *Modern Mahrem: Medeniyet ve Örtünme*. Metis.
- Gratien, C. (2022). *The Unsettled Plain: An Environmental History of the Late Ottoman Frontier*. Stanford University Press.
- Hanssen, J. (2005). *Fin de Siècle Beirut: The Making of an Ottoman Provincial Capital*. Oxford University Press.
- Issawi, C. (1982). *An Economic History of the Middle East and North Africa*. Columbia University Press.
- İnal, O. (2019). The Making of an Eastern Mediterranean Gateway City: Izmir in the Nineteenth Century. *Journal of Urban History*, 45(5), 891–907.
- İslamoğlu-İnan, H. (1987). Introduction: 'Oriental Despotism' in World-System Perspective. In H. İslamoğlu-İnan (Ed.), *The Ottoman Empire and The World-Economy* (pp. 1–26). Cambridge University Press.
- Joyce, P. (2003). *The Rule of Freedom: Liberalism and the Modern City*. Verso.
- Kadioğlu, A. (1996). The Paradox of Turkish Nationalism and the Construction of Official Identity. *Middle Eastern Studies*, 32(2), 177–193.
- Kasaba, R., Keyder, Ç., & Tabak, F. (1986). Eastern Mediterranean Port Cities and Their Bourgeoisies: Merchants, Political Projects, and Nation-states. *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)*, 10(1), 121–135.
- Keyder, Ç., Özveren, Y. E., & Quataert, D. (1993). Port-Cities in the Ottoman Empire: Some Theoretical and Historical Perspectives. *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)*, 16(4), 519–558.
- Keyman, E. F. (1995). On the relation between global modernity and nationalism: the crisis of hegemony and the rise of (Islamic) identity in Turkey. *New Perspectives on Turkey*, 13, 93–120.
- Köker, L. (2007). *Modernleşme, Kemalizm ve Demokrasi*. İletişim.
- Köksal, Y. (2002). Imperial Center and Local Groups: Tanzimat Reforms in the Provinces of Edirne and Ankara. *New Perspectives on Turkey*, 27, 107–138.
- Kuehn, T. (2011). *Empire, Islam, and Politics of Difference: Ottoman Rule in Yemen, 1849–1919*. Brill.
- L'irrigation de la Mesopotamie. L'opinion Publique a Bassorah et la Compagnie Lynch. (1910a, Mai). *L'Asie Française*, 10(110), 250–251.
- L'irrigation de la Mesopotamie. La Question de la Compagnie Lynch. Chemin de fer de Bagdad. (1910b, Janvier). *L'Asie Française*, 10(106).
- Larkin, B. (2008). *Signal and Noise: Media, Infrastructure, and Urban Culture in Nigeria*. Duke University Press.
- Le Ministre du Commerce et des Travaux Publics Gabriel Noradounghian. (1 Decembre 1908). *Empire Ottoman. Ministre du Commerce et des Travaux Publics. Rapport de S. E. le Ministre du Commerce et des Travaux Publics a S. A. le Grand-Vezir (Trasuction)*.
- Lemke, T. (2021). *The Government of Things: Foucault and the New Materialisms*. New York University Press.
- Lewis, B. (1993). *Modern Türkiye'nin Doğuşu* (P. D. M. Kıratlı, Trans.). Türk Tarih Kurumu.
- Low, M. C. (2020). *Imperial Mecca: Ottoman Arabia and the Indian Ocean Hajj*. Columbia University Press.
- Makdisi, U. (2002). Ottoman Orientalism. *The American Historical Review*, 107(3), 768–796.
- McFarlane, C. (2008). Governing the Contaminated City: Infrastructure and Sanitation in Colonial and Post-Colonial Bombay. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 32(2), 415–435.
- Mikhail, A. (2011). *Nature and Empire in Ottoman Egypt: An Environmental History*. Cambridge University Press.
- Minawi, M. (2015). Beyond Rhetoric: Reassessing Bedouin-Ottoman Relations along the Route of the Hijaz Telegraph Line at the End of the Nineteenth Century. *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 58(1-2), 75–104.
- Minawi, M. (2016). *The Ottoman Scramble for Africa: Empire and Diplomacy in the Sahara and the Hijaz*. Stanford University Press.
- Mundy, M., & Smith, R. S. (2007). *Governing Property, Making the Modern State: Law, Administration and Production in Ottoman Syria*. I.B. Tauris.
- Osborne, T. (1996). Security and Vitality: Drains, Liberalism and Power in the Nineteenth Century. In A. Barry, T. Osborne, & N. Rose (Eds.), *Foucault and Political Reason: Liberalism, Neo-liberalism and Rationalities of Government* (pp. 99–121). The University of Chicago Press.
- Otter, C. (2002). Making Liberalism Durable: Vision and Civility in the Late Victorian City. *Social History*, 27(1), 1–15.
- Ozkan, F. (2014). Winding Road to Modernization: Trabzon-Erzurum-Bayezid Road in the Late Ottoman World. *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 34(1), 191–205.
- Petriot, P. (2014). For Pilgrims and for Trade: Merchants and Public Works in Ottoman Jeddah. *Turkish Historical Review*, 5, 200–220.
- Petrov, M. V. (2004). Everyday Forms of Compliance: Subaltern Commentaries on Ottoman Reform, 1864–1868. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 46(4), 730–759.
- Piterberg, G. (2017). *Bir Osmanlı Trajedisi: Tarihyazımının Tarihle Oyunu* (U. Abacı, Trans.). Koç Üniversitesi.



- Salzman, A. (1993). An Ancien Régime Revisited: "Privatization" and Political Economy in the Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Empire. *Politics & Society*, 21(4), 393-423.
- Santo Sémo. (1910, 11 Juin). Les Irrigations en Mésopotamie. *La Jeune Turquie*.
- Seyitdanlıoğlu, M. (1992). Tanzimat Dönemi İmar Meclisleri. *Ankara Üniversitesi Osmanlı Tarihi Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi (OTAM) Dergisi*, 3, 323-332.
- Star, S. L., & Ruhleder, K. (1996). Steps Toward an Ecology of Infrastructure: Design and Access for Large Information Spaces. *Information Systems Research*, 7(1), 111-134.
- T. de Leandre. (1911, 3 Aout). Les Irrigations. *La Turquie*.
- Tekeli, İ., & İlkin, S. (2004). 1908 Tarihli "Umur-u Nâfia Programı"nın Anlamı Üzerine. In *Cumhuriyetin Harcı 3: Modernitenin Altyapısı Oluşurken* (pp. 175-215). İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları.
- Travaux d'Abaissement des Eaux du Lac d'Isnik. Travaux d'Irrigations a Karpouth. Irrigations dans les Environs d'Adana. (1911, Juillet). *Revue Technique d'Orient*, 1(11).
- Un Manifeste Arabe. (1910c, Septembre). *L'Asie Française*, 10(114), 401-404.
- Une Protestation Arabe Contre les Irrigations de la Mésopotamie. (1910d, Juin). *L'Asie Française*, 10(111), 287-288.
- US Department of Commerce and Labor Bureau of Manufactures. (1907). *Report on Trade Conditions in Asiatic Turkey by Charles M. Repper*. Government Printing Office.
- US Department of the Interior. (1909). *Government Reclamation Work in Foreign Countries. Compiled from Consular Reports and Official Documents by Edward D. McQueen*. Government Printing Office.
- Williams, E. R. (2023). *States of Cultivation: Imperial Transition and Scientific Agriculture in the Eastern Mediterranean*. Stanford University Press.
- Zandi-Sayek, S. (2012). *Ottoman Izmir: The Rise of a Cosmopolitan Port, 1840-1880*. University of Minnesota Press.





Journal of Humanity, Peace and Justice

Research Article

Open Access

Navigating Fragility: Unraveling Intergroup Relations in South Sudan's Peace-Building Process



Melek Aylin Özoflu^{1,2}  

¹ International Relations, Özyeğin University, İstanbul, Türkiye

² Institute of Political Science, Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary.

Abstract


Since gaining independence in 2011, the Republic of South Sudan as the world's youngest nation has been ranked among the most fragile states. Moreover, the civil wars that erupted in 2013 and 2016 resulted in intercommunal violence and crimes against humanity, leading to an immeasurable humanitarian crisis in the region. While it still suffers from political instability, internal security challenges, and lack of economic development, the legacy of ethnic mistrust shaping the intergroup relations within South Sudanese society remains critical. Therefore, this paper seeks to understand the peace-building process in South Sudan to shed light on the stemming reasons that have kept the state-building efforts and peace-building initiatives ill-equipped. The mainstream literature often relies on investigating the functionality of governmental structures in respect to state-building initiatives, and this paper argues that the formation of a collective consciousness toward the constitution of a shared collective identity within the multiethnic society of South Sudan is one of the leading issues in question. Because war-torn South Sudan presents the prototype of a fragile state with its civil wars, armed conflicts, poverty, weak state institutions, and social inequalities, the study utilizes the conceptual framework of fragile states in order to examine the internal factors of fragility

Keywords

Civil war · Peace-building · Collective identity · Fragile states · South Sudan



“ Citation: Özoflu, M. A. (2024). Navigating Fragility: Unraveling Intergroup Relations in South Sudan's Peace-Building Process. *Journal of Humanity, Peace and Justice*, 1(1), 37-48. <https://doi.org/10.26650/hupej.2024.10.1.1456766>

© This work is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License. 

© 2024. Özoflu, M. A.

✉ Corresponding author: Melek Aylin Özoflu melekaylinzoflu@gmail.com



Navigating Fragility: Unraveling Intergroup Relations in South Sudan's Peace-Building Process

The Republic of South Sudan gained independence on July 9, 2011 following a two-decades-long conflict between the tribes from North and South Sudan. With 73.7% of its population under 30 years of age (United Nations [UN], 2023), it is the youngest sovereign state in the world. Yet, of its 12.2 million citizens, two-thirds are estimated to require humanitarian aid (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs [OCHA], 2023). This is because its peace-building efforts toward establishing functional governance structures were interrupted by outbreaks of civil wars in 2013 and 2016 that caused over 400,000 deaths and 3.9 million displaced people. South Sudan has a complex structure of contending ethnic groups. In addition to the two main rival ethnic groups (i.e., Dinka and Nuer), the country has another 62 different ethnic groups as illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1

Contending Ethnic Groups in South Sudan

Rank	Ethnic Group	Percentage of the Population in S. Sudan
1	Dinka	0,36
2	Nuer	0,16
3	Azande	0,06
4	Bari	0,04
5	Shilluk	0,03
6	Toposa	0,02
7	Otuha	0,02
8	Luo	0,01
9	Moru	0,01
10	Murle	0,01
11-14	Other Ethnic Groups	0,28

Source: Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, 2020

Because of South Sudan's multiethnic structure, its civil wars have mostly taken the form of ethnic conflicts subject to multiethnic genocide. The genocidal violence conveyed pre-dominantly by the state-supported Dinka ethnic group has targeted nearly all non-Dinka civilians (Pinaud, 2022).

Although the signing of the 2018 Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS) significantly reduced the violence between the warring groups, the country still suffers from weak civilian and security institutions, massive corruption, low human capital, and poor infrastructure (Agwanda & Asal, 2020, p. 126). For instance, Transparency International (2023) ranked South Sudan as the second most corrupt country in the world. Moreover, according to Freedom House's (2023) report on freedom, South Sudan is the world's least free country. In this respect, South Sudan has never had a resistant democratic and political tradition for preserving civil liberties and political rights. Moreover, sub-national clashes among different communities, ethnopolitical tension, and rivalry between elites for



political power and financial and oil resources persist (Chagutah, 2023). Accordingly, South Sudan's complex structure of conflicting memories and diverse array of ethnic identities pose a unique challenge for reconstructing the deeply divided post-conflict society. This interrupted peace-building process in turn impedes the formation of a shared collective South Sudanese identity and reinforces the continuation of the status quo.

As the newest independent African country and its experience of ongoing intercommunal violence, South Sudan presents a unique case within the burgeoning literature of peace-building initiatives around the nexus of identity politics. Moreover, the recent influx of refugees from Sudan following the eruption of internal conflicts has worsened food insecurity and humanitarian conditions (Council on Foreign Relations, 2023).

The relevant literature on South Sudan has mostly focused on the process of its establishment (Arnold & Le Riche, 2013), respective civil wars, and political crises (Johnson 2014a, 2014b, 2016; Blanchard, 2016; De Waal, 2014; Sefa-Nyarko, 2016); its resources (Bilali, 2020; Ayik et al., 2021; Ladu et al., 2021; Shankleman, 2011). Yet, its interrupted peace-building process around the nexus of identity politics and identity-building has been largely under-studied. As Pinaud (2022) put forward, scholars have interpreted the phenomena often by disregarding ethnicity, namely the identity-based causes of the conflict and failure to form a collective (political) identity at the state level. Therefore, the process of peace-building in South Sudan needs to be further investigated by critically evaluating the perspective of forming a shared collective identity. This research aims to address this gap by interpreting the South Sudanese process of peace-building through the lens of identity politics. Because South Sudan represents a critical example of state fragility through an internal armed conflict destabilizing both state functionality and citizen safety, the concept of state fragility is given specific emphasis within the peace-building process of South Sudan.

In this respect, the research contributes to the literature by employing a different standpoint of analysis, thus expanding the issue beyond the structural problems of the country. The research relies on reviewing and interpreting secondary sources, including official data from country reports and development indicators. All the relevant data are publicly available. The research will first briefly explain the conceptual framework of fragile states along the nexus of peace-building before focusing on the historical enmities within South Sudan since its establishment in order to provide the necessary background for reflecting on the impediments to constructing a functional state and on the challenges faced by the state and its citizens. After this, the study will critically assess state fragility in South Sudan by providing a rigid focus on the intergroup relations among the contending ethnic groups so as to shed light on the interconnection between the state fragility and ethnic division that have been limiting the prospective of peace-building with regard to forming a collective identity and reinforcing intercommunal trust and respect.

Conceptual Framework of Fragile States

Since the end of the Cold War, Madeleine Albright and UN officials popularized the concept of state failure. Since then, the concept of a failed state has been used both in interstate agreements and various official documents. However, no scholarly agreement is found on how to define the term. Moreover, various terms such as weak, collapsed, and fragile have been used interchangeably. Because different terms imply differ-



ent types of international action, highlighting the definitional characteristics of a failed state will be noteworthy.

With regard to addressing failed states, Helman and Ratner (1993) proposed the UN conservatorship in failed states, while Kaplan (1994) highlighted the potential danger for state failure in West Africa to spread worldwide. Later, Zartman (1995, pp. 243–244) proposed the most widely accepted and encompassing definition for failed state:

As the authoritative political system, it has legitimacy, which is therefore up for grabs, and so has lost its right to command and conduct public affairs... As a system of socio-economic organization, its functional balance of inputs and outputs is destroyed; it no longer receives support from nor exercises control over its people, and it is no longer even the target of demands because its people know that it is incapable of providing supplies. No longer functioning, with neither traditional nor charismatic nor institutional sources of legitimacy, it has lost the right to rule.

Gross (1996, as cited in François & Sud, 2006) later provided a taxonomy of failed states by separately categorizing them as anarchic, phantom, anemic, captured, and aborted. This taxonomy noteworthy highlights the fact that each failed state has its own dynamics of failure and arising internal instabilities. Moreover, not all of these have the same degree of failure regardless of any common origin. Therefore, reflecting upon the necessity of different types of international action is critical.

Rotberg (2010) asserted failed states to have firm violent tendencies directed against the government or other political, social, or ethnic groups, as well as intercommunal enmities. The report of the State Failure Task Force (2000) highlighted the different types of internal conflicts that lead to state failure. Accordingly, internal conflicts might be triggered in different forms, such as revolutionary wars, crimes against humanity, ethnic wars, adverse regime changes, ethnic cleansing, and genocides.

While the effects of state failure were initially considered in responding to humanitarian concerns and domestic effects, since 9/11, the international community has started to recognize failed states as a security threat and viable grounds for international terrorism, international criminals, and drug and human traffickers to flourish. Therefore, the narratives communicating about failed states have shifted toward them posing dramatic dangers locally and globally. Helman and Ratner (1992) argued failed states to drag their citizens to violence and anarchy while simultaneously threatening the stability of their surroundings with warfare, economic setbacks, and refugee flows. In this vein, Carment (2003) defined failed states as breeding grounds for terrorist groups. Fukuyama (2004, p. 18) put forward that failed states pose the most critical problems for the world, from poverty to drug trafficking and terrorism:

State collapse and weakness had already created major humanitarian and human rights disasters with hundreds of thousands of victims during the 1990s in Somalia, Haiti, Cambodia, Bosnia, Kosovo and East Timor. For a while, the United States and other countries could pretend that these problems were just local, but the terrorist attacks of September 11 proved that state weakness constituted a huge strategic challenge as well.



Such an interpretation seeing failed states as the principal problem for the international order laid the foundations for international community's motivating rationale behind international interventions. Accordingly, based on Western-style modern state approaches, taking coordinated action to eliminate the risks and incidences of state failure is widely regarded as a moral and practical responsibility. In line with the main accounts of democratic peace theory, such action has necessarily involved a liberal inspiration based on the establishment of liberal democracy and an open market economy. Therefore, peace and state-building are an inherent response to state failure and civil conflicts (Marten, 2004; Paris, 2004; Rotberg, 2010).

Historical Enmities of the Republic of South Sudan

With the initiatives of the international community and Internal Authority on Development (IGAD), the signing of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between the National Congress Party (NCP) and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement / Army (SPLM/A) ended a decades-long Sudanese war and granted autonomy to South Sudan being controlled under the rule of the SPLM/A and NCP within the Government of National Unity (GoNU). As the interim constitution, the CPA outlined the judicial, executive, and legislative agenda for the autonomy of South Sudan (Ajak et al., 2013). The parties also agreed on sharing power in four main areas; political, economic, territorial, and military. Politically, the Government of South Sudan became semi-autonomous within the ruling of GoNU (Wight, 2017). Economically, oil revenues would be split in half. Territorially, it provided for a referendum on southern secession in 2011. Lastly, it foresaw the integration of all opposition forces and other armed groups into either the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) or the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), with both forces redeploying their units to their own respective sides within their borders. However, the multiethnic composition of South Sudan would not allow intergroup peace and coexistence, because the agreement had put the Dinka-dominated SPLM/A in the ruling position and strengthened its legitimacy while marginalizing other non-Dinka ethnic groups. These marginalized groups were mainly the Nuer and Equatorian South Sudan Defense Force (SSDF). The past atrocities had originated mainly from the legacy of the Sudanese Civil War, during which the Nuer had been on the side of the Sudanese government (Climate Diplomacy.org, n.d.). Thus, this group was not regarded as a supporter of South Sudanese autonomy or its government. The power-sharing arrangements laid out by the CPA failed to eliminate these intergroup biases by ensuring equality and intergroup cohesion among the contending groups of South Sudan.

After South Sudan gained its independence following the referendum in July 2011, the intergroup competition between the Dinka and Nuer (two rival ethnic groups) became aggravated. Salva Kiir Mayardit from the Dinka ethnic group was elected president of the semi-autonomous South Sudan in 2010 and remained president following the independence of South Sudan. His vice president was Riek Machar from the Nuer ethnic group. Two years after its independence, the interethnic tension was exacerbated when Salva Kiir dismissed Riek Machar when he was accused of organizing a coup against him in 2013. Although some scholars argued that this has been mainly a political crisis in nature (Kuntzelman 2013), the tension incrementally turned into an ethnic crisis culminating in a civil war between the government and opposition forces involving the country's 64 ethnic groups as well. Confrontations started in South Sudan's capital of Juba and dramatically spread to the Upper Nile, Central Equatoria, Lakes, Unity, and Jonglei, resulting in a nationwide humanitarian, security, ethnic, and political crisis. The confrontations involved war crimes



and crimes against humanity and failed to comply with international humanitarian and human rights law. Because the warring parties targeted civilians based on their ethnic origin, the United Nations Commission for Human Rights (OHCHR) in South Sudan revealed that the country to be witnessing the risk of genocide (UN Refugee Agency [UNHCR], 2016). Pinaud (2022) argued that during the Civil War of 2013, South Sudan had witnessed both genocide and ethnic cleansing.

Due to the conflict, more than 200,000 civilians have been internally displaced, while approximately 40,000 people had escaped to neighboring countries (Blanchard, 2014). In addition, more than 60,000 people sought refugees status at the UN peacekeeping bases. According to the Health in Humanitarian Crises Centre, over 300,000 people have been killed (Storeng et al., 2018). The number of civilians that fell under the emergency category regarding food insecurity has increased from 1.1 million to 3.7 million people (UN, 2018). International agencies, international responses, diplomatic interventions, and aid efforts were multilaterally formulated to resolve the conflict and alleviate the humanitarian suffering.

While the humanitarian situation incrementally deteriorated, the anti-UN sentiment and tense relations with the government, which alleges the UN to be siding with the opposition forces, have severely hindered the capacities of the UN Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS), which aims to provide humanitarian aid, protect civilians, and support mediation efforts. To mobilize UN efforts and resources, the UN Security Council (UNSCR, 2013) also adopted Resolution 2132 to increase the number of troops from 7,000 to 12,500 and the police personnel from 900 to 1300. This resolution also called for an opening of political dialogue and an end of hostilities (Blanchard, 2014). IGAD also assumed an active role in organizing peace talks in collaboration with the African Union (AU).

The warring parties signed a temporary ceasefire to halt military actions, and then Salva Kiir and Riek Machar started negotiations to sign a permanent ceasefire and establish a transitional government (Rolandsen et al., 2015). Following the long process of intense negotiations, the Compromise Peace Agreement was signed in August 2015 (Vhumbunu, 2016). As a result, Machar returned to Juba in April 2016 and became vice president again. Soon after his return, however, conflicts between the government and the opposition re-erupted. Although a series of cease-fires were negotiated in 2017 and 2018, both sides violated the agreements, which dramatically prolonged the humanitarian situation. Thanks to the mediation efforts of Uganda and Sudan, Kiir and Machar signed a final cease-fire through the Khartoum Declaration of Agreement in 2018, which outlined the power-sharing mechanism in the country (Council on Foreign Relations, 2014). In addition, the peace agreement titled Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) was signed in September 2018 among SPLM/A-IO, SSOA, OPPs, and the Former Detainees party (Accord.org, 2019). R-ARCSS reinstated Machar as vice president and marked the end of the conflict (Euronews, 2020). It envisaged radical reforms in public management regarding transparency, the restructuring of civil service, the reallocation of powers and resources between state and local government levels toward a sustainable federal system, and the reintegration of displaced South Sudanese people (both refugees and internally displaced), thereby facilitating national reconciliation (Liaga, 2021).

In line with Chapter 1 of the R-ARCSS, the Revitalised Transitional Government of National Unity of South Sudan (RTGoNU) was established in February 2020 for the purpose of forming a new transitional government that is envisaged to rule the state for a transitional period of 36 months (Gituai, 2023). The main



task of the RTGoNU has been to fully implement the articles of the R-ARCSS for the purpose of restoring lasting peace, security, and stability in South Sudan (Gituai, 2024). To this end, during the transitional period, RTGoNU is to:

1. facilitate the rehabilitation and reintegration of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and returnees;
2. facilitate national reconciliation and national healing;
3. complete the process of making a permanent national constitution;
4. consolidate peace and stability in South Sudan;
5. undertake radical reforms and transformation regarding public finance management;
6. ensure the effective, transparent, and accountable management of national resources;
7. undertake radical civil service reforms;
8. design and implement security sector reforms;
9. rebuild and recover destroyed physical infrastructure;
10. conduct a national population and housing census;
11. and devolve powers and resources to state and local government levels.

The transitional government was led by Salva Kiir while Riek Machar was reappointed as vice president. In addition, James Wani Igga (from the SPLM), Taban Deng Gai (representing Sudan People's Liberation Movement – In Opposition; Rebecca Nyandeng De Mabior (responsible for the economy and infrastructure and representing SPLM former detainees), John Garang (responsible for the youth and gender cluster), and Hussein Abdelbagi Akol Agany (representing the South Sudan Opposition Alliance [SSOA]; Liaga, 2021). In March 2020, President Kiir appointed 35 members of the Council of Ministers as well as 10 deputy ministers. The unity government would have three area administrators, 550 members of parliament and 10 governors (Accord, 2020).

At the time of this writing, the process of RTGoNU continues, as it was extended for two years until February 2025 to allow the transition government to meet the milestones within the R-ARCSS (Gituai, 2024). Nevertheless, the threat of a conflict stemming from the incremental intercommunal violence and dire humanitarian conditions carries the urgency to provide security and meet the humanitarian needs of South Sudan's civilians. The next section will explain the current situation of state fragility in South Sudan.

The Current Situation of State Fragility in South Sudan

Before the signing of the R-ARCSS, the number of conflict events had been dramatically high. The intensity of conflicts between late 2014-2017 is illustrated in [Figure 1](#). Accordingly, nearly 160 conflicts were reported in 2015, while reported fatalities ranged between 1,000-1,200. As [Figure 2](#) shows, the number of conflicts in 2017 had increased 170%, implying aggravated clashes among the conflicting parties. In this respect, the signing of the R-ARCSS in 2018 marked a decrease in conflict events and reported fatalities nationwide, thereby providing a process of recovery and peacebuilding in South Sudan.



Figure 1
Conflict Trends in South Sudan (2014- 2017).

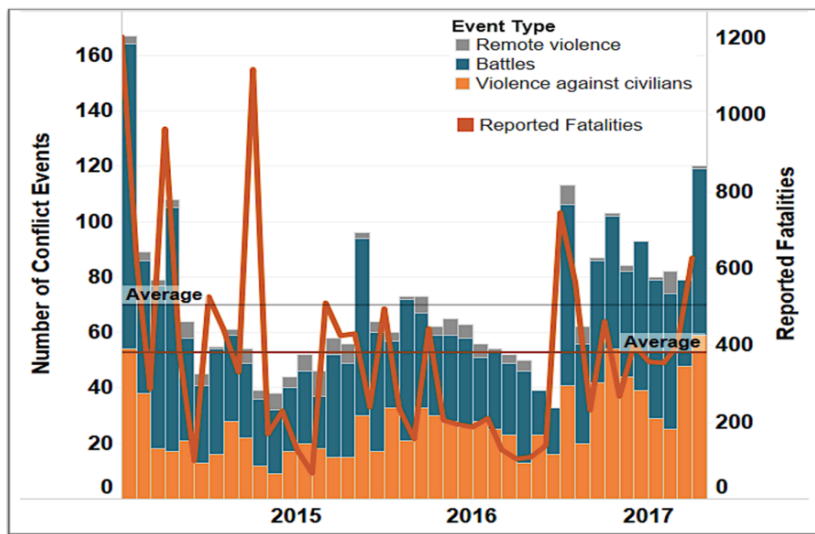
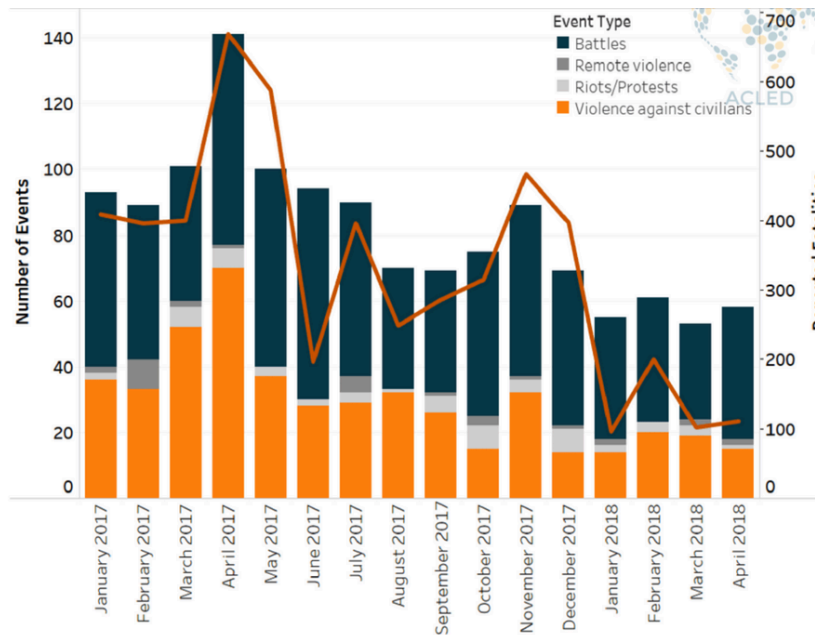


Figure 2
Conflict Trends in South Sudan (2017-2018).

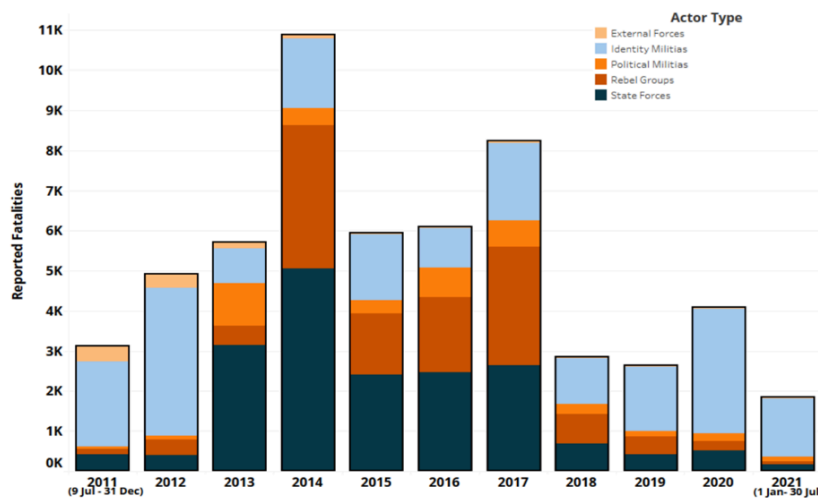


Yet, as Figure 3 shows, among the warring actor types, the identity militias were the principal actors in the rising incidents of violence while the conflicts perpetrated by the state forces, political militias and rebel groups were fading away. Accordingly, the increased ethnic militias were the principal actors culminating in persistent internal tribal divisions and interethnic and localised violence (Human Rights Council, 2021).



Figure 3

Fatality aggregations in South Sudan by actor type (2011- 2021).



The increased intercommunal conflict and tension had resulted from the power vacuum at the subnational level, stemming from the delays in the appointment of state governors (ReliefWeb, 2020). This finding shows that South Sudan is still internally divided by ethnic loyalties (Garang, 2021). It also highlights the critical role of governance structures in assuring the mitigation of interethnic enmities, revealing that unresolved power struggles can exacerbate existing enmities, which in return keep both the nation- and peace-building initiatives ill-equipped. Moreover, the traumatic genocidal legacy has remained persistent in the face of the prospective of post-conflict recovery, thus bringing the critical role of identity politics, intergroup relations, and ethnicity to the fore within the conflict analysis of South Sudan, even during the elusive peace. This reaffirms scholarly positions that approach the phenomena as an issue of ethnic or identity politics (Pinaud, 2022) while refuting the approaches that regard the issue outside of interethnic relations (Kuntzelman 2013).

In addition to local-level ethnic clashes hindering the stable functioning of governance structures, South Sudan also experiences a deep humanitarian crisis because of multiple reasons that both result from and in the state's fragility. Firstly, modest economic recovery and growth has impeded the self-sustainability of South Sudan. This has been partly due to climate change and such natural disasters as droughts and floods affecting water insecurity and economic growth. Moreover, these have also led to high numbers of displacements and fatalities. According to the World Bank's (2023) report on the South Sudan Economic Monitor, its economy has experienced stagnation due to the impacts of flooding on oil production. Secondly, Sudan's dependence on oil exportation poses critical risks to South Sudan's macroeconomic stability in the face of the eruption of Sudan's civil wars. Moreover, because of the ongoing conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) since April 2023 that have resulted in another humanitarian crisis and mass displacement in the region, South Sudan has received over 541,888 Sudanese refugees culminating in a refugee crisis in the country (Caton, 2024).

Conclusion

This paper has investigated the peace-building process of South Sudan with a particular emphasis on intergroup relations. The article has found ethno-politics to play a vital role in shaping the current structure of



the state of South Sudan. As a result, it remains strongly susceptible to pre-existing cleavages within society political instability, as internal security challenges and lack of economic development largely stem from the legacy of ethnic mistrust that has shaped intergroup relations within South Sudanese society. While the absence of intergroup cohesion has dramatically hindered the economic and political transition, the dividing lines being based on rival identities has also strongly hindered the shared collective South Sudanese identity. In this respect, the current research argues the formation of a collective consciousness toward the constitution of a shared collective identity within the multiethnic society of South Sudan to be one of the leading issues in question. This finding and argument open a question or future research as to whether or not and the extent to which an establishment of a multiethnic party can contribute to building trust and empathy among different ethnicities.



Peer Review	Externally peer-reviewed.
Conflict of Interest	The author have no conflict of interest to declare.
Grant Support	The author declared that this study has received no financial support.

Author Details **Melek Aylin Özoflu**

¹ International Relations, Özyeğin University, İstanbul, Türkiye

² Institute of Political Science, Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary.

 0000-0002-9403-6957  melekaylinzoflu@gmail.com

References

- Accord.org (August, 2020) The Formation of the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity in South Sudan. Retrieved from <https://www.accord.org.za/conflict-trends/the-formation-of-the-revitalized-transitional-government-of-national-unity-in-south-sudan/>.
- Accord.org. (February, 2019) Reviving peace in South Sudan through the Revitalised Peace Agreement. Retrieved from <https://www.accord.org.za/conflict-trends/reviving-peace-in-south-sudan-through-the-revitalised-peace-agreement/>
- Agwanda, B., & Asal, U. Y. (2020). State fragility and post-conflict state-building: An analysis of South Sudan Conflict (2013-2019). *Güvenlik Bilimleri Dergisi*, 9(1), 125-146. Retrieved from <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/download/article-file/1099660>. <https://doi.org/10.28956/gbd.736103>
- Ajak, P, Larson, G, and Pritchett, L. (October 2013). South Sudan's capability trap: Building a state with disruptive innovation. Center for International Development at Harvard University. Retrieved from http://www.hks.harvard.edu/var/ezp_site/storage/fckeditor/file/pdfs/centers-programs/centers/cid/publications/faculty/wp/268_Sudan-PDIA.pdf <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2366894>
- Arnold, M., & LeRiche, M. (2013). *South Sudan: from revolution to independence*. Oxford University Press, USA.
- Ayik, A., Ijumba, N., Kabiri, C., & Goffin, P. (2021). Preliminary wind resource assessment in South Sudan using reanalysis data and statistical methods. *Renewable and Sustainable Energy Reviews*, 138, 110621. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rser.2020.110621>
- Bilali, B. (2020). Energy security in south Sudan: Potentials and challenges. *Türkiye Siyaset Bilimi Dergisi*, 3(1), 1-16.
- Blanchard, L. P. (2016). Conflict in South Sudan and the challenges ahead.
- Blanchard, P. (2014) The Crisis in South Sudan. Retrieved from <http://www.fredsakademiet.dk/ordbog/sord/Crisis%20South%20Sudan.pdf>
- Carment, D. (2003). Assessing state failure: implications for theory and policy. *Third World Quarterly*, 24(3), 407-427. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0143659032000084384>



- Caton, P. (February, 2024). Photos: Inside South Sudan's worsening refugee crisis, in Renk and Maban. Retrieved from <https://www.aljazeera.com/gallery/2024/2/8/photos-inside-south-sudans-worsening-refugee-crisis-renk-and-maban#:~:text=For%20the%20last%2010%20months,from%20any%20month%20last%20year.>
- Climate Diplomacy. Conflict between Dinka and Nuer in South Sudan. Retrieved from <https://climate-diplomacy.org/case-studies/conflict-between-dinka-and-nuer-south-sudan>
- Conciliation Resources. History of the conflict in South Sudan. Retrieved from https://www.c-r.org/programme/east-and-central-africa/south-sudan-conflict-focus?gclid=CjwKCAiA_OetBhAtEiwAPTeQZ5ndLd0XV7hr8OEqrFCucl2zwClImaDqVDl1jVCOlEd4TEdnfdPmhoCnqEQAvD_BwE
- Council on Foreign Relations. (August, 2023) Instability in South Sudan. Retrieved from <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/civil-war-south-sudan>
- De Waal, A. (2014). When kleptocracy becomes insolvent: Brute causes of the civil war in South Sudan. *African Affairs*, 113(452), 347-369. <https://doi.org/10.1093/afraf/adu028>
- ë Garang, K. (2021). Birth of a State: Rethinking South Sudanese Collective Identity through Identity Anchors. *Modern Africa: Politics, History and Society*, 9(2), 5-37. <https://doi.org/10.26806/modafr.v9i2.330>
- Euronews. (February, 2020). Rebel leader in South Sudan sworn in as vice president of government meant to end war. Retrieved from <https://www.euronews.com/2020/02/23/rebel-leader-in-south-sudan-sworn-in-as-vice-president-of-government-meant-to-end-war>
- François, M., & Sud, I. (2006). Promoting stability and development in fragile and failed states. *Development policy review*, 24(2), 141-160. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-7679.2006.00319.x>
- Freedom House. South Sudan. Retrieved from <https://freedomhouse.org/country/south-sudan/freedom-world/2023>.
- Fukuyama, F. (2004). The imperative of state-building. *J. Democracy*, 15, 17. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2004.0026>
- Gituati, C.T. (February, 2024). 4 Years of the RTGoNU: Why the Parties must dialogue, deliver the promise of stable, peaceful, democratic South Sudan. Retrieved from <https://reliefweb.int/report/south-sudan/4-years-rtgonu-why-parties-must-dialogue-deliver-promise-stable-peaceful-democratic-south-sudan>
- Helman, Gerald B. "The Conservator: Saving States from Political Bankruptcy." *Harvard International Review* 29, no. 4 (2008): 68. <https://www.fao.org/3/i3652e/i3652e.pdf>.
- Human Rights Council. (February, 2021) Retrieved from https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session46/Documents/A_HRC_46_CRP_2.pdf
- Johnson, D. H. (2014). Briefing: the crisis in South Sudan. *African Affairs*, 113(451), 300-309. <https://doi.org/10.1093/afraf/adu020>
- Johnson, D. H. (2014). The political crisis in South Sudan. *African Studies Review*, 57(3), 167-174. <https://doi.org/10.1017/asr.2014.97>
- Johnson, H. F. (2016). *South Sudan: The untold story from independence to civil war*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Kaplan, S. D. (2008). *Fixing fragile states: a new paradigm for development*. Bloomsbury Publishing USA. <https://doi.org/10.5040/9798400651755>
- Kuntzelman, C. C. (2013). South Sudan: Solutions for Moving beyond an "Ethnic Conflict". *International Research and Review*, 3(1), 81-118.
- Ladu, N. S. D., Subburaj, S. K., & Samikannu, R. (2021, October). A review of renewable energy resources. Its potentials, benefits, and challenges in South Sudan. In *2021 International Conference on Advancements in Electrical, Electronics, Communication, Computing and Automation (ICAECA)* (pp. 1-6). IEEE. <https://doi.org/10.1109/ICAECA52838.2021.9675574>
- Liaga, E.A. (October, 2021). South Sudan's transitional government Realities, challenges and opportunities. Retrieved from <https://issafrica.s3.amazonaws.com/site/uploads/EAR-41.pdf>
- Paris, R. (2004). *At war's end: building peace after civil conflict*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511790836>
- Marten, K. Z. (2004). *Enforcing the peace: Learning from the imperial past*. Columbia University Press. <https://doi.org/10.7312/mart12912>
- Pinaud, C. (2022). *War and genocide in South Sudan*. Cornell University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781501753022>
- Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission. (February, 2023). Three Years of the RTGoNU: Unity of purpose to lead the country to enduring peace through implementation of R-ARCSS. Retrieved from https://jmecsouthsudan.org/index.php/media-center/news/item_665-three-years-of-the-rtgonu-unity-of-purpose-to-lead-the-country-to-enduring-peace-through-implementation-of-r-arcss
- Reliefweb. (September, 2020). Situation in South Sudan- Report of the Secretary-General. Retrieved from <https://reliefweb.int/report/south-sudan/situation-south-sudan-report-secretary-general-s2020890>



- Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. (September 2018) Retrieved from <https://www.peaceagreements.org/viewmasterdocument/2112>
- Rolandsen, Ø. H., Glomnes, H. M., Manoeli, S., & Nicolaisen, F. (2015). A year of South Sudan's third civil war. *International Area Studies Review*, 18(1), 87-104. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2233865915573797>
- Rotberg, R. I. (Ed.). (2010). *When states fail: Causes and consequences*. Princeton University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt7scrg>
- Sefa-Nyarko, C. (2016). Civil war in south Sudan: is it a reflection of historical secessionist and natural resource wars in "Greater Sudan"? *African security*, 9(3), 188-210. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19392206.2016.1208476>
- Shankleman, J. (2011). *Oil and State Building in South Sudan*. US Institute of Peace.
- Storeng, K. T., Palmer, J., Daire, J., & Kloster, M. O. (2019). Behind the scenes: International NGOs' influence on reproductive health policy in Malawi and South Sudan. *Global public health*, 14(4), 555-569. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17441692.2018.1446545>
- Tigere Chagutah. (March, 2023). South Sudan's conflicts are not just between communities. Retrieved from <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/03/violent-conflicts-in-south-sudan-almost-always-involve-human-rights-violations-and-abuses-and-crimes-under-international-law/>
- Transparency International. Corruption Perceptions Index. Retrieved from https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2023?gad_source=1&gclid=Cj0KCQiAoKeuBhCoARisAB4WxtfotY9hvku9LWLffKzESr70Po3zraoIP1-iYTI4nnjm_beXrv29X4aAjvTEALw_wcB
- UNHCR. (November, 2016) The genocidal logic of South Sudan's "gun class". Retrieved from <https://webarchive.archive.unhcr.org/20230522010614/https://www.refworld.org/docid/583c060d4.html>.
- United Nations Mission in South Sudan. Retrieved from <https://unmiss.unmissions.org/background>.
- United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). Retrieved from <https://www.unocha.org/south-sudan>
- United Nations Security Council Resolutions. Resolution 2132 Sudan and South Sudan. (2013). Retrieved from <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/2132>
- United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF). (2022). Retrieved from <https://southsudan.un.org/sites/default/files/2023-02/UN%20Sustainable%20Development%20SOUTH%20SUDAN-%20FINAL.pdf>
- United Nations World Food Programme. Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission to South Sudan. (February 2014) Retrieved from <https://www.fao.org/3/i3652e/i3652e.pdf>.
- Vumbunu, C.H. (2016). Conflict Resurgence and the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. Retrieved from <https://reliefweb.int/report/south-sudan/conflict-resurgence-and-agreement-resolution-conflict-republic-south-sudan>
- Wight, P. (2017). South Sudan and the Four Dimensions of Power-Sharing: Political, Territorial, Military, and Economic. *African Conflict and Peacebuilding Review*, 7(2), 1-35. <https://doi.org/10.2979/africanpeaceprevi.7.2.01>
- Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute. South Sudan Country Profile. Retrieved from <https://pksoi.armywarcollege.edu/index.php/country-profile-of-south-sudan-social/>.
- World Bank. (March, 2023). Rising from the Depths: Water Security and Fragility in South Sudan. Retrieved from <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/southsudan/overview#:~:text=South%20Sudan%20remains%20in%20a,to%20be%20the%20most%20affected.>
- Young, J. (2012). *The fate of Sudan: The origins and consequences of a flawed peace process*. Zed Books Ltd. <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781350223134>
- Zartman, I. W. (Ed.). (1995). *Collapsed states: the disintegration and restoration of legitimate authority*. Lynne Rienner Publishers. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781685853907>





Journal of Humanity, Peace and Justice

Research Article

Open Access

Revisiting Ethnic Framing in Conflicts: Challenging the Concept of Ethnic Conflict



İbrahim Fevzi Güven¹  

¹ Karabük University, Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, Department of International Relations, Karabük, Türkiye

Abstract


One of the primary research agendas in the fields of conflict resolution, security studies, and international relations in the post-Cold War era has been the rise of ethnic conflicts. Ethnic conflict has been one of the most widely used concepts in the scholarly literature, as well as by international organizations, peace practitioners, and other stakeholders working to end conflicts and build peace. During the 1990s when interstate wars were overshadowed by civil wars, conflicts in the breakup of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union and in Africa, the Middle East, and many other parts of the world were defined as ethnic conflicts. But do ethnic conflicts really have different characteristics that could call for a different conceptualization than other comparable conflicts? Has it been the increase in ethnic conflicts in the post-Cold War period, or has it been the ethnic framing of conflicts in certain geographies? Is a discussion of the ontological differences that distinguish an ethnic conflict from other interstate or intrastate wars possible? The study assumes that wars identified as ethnic conflicts do not have different dynamics that require a different conceptual framework than other civil wars. The concept of ethnic conflict would only be useful if it offered a different causal explanation than other alternative concepts for the conflict patterns it addresses. However, empirical analysis indicates both ethnic and non-ethnic conflicts to be largely related to the same factors. In other words, ethnic conflicts do not arise as a result of different causes, processes, or actors that place them in a separate category. While the concept of ethnic conflict does not effectively fill an analytical gap in understanding civil war dynamics, causes, and consequences, focusing on ethnic identity differences while leaving other conflict dynamics to the side risks losing sight of the real root causes that need to be addressed.

Keywords

Bosnia Herzegovina · Conflict resolution · Ethnic conflict · Ethnic framing · War



“ Citation: Güven, İ. F. (2024). Revisiting ethnic framing in conflicts: challenging the concept of ethnic conflict. *Journal of Humanity, Peace and Justice*, 1(1), 49-64. <https://doi.org/10.26650/hupej.2024.10.11459672>

© This work is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License. 

© 2024. Güven, İ. F.

✉ Corresponding author: İbrahim Fevzi Güven ibrahimguven@karabuk.edu.tr



Revisiting Ethnic Framing in Conflicts: Challenging the Concept of Ethnic Conflict

In the post-Cold War era, one of the main themes of much research in fields such as conflict resolution, security studies, and international relations has been the rise of civil wars. During the 1990s when civil wars overshadowed interstate wars, conflicts arising from the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union, as well as in Africa, the Middle East, and many other regions, marked a framework wherein conflicts were largely characterized along ethno-national lines. The term ethnic conflict has become widely used in scholarly discourse and embraced by international organizations, peace practitioners, and diverse actors engaged in conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Many scholars find ethnic conflict to be an appropriate term when the conflicting parties belong to different ethnic groups and when ethnic identities play a significant role in shaping the conflict dynamics. However, the question arises as to whether the concept of ethnic conflict has the analytical grounds to stand as a distinct category as such. In other words, what makes ethnic conflicts different from other similar conflicts, and what makes a conflict ethnic in a way that deserves to be referred to in a different conceptual framework? The study aims to address these main research questions using a qualitative approach based on theoretical and conceptual debates surrounding the concept of ethnic conflict. It also examines secondary sources that analyze various conflict cases to navigate the conceptual and analytical debates surrounding the question of what constitutes ethnic conflict.

Cross-sectional data from various conflict cases are used for discussing the concept of ethnic conflict, with particular emphasis on examining the case of Bosnia Herzegovina (BH, or Bosnia hereafter). The decision to focus mainly on the case of Bosnia is based on the author's familiarity with the country from his previous studies and the critical nature of this country as a case study due to its ethnic structure and political context. The war in Bosnia (1992-1995), which is almost a laboratory for the concept of ethnic conflict with the rich data it provides on the issue and its various dimensions, is one of the most useful illustrative cases for determining how the concept of ethnic conflict fills an analytical gap and what its strengths and weaknesses are.

The main assumption of the study is that wars referred to as ethnic conflicts do not have different dynamics requiring a different conceptual framework than other civil wars. This conceptualization fails to address the analytical gap in understanding civil war processes and the causes and consequences of wars; perhaps, more importantly, it leads to ethnic framing in the analysis of wars, with the danger of focusing on ethnic divisions and pushing to the background or even ignoring other conflict dynamics. Instead of explaining the phenomenon from a neutral perspective, the conceptualization represents a particular point of view on the phenomenon of civil war.

Is the Concept of Ethnic Conflict Analytically Useful?

Ethnic groups, which are seen as the main actors in ethnic conflicts, can be defined as people united around a common culture, language, religion, race, customs, and traditions, as well as around a common understanding of history and a psychological sense of belonging (Malešević, 2004, p. 4; Smith, 2010; Taras & Gan-guly, 2016, p. 1). Ethnic conflict is a type of group conflict where at least one party interprets the conflict,



its causes, potential solutions, and main motivations in ethnic terms by referring to ethnic divisions. It describes situations where the leading cleavage is ethnic and where groups organized around ethnic identities engage in violent conflict (Cordell & Wolff, 2016, p. 4). Although ethnic conflict is often used to refer to a particular type of war, whether it fills an analytical gap and if the cases referred to as ethnic conflict are sufficiently different to sustain a distinctive concept are controversial issues. When failing to distinguish between ethnic and non-ethnic conflicts, the necessity of employing such a concept becomes questionable (Forbes, 1997, p. 1). The fact that ethnic groups constitute the parties to the conflict and that ethnic indicators are present in the conflict dynamics should not be the reason for a different conceptualization than other types of conflicts. Its usefulness depends on offering a unique explanatory basis for the conflicts it addresses compared to alternative frameworks. However, empirical analysis has shown that ethnic and non-ethnic conflicts are largely related to the same factors and that those defined as ethnic conflicts do not emerge as a result of different causes, processes, or actors requiring the a separate categorization of conflict (Gilley, 2004, pp. 1158–1160; Henderson & Singer, 2000, p. 293). Furthermore, seeing how ethnic identities hold a decisive sway over other motivations in conflict dynamics for ethnic groups and their political and military elites is difficult (Sarkees et al., 2003, p. 55). Although some ethnic groups may be participants in the conflict, whether their actions are primarily driven by ethnic identity is unclear. For example, Brubaker and Laitin (1998, p. 424) argued that, although some regions such as the Balkans and Sub-Saharan Africa are portrayed as places where ethnic problems and identity tensions are ever-present and ready to explode when the opportunity arises, violence based on ethnic identities and ethnic nationalism is not as prominent in these regions as one might think.

Many authors (Fearon & Laitin, 2003; Foroughi, 2002, pp. 48–52; Kaufman, 2023, p. 19; Wimmer, 2013, pp. 168–169; Yilmaz, 2007, p. 4) contend that, while ethnic identity differences or tensions are not inherently the direct cause of conflict, they can contribute to conflict initiation due to factors such as the breakdown of central authority, socioeconomic challenges, disparities in resource distribution, and competition for resources, as well as power struggles among political elites. The absence of conflicts in many countries with existing ethnic identity differences and tensions when these aforementioned conditions are not present suggests that ethnic identities do not exert a decisive influence on the onset of conflicts (Cordell & Wolff, 2016, p. 4; see also Jesse & Williams, 2011). Nevertheless, the concept continues to be widely used, perhaps because it is considered to offer an analytical framework with significant explanatory capabilities (see Taras & Ganguly, 2016).

Identifying conflicts as ethnic solely based on the involvement of different ethnic groups as primary actors and attributing ethnic tensions as the main cause inevitably result in a reductive understanding that lumps all such conflicts into a single category. Thus, different phenomena, events, cause-effect relationships, and processes with many nuances are homogenized to an ethnic framework. While the use of a new concept is expected to lead to richer and more powerful explanations, analyses, and conclusions, the concept of ethnic conflict has the opposite effect (Gilley, 2004, p. 1155). Applying an ethnic framework for analyzing a war may predispose researchers to an ethnic explanatory bias, potentially overemphasizing the role of ethnicity and affording it undue prominence in the analytical process (Brubaker & Laitin, 1998, p.



428; Fox & Jones, 2013, p. 385). As Hirschman (1970, as cited in Gilley, 2004, p. 1162) indicated, the widespread use of the term ethnic conflict may be seen as a prioritization of generating a new concept at the risk of reducing the possibilities of effectively analyzing the problem at hand. This is because focusing on ethnic identities to explain certain types of conflicts weakens the ability to see the other factors at play in conflicts and the other forms of difference held by conflict actors (Fox & Jones, 2013, p. 386).

Questioning the concept of ethnic conflict should be noted to not mean rejecting the ethnic, religious, or other dimensions of identity involved in such conflicts. Undoubtedly, identities represent a crucial variable in conflicts involving ethnic groups as actors (Gilley, 2004, p. 1155). However, the misconception lies in conflating the disputes, tensions, and animosities among different identity groups with violent conflicts and in viewing violent conflicts as a mere extension of ethnic disputes. In fact, war and violence are the transformation of ethnic disputes into another form under certain conditions (Brubaker & Laitin, 1998, p. 426). While ethnic diversity and identity tensions are evident in many countries, they often manifest themselves in cultural and political spheres without escalating into full-fledged violent conflict. In many cases the identity dimension, which includes ethnic animosities, should also be noted to perhaps not be the root cause of the conflict. But when violence erupts, identity polarization is exacerbated as a result of the conflict (Fearon & Laitin, 2000, p. 846; Hierro & Gallego, 2018, p. 1318; Rohner et al., 2013), and the ethnic aspect subsequently emerges as a significant factor shaping the outcome of the conflict. Therefore, what is observed in many instances is the ethnicization of conflicts due to the effects of war and violence, rather than actually being conflicts primarily rooted in ethnicity (Hierro & Gallego, 2018, p. 1332; Kalyvas & Sambanis, 2005, p. 216; Kilavuz, 2009, p. 694; Tunçer-Kilavuz, 2011, pp. 269–270).

Ethnic Politics and the Ethnicization of Politics

The Cold War was characterized by a bipolar international system, during which civil wars were defined along right-left or communist-capitalist divisions, reflecting the ideological polarization of the period. The actors of the conflicts also adopted these ideological definitions themselves, considering the political, military, and economic advantages of being close to one side of the global polarization. With the demise of the bipolar system and the conclusion of the Cold War, ideological paradigms gave way to identity-based, ethnic, and religious framings. This emerging mode of explanation revolved around historical ethnic animosities and clashes (Brubaker & Laitin, 1998, pp. 425–426; Fox & Jones, 2013, p. 387; Waever, 2008, p. 171).

To claim that ethnic conflicts have escalated in the post-Cold War era is an insufficient assertion, albeit partially accurate. While this perspective highlights the surge in ethnic conflicts, it fails to acknowledge the phenomenon of ethnicization and the framing of conflicts along ethnic lines. Analyzing the agents responsible for the ethnicization of war and violence, as well as the mechanisms through which this occurs, is crucial for addressing this shortcoming and moving toward a more comprehensive perspective. Examining the processes, discourses, attitudes, and policies that transform conflicts enables insights to be gained into how conflicts take on an ethnic dimension (Brubaker & Laitin, 1998, p. 427). The ethnicization of politics is often exploited by political elites to mask underlying power struggles, political instability, competition for resources, expansionist agendas, separatist movements, and similar territorial goals (Brubaker & Laitin, 1998, p. 425; Fearon & Laitin, 1996; Mueller, 2004; Sisk, 2022, p. 407; Stroschein, 2005, pp. 49–50; Weidmann,



2011, p. 1179). Thus, ethnic-based interpretations run the risk of neglecting the more complex challenges that need to be addressed. Understanding ethnicization clarifies how ethnic-based problems such as ethnic hatred that is often used to characterize these issues are either by-products or deliberate outcomes of ethnicization, rather than their root causes (Kuran, 1998b).

Political elites, often the key actors in ethnic politics and the process of ethnicization, have frequently paved the path for wars deemed as ethnic conflicts by promoting ethnic nationalist discourses and policies that engender polarization, competition, and violence among ethnic groups (Kennedy-Pipe & Jones, 1998, p. 13; Sandole, 2003, p. 73; Senehi et al., 2023, p. 2). Moreover, inequalities in resource distribution among ethnic groups, as well as political, economic, and cultural disparities and pressures along ethnic lines, facilitate the framing of such issues in ethnic terms (Gilley, 2004, p. 1159; Gurr, 1993, p. 59; King, 2001, p. 167; Taras & Ganguly, 2016, p. 13). Additionally, given the strong potential ethnic identities have for mobilizing masses and fostering a sense of solidarity, many political elites choose to instrumentalize ethnicity to advance their political interests (Brubaker, 2004, p. 110; Brubaker & Laitin, 1998, p. 446; Gagnon, 2004; Kaufman, 2001; Mueller, 2000; Taras & Ganguly, 2016, pp. 4, 22–23; Wolff, 2006, pp. 71–74).

Ethnic Divisions: Cause or Consequence of Conflict?

Have ethnic conflicts increased in the post–Cold War period, or has the ethnic framing of conflicts been what has increased instead? Gilley (2004, pp. 1155–1157), who proposed abandoning the concept of ethnic conflict due to its analytically weak and misleading nature, suggested that ethnic conflicts are not what have become widespread but rather the ethnic characterization of conflicts. While the number of interstate wars has undeniably decreased in the post–Cold War period, the number of civil wars has increased, and in several of these civil wars, the conflicting actors are from various ethnic groups. However, because of the increase in the number of civil wars in which ethnic groups confront each other, such wars have been thoughtlessly labeled ethnic conflicts, leading to the misconception that ethnic conflicts have increased (Gilley, 2004, p. 1156).

Under the concept of ethnic conflict, addressing the causes of such conflicts within the framework of ethnic identities and neglecting the socially constructed aspect of ethnicity leads to a hopeless picture of conflict resolution. This is because when the root of a problem lies in ethnic identities and in the tensions caused by these identity differences, finding a solution to these problems can be inferred to be impossible as long as ethnic identities exist (Holbrooke, 1999, pp. 26–27; Jenne, 2012, p. 256; Malcolm, 1999, p. 13). In this case, the most realistic steps that can be taken to stop a conflict and build peace is to separate (i.e., partition) these ethnic groups who cannot live together in peace into different political units, demographically separating ethnic groups by changing their settlements or by resorting to methods such as population exchange (Bağcı, 1994, p. 266; Mujanović, 2018, p. 72; Stroschein, 2005, p. 50). According to this view, forcing conflicting ethnic groups to coexist and integrate in the post-war period would prolong the possibility that centuries of ethnic hostility could lead to renewed war at any moment (Burg & Shoup, 1999, pp. 6–7; Gilbert & Mujanović, 2015, p. 606). While Chaim Kaufmann (1996a, 1996b, 1998, 2003) has been one of the most prominent proponents of this view for many conflict cases in general, noted academicians such as Henry Kissinger



(1997), Robert Pape, and John Mearsheimer (1993) have also suggest this, especially for the war in Bosnia¹, proposing partitioning BH along ethnic lines (Campbell, 1999, p. 404)².

Samuel Huntington (1996), who drew a famously pessimistic picture of identity differences in the post-Cold War era, interpreted the wars that emerged in the 1990s as inevitable identity-based wars situated on the fault lines of civilizational conflict. The war in Bosnia, which is seen one of the foremost examples of ethnic conflict in this period, has been interpreted through an ethnic lens not only by academicians (see Doder, 1993; Kaplan, 1993; Kennan, 1993; Vulliamy, 1994) but also by political leaders such as then US President George H. W. Bush and then British Prime Minister John Major, as well as by diplomats such as US Secretary of State Warren Christopher and former US Ambassador to Yugoslavia Lawrence Eagleburger. They argued that this war, stemming from centuries-old ethnic enmities that had resurfaced with the collapse of Yugoslavia, could not be stopped until Bosnian Muslims, Serbs, and Croats stopped killing each other and that the outside world did not have many options for a solution (Carmichael, 2002, p. 103; Çınar, 2019, pp. 19–20; Holbrooke, 1999, pp. 22–27; Sells, 1996, p. 142; Snyder, 1993, p. 79). In this way, international actors who were reluctant to intervene argued that intervention would not bring about a sustainable result based on the assumption that identity-based conflicts were doomed to remain unresolved (Ali & Lifschultz, 1994, p. 374; Cigar, 1995, p. 121; Mujanović, 2018, p. 52).

The search for the causes of ethnic conflicts in deep cultural divergences among ethnic groups and of historical intergroup hatred and enmity reflects the approach referred to as primordialism (Carment, 1994, p. 558; Çelik, 2009, p. 165; Cordell & Wolff, 2010, p. 14). The primordialist approach considers ethnic identities as fixed and unchanging phenomena arising from the nature of human beings, such as their biological characteristics; according to this approach, the causes of ethnic conflicts should be sought in the incompatibilities of these unchanging identities (Jesse, 2014, p. 94). In addition, a parallel can be identified between the primordialist approach and the Orientalist perspective. For conflicts in the non-Western world such as the Balkans, Africa, and Asia, explanations such as ancient hatred and ethnic conflicts are often preferred, whereas wars in developed Western countries are usually examined within the framework of national interests, rational policies, or, in some cases, liberal values such as the struggle for democracy and freedom. Although the motivations of the war actors are largely similar in both cases, Western wars are often ascribed more rational motivations, while wars in the East, which in the Orientalist imagination represents the un-

¹In BH, however, ethnic divisions emerged as a consequence of the conflict, not as its cause. The Dayton Agreement, which institutionalized the constitutional and political structure along ethnic lines, played an important role in the ethnicization of the post-war political order and the legitimization of ethnic divisions (Ekinci, 2014, p. 34; Gilbert & Mujanović, 2015, p. 607). Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs who'd lived together before the war were separated as a result of the war, violence, and ethnic cleansing that had occurred. This situation is observable in the changing demographic structure of the country after the war, especially in the BH entity Republika Srpska, where Bosniaks and Serbs used to live together, as well as in many cities (Ekinci, 2014, p. 39). Bosniaks were the majority population but were replaced by the Serbs after the war. In other words, as the war caused forced displacement within the country, ethnic groups separated from each other and had to settle in areas where their own group was the majority. This segregation was not only spatial but also mental. During my fieldwork in BH in 2021, I had the opportunity to personally observe this situation. Many people from BH (mostly Bosniaks) with whom I had the opportunity to speak stated how they had had no reservations about living together with other ethnic groups and establishing close relations before the war, but that nothing was no longer the same, as the war had damaged the relationship of trust among ethnic groups and pushed them away from each other.

²In contrast, Glaurdić (2011, p. 290) argued the proposed ethnic division for BH and the arrangements in this regard to be incompatible with the country's pluralistic ethnic realities, by which the author meant the acceptance and institutionalization of the new ethnic realities created by the war. Similarly, Lemarchand's (2007) examination of African countries such as Rwanda, Burundi, and the Democratic Republic of Congo and Vaughan's (2018) study of Lebanon addressed the problem of how ethnic division and power sharing institutionalize identity divisions.



developed and non-Western world, are attributed to such irrational and emotional reasons as ancient hatreds and ethnic enmities and bear traces of dichotomies such as us-them and barbarian-civilized that are found in the Western-centered and Orientalist approaches (Ali & Lifschultz, 1994, pp. 370–371; Bakić-Hayden & Hayden, 1992; Biondich, 2011; Gagnon, 2004; Roudometof, 2001; Todorova, 2009). Indeed, the concept of Balkanization, which labels the Balkans as a region almost ontologically prone to constant ethnic conflicts and civil unrest, evokes this Orientalist approach by reflecting the inaccurate assumption that Balkan peoples are prone to conflict, banditry, violence, and national feuds (Bora, 1995, p. 16; Kitromilides, 1996, pp. 163–171; Mazower, 2014, pp. 28–32; Rumelili, 2014, p. 378).

What is interesting is the potential for some ethnic groups, especially actors who pursue separatist policies in conflicts, to adopt this approach themselves (Gil-White, 1999, p. 790), a fact that has largely lost its relevance in the academic world today. This approach allows one to argue a conflict to be rooted in deep historical animosities, where all parties share the blame for the war in a way that makes distinguishing between aggressor and victim difficult³the only way to prevent ancient unstoppable identity-based hatreds from leading to repeated conflicts is to separate the ethnic groups. This is illustrated by the fact that Serbs and Bosniaks define the war in Bosnia in different terms. Arguing the war to be a religious and/or ethnic conflict, nationalist Serb leaders have tried to absolve themselves of the responsibility for the attitudes and policies they pursued that had led to the outbreak of the war by suggesting that the civil war and ethnic division had been inevitable (Bağcı, 1994, pp. 259–261). In addition, they have sought to legitimize their separatist views on the disintegration of BH being a natural consequence of the course of history, where efforts to restore its territorial integrity would only have led to a forced unity (Cigar, 1995, p. 121). This perspective portrays BH as a state doomed to disintegrate due to its multi-ethnic structure and argues that only a BH divided into mono-ethnic states can achieve peace and stability (Oliver, 2005, p. 11), thus reflecting one definition of the problem as an ethnic conflict⁴.

When explaining the causes of conflicts in multi-ethnic and multi-cultural countries, the approach that places ethnicities at the center of the problems by pointing to the animosity among groups with different ethnic identities is inadequate for explaining the peaceful coexistence practices of the ethnic groups in such countries⁵ in pre-conflict periods or the examples of countries where conflicts are not witnessed despite their multi-ethnic population structure (Jesse & Williams, 2011; Weidmann, 2011, p. 1180). The narrative of

³Especially among the US foreign policy elite, such a totalitarian assessment of the war in Bosnia was quite common. William Hyland, an editor of *Foreign Affairs* magazine, characterized the conflict as a “war of gangsters” without distinguishing between the attacker and the attacked. James Hoge, another editor for *Foreign Affairs*, similarly emphasized that no “good people” were among the parties to the Bosnian War. Then US Secretary of State Warren Christopher also stated that all parties shared responsibility for the bloody war in Bosnia (as cited by Ali & Lifschultz, 1994, pp. 371–372).

⁴On the other hand, Bosniaks insistently refrain from characterizing the war as an ethnic conflict, preferring to call it an attack and occupation attempt by neighboring Serbia and Croatia against the territorial integrity of the state of BH, whose independence is recognized by the international community. According to Bosniaks, the war in Bosnia, which was a conflict between those who wanted to preserve the territorial integrity of the country with its multi-ethnic structure and those who wanted to divide the country through ethnic cleansing and genocide, had not started as an ethnic conflict; instead, the intense violence experienced during the war had given the conflict a subsequent ethnic character.

⁵As an example, BH was a place where Bosniaks, Serbs, Croats, and Jews had lived together for generations and, except for exceptional periods of war such as World War II, was where the practice of peaceful coexistence had been maintained for centuries, especially in centers such as Sarajevo and Mostar. The intermingling of peoples and cultures had reached such a level that, in the 20th century, about a quarter of all marriages in Bosnia were between members of different ethnic groups (Ali & Lifschultz, 1994, p. 367). All this suggests that characterizing the war in BH in the 1990s as an ethnic conflict would be analytically simplistic.



ethnic hatred is usually constructed by considering the attitudes, discourses, and policies adopted by political and military elites or marginalized minority groups and exaggerates the importance the role of ethnicity had in causing conflict (Fox & Jones, 2013, p. 389). When examining the attitudes and behaviors of the wider society and the practices of coexistence and communication developed by different ethnic groups in daily life, a different picture of ethnic relations at the local level emerges compared to the top-down narrative portrayal (Brubaker et al., 2006; Fox & Miller-Idriss, 2008; Karner, 2007). Therefore, including the local everyday bottom-up dynamics in the analysis is important in order to avoid the ethnic conflict narrative, while examining at what stages, through what processes, and under what factors this dimension becomes a part of the conflict without denying the ethnic dimension in conflicts (Richmond, 2009a).

Such approaches that are based on a long tradition of rigorous anthropological and sociological research informed by rich empirical findings contribute to moving the narratives of ethnicity beyond the shadow of political elites, the media, and desktop analyses and to understanding the forms that ethnicity takes at the social level alongside the other types of identities and their significance (Eminoğlu & Aydın, 2021; Fox & Jones, 2013, pp. 389–390). In addition to a more careful examination of the role of ethnicity in the emergence of conflicts, these approaches offer the opportunity to discuss the potential for peace and reconciliation of local/micro-level practices of coexistence and avoidance of ethnic tensions in the post-conflict peace-building process (Berents & McEvoy-Levy, 2015, p. 116; Mac Ginty, 2014, pp. 550, 560; Richmond, 2009b, p. 331).

Recognizing that so-called ethnic conflicts acquire an ethnic dimension by being subjected to a process of ethnicization provides a way out of the pessimistic perspective that ethnic divisions are at the root of the conflict and will remain an insurmountable obstacle to lasting peace in the post-conflict period (Brubaker, 1996). This pessimistic perspective, which categorizes so-called ethnic conflicts as intractable conflicts, predicts that lasting peace will not be easily achieved in the post-conflict period, as identity issues are seen as being at the root of the conflict. An alternative perspective does not see identities as the main problem and draws attention to the process of ethnicization. Optimistically, ethnic polarization in many post-conflict countries can be ended if problems are removed from the ethnic framework and ethnic divisions are made to cease being a problem through a focus on common problems or the construction of new common civilian identities (Foroughi, 2002, pp. 54–56; Lowe & Muldoon, 2014; McKeown, 2014; Pickering, 2009; Touquet, 2015). This optimism does not mean that the influence of ethnic identities on social divisions and politics can be easily eliminated, but it does reflect the view that preventing the ethnicization of problems and politics can yield effective results even if ethnic identities persist. For example, if an ethnic conflict is argued to have arisen between ethnic group A and ethnic group B in a country due to ethnic problems, the solution focuses on ethnic groups and identities; however, if the ethnicization of problems by political elites or other actors is identified as the main problem, the prevention of ethnic politics and the de-ethnicization of the political structure can present itself as a solution. Relatedly, a focus on what Galtung (1969) described as “structural violence,” such as in the unemployment, poverty, corruption, anti-democratic practices, and lack of development that constitute common problem areas for ethnic groups within a country, can be expected to lead to more effective solutions for peace and stability by transcending the ethnic framework (Gilley, 2004, p. 1163; Mayor, 1995, pp. 4–7; Murtagh, 2016, 2020).



Even if conflicts do not start due to ethnicity, the fact that they develop an ethnic dimension, especially with the introduction of violence, can be seen as a self-fulfilling prophecy. A self-fulfilling prophecy is a concept used in many fields of social sciences ranging from social psychology and political science to international relations and refers to the process by which an initial mis-definition of a situation leads to events and/or behaviors that justify the mis-definition, thereby validating it (Merton, 1948, p. 195). From this perspective, most so-called ethnic conflicts arguably do not start with ethnic motives but eventually become ethnicized once ethnic framing becomes dominant in the process, leaving a legacy of ethnic divisions for the post-war period. Nevertheless, this should not lead to a misconception that ethnic problems had suddenly emerged or been invented for the first time during the conflict. What is meant by ethnic conflicts being self-fulfilling prophecies is that the ethnic divisions and tensions that were not an initial determining factor in the emergence of the conflict had gone from being a marginal issue to becoming a central issue during the conflict and the political and social reality of the post-conflict period (Waever, 2008, pp. 176–177). If the actors in the conflict perceive the situation they are in as an ethnic conflict and the actors outside the conflict perceive the conflict situation they are following and trying to interpret as the same, then their attitudes and behaviors will be shaped by these perceptions. Thus, the attitudes and behaviors activated by the ethnic framing, which is initially only thought of as a meaning-making scheme, will pave the way for the ethnic conflict to become a socially constructed reality.

The portrayal of so-called ethnic conflicts not as conflicts that construct or sharpen divisions between ethnic groups but as the outcome of ethnic divisions whose existence is a given leads to the constructed and instrumentalized nature of ethnicity and ethnic conflicts being overlooked (Fox & Jones, 2013, p. 387; Jesse, 2014, pp. 95–96; Ruane & Todd, 2004, pp. 212–215). Emphasizing the socially constructed nature of ethnic groups and thus ethnic conflicts, Brubaker (2004, p. 13) opposed the concept of ethnic group in the first place and proposed the concept of “groupness” instead. According to him, the use of the concept of groupness can help one realize that, instead of attributing events to ethnic groups per se a predetermined reality, these groups are essentially the “events” that emerge and persist in a given period and conjuncture (Brubaker, 2004, p. 12). Based on this perspective, he goes on to argue that the conflicts referred to as ethnic are essentially conflicts between groups that define and construct themselves as ethnic. Although the main actors of the conflicts are the ethnic groups in question, this is not enough for these conflicts to be referred to as ethnic conflicts, as such a definition would mean the “reification” of ethnic groups that are formed as a result of social and discursive mental constructs (Brubaker, 2004, pp. 9–11). Similarly, Malešević (2004, p. 2) argued the definition of ethnic groups to objectify groups and individuals and to reflect an anti-sociological understanding that attributes a fixed structure to cultural and identity differences. According to Malešević, the danger of this objectification is not only that it leads to deep misunderstandings of ethnicities and ethnic groups (and ethnic conflicts seen as wars between these groups) but also that it can lead to the exploitation of these concepts in a political context. Rather than accepting ethnic categories as inherent realities without question, the task for researchers is to scrutinize the circumstances where ethnic categories are constructed, ethnic loyalties are reinforced and contribute to violent conflicts, or where ethnic loyalties erode and/or intertwine with other forms of affiliation (Gilbert & Mujanović, 2015, p. 608).



The Fallacy of the Homogeneity of Ethnic Groups

Another problematic aspect of ethnic framing is the neglect of intra-ethnic differences and the assumption that members of ethnic groups are united around common perspectives, goals, and interests (Stroschein, 2005). Thus, when ethnic conflicts are seen as the result of parties acting according to ethnic motivations, different attitudes and policies between ethnic groups are reduced to the ethnic frame, while the attitudes and behaviors of different subgroups within ethnic groups are often excluded from the analysis. The pre-supposition that the conflicting groups have homogeneous identities therefore leads to the assumption that the conflict results from identity-based problems between homogeneous groups. However, sociological and anthropological studies that look closely at post-conflict social dynamics in countries divided into different identity groups, as well as approaches that examine the microsocial relations of ordinary people in divided societies such as everyday peace, draw attention to intragroup heterogeneity and transitivity between groups (Mac Ginty, 2014, pp. 552–553, 2021, p. 31). An analysis of social relations in conflict countries shows that groups are not based on rigidly segregated identities, ideas, and practices that do not allow for any transitivity (Mac Ginty, 2012). In many cases, everyday intergroup interactions transcend or erode social divisions, otherwise identity groups cannot be fully incorporated into the social identity of any of the conflicting groups (Mac Ginty, 2014, p. 551).

The assumption of ethnic homogeneity makes Serbs' fighting in the army of BH or Serbs and Croats who did not leave the city during the siege of Sarajevo and risked being attacked by Serb forces together with Bosniaks difficult to explain. In the case of BH, this approach again leaves unanswered the question of why Bosnian leader Alija Izetbegović rejected the ethnic partition proposals offered to him and considered preserving the territorial integrity of BH with its multi-ethnic structure as the main goal of the war if it had actually been an ethnic conflict. If the war in Bosnia had been an ethnic conflict in which each side was ethnically motivated, Bosniaks would have been expected to pursue their own homogeneous ethnic state, as Bosnian Serbs did and Bosnian Croats did in part. However, putting aside the ethnic analysis of the war and listening to Taras and Ganguly (2016, pp. 15–17), who argued that many wars referred to as ethnic conflicts are actually fought between separatist or irredentist parties seeking territorial gains and those seeking to preserve the status quo, will allow the uncovering of how ethnic identities are instrumentalized for political and territorial purposes, not only in the war in Bosnia but also in many similar conflicts.

In many conflict cases, ethnic subgroups that advocate different goals and interests or different means of achieving the same goals may engage in a struggle for political power within their own ethnic group in addition to with the rival ethnic group (Jesse, 2014, p. 97). In some cases, elites emerge who succeed in uniting these subgroups under the umbrella of a common goal⁶ or in framing the issue in ethnic terms; however, intra-ethnic rivalries and differences persist throughout the conflict in most cases, albeit at low intensity (Brubaker & Laitin, 1998, p. 440; Gagnon, 1995; Kuran, 1998b, 1998a, pp. 42–48; Laitin, 1995b). Some members of the ingroup may advocate softer policies toward the perceived enemy group, criticize violent methods, and seek to avoid violence, and such members may face the risk of being penalized by various

⁶İdil Tunçer Kılavuz (2009), in her study on the civil war in Tajikistan, refers to the efforts of elites to convene and gain the support of individuals and groups they are connected to in such times of crisis as “network activation.”



formal or informal intra-group sanction mechanisms, ranging from exclusion and political isolation to violence (Brubaker & Laitin, 1998, p. 433; see also Laitin, 1995a and Pfaffenberger, 1995). In cases of ethnic outbidding, leaders who advocate more hawkish policies toward the other group publicly question their moderate opponents' loyalty to the group and willingness to defend its interests and security (Kaufman, 1996; Mitchell et al., 2009). As a result, moderate leaders may have to choose between losing electoral support or shifting to a more hardline stance to prove their loyalty to the group.

As ethnic nationalist political elites gained dominance during the breakup of Yugoslavia, particularly in Serbia and Croatia, those advocating more moderate views struggled to garner adequate support and representation within their respective ethnic communities. Moreover, as tensions between the groups increased, expressing peaceful and moderate views within the ethnic group became increasingly dangerous. To deviate from the ideas and actions of one's own ethnic group became even more dangerous with the outbreak of war. Sells (1996, p. 73) reported Serbs who tried to protect their neighbors from other ethnic groups during the war in Bosnia to have become victims of the aggression of Bosnian Serb forces and to have been killed along with the neighbors they were trying to protect. Under such extreme conditions, both political elites and social groups, even if they do not actually hold ethnically hateful views, are unsurprisingly forced to succumb to ethnic framing because of the social pressure that has been created (Güven, 2023, pp. 265–266; Oberschall, 2000, pp. 990–991). Therefore, when analyzing conflicts, limiting oneself to superficial conclusions such as the impression that ethnic groups act in lockstep⁷ runs the risk of failing to adequately grasp the implications of intra-ethnic dynamics on intergroup relations and the conflict itself.

Conclusion

At a time when inter-state and civil wars worldwide cause civilian casualties and humanitarian crises and demand urgent solutions, a conceptual debate on ethnic conflict can be criticized from both practical and normative perspectives. This is because problems persist regardless of what they are called. However, the concepts used to define problems are crucial, as they influence the way a problem is viewed, the methods for addressing it, and the attitudes toward the possibility of a solution. The realities of the social world do not exist independently of how they are thought about. The agent-structure relationship is a two-way interaction, and people as social actors are not only under the influence of the structure they are a part of but also construct this structure through concepts, practices, and perceptions. Therefore, the concept of ethnic conflict reflects a particular perspective on conflict. Constructing meaning for these conflicts influences their analysis and proposed conflict resolution. Questioning the validity of a concept is a necessary endeavor, as it means questioning the validity of the phenomenon to which the concept refers. Identities are of existential importance for human beings, and almost every group is ready to fight to defend its ethnic, religious, or national identity. Ethnic identities and disputes around these identity differences are undeniably among the dynamics of conflict. From this perspective, the concept of ethnic conflict may seem a useful

⁷For instance, Taylor (1991, pp. 4–5) criticized the view of some authors who'd interpreted the 1990s conflict in South Africa as a conflict based on historical animosities between the Zulu and Xhosa tribes who'd been divided into ethnically homogeneous blocs, ignoring the ethnic transitions between the groups involved in the conflict. Taylor (1991, pp. 3–7) also argued that this view, which was found both in the media and in the assessments of prominent scholars such as Hermann Giliomee, R.W. Johnson, and Donald L. Horowitz, leads to a superficial and misleading analysis by reducing the problem to ethnic categories and ignores the conflict's underlying political and sociological causes.



tool for explaining a particular type of conflict. The concept's basic premise asserts that ethnic groups are the principal actors in certain conflicts or that the fundamental dynamics of the conflict are predominantly shaped by ethnic identities. Therefore, these conflicts are considered a distinct category separate from others. However, a close examination of the validity of this proposition through examples of ethnic conflict reveals that, ethnic identities are used instrumentally by political and military elites in many cases, thus concealing the underlying conflict dynamics behind ethnic identities. The misleading aspect of the concept of ethnic conflict is not that it pretends that factors that are not instrumental in the emergence of conflicts are instrumental. The main problem with the concept is the lack of assessment regarding how, under what circumstances, and through the influence of which actors do the issues related to ethnic identities become part of the conflict dynamics. A closer look at conflict examples reveals that many wars acquire an ethnic character over time, despite ethnic issues not being the main drivers of war. The concept of ethnic conflict fails to make this distinction and defines conflict superficially in terms of conflict actors and apparent ethnic discourses and symbols. In the social sciences, researchers may be inclined to create and use new concepts without asking basic questions about what the concepts are used for and in what situations new concepts are needed. This can lead to conceptual confusion, where the same ideas are expressed using multiple concepts. However, a new concept should only be used if it contributes to a better understanding and analysis of the phenomenon under study and the development of new insights. Ethnic conflict is a term that does not fully meet these criteria and can lead to misleading inferences about the phenomenon. Thus, far from providing a better understanding of a certain type of conflict, the term misdirects ideas about the phenomenon and plays a role in the construction of a new social reality. Therefore, to say that the drawbacks of using this concept, which offers a limited perspective when it should provide a deeper analytical insight into the phenomenon it addresses, are greater than the benefits it provides would not be an exaggeration.



Peer Review	Externally peer-reviewed.
Conflict of Interest	The author have no conflict of interest to declare.
Grant Support	The author declared that this study has received no financial support.

Author Details **İbrahim Fevzi Güven**

¹ Karabuk University, Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, Department of International Relations, Karabük, Türkiye

 0000-0001-8616-947X  ibrahimguven@karabuk.edu.tr

References

- Ali, R., & Lifschultz, L. (1994). Why Bosnia? *Third World Quarterly*, 15(3), 367–401. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436599408420387>
- Bağcı, H. (1994). Bosna Hersek: Soğuk Savaş Sonrası Anlaşmazlıklara Giriş. *Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 16(27), 257–279.
- Bakić-Hayden, M., & Hayden, R. M. (1992). Orientalist Variations on the Theme “Balkans”: Symbolic Geography in Recent Yugoslav Cultural Politics. *Slavic Review*, 51(1), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2500258>
- Berents, H., & McEvoy-Levy, S. (2015). Theorising youth and everyday peace(building). *Peacebuilding*, 3(2), 115–125. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21647259.2015.1052627>



- Biondich, M. (2011). *The Balkans: Revolution, War, and Political Violence since 1878*. Oxford University Press.
- Bora, T. (1995). *Yugoslavya: Milliyetçiliğin Provokasyonu*. Birikim Yayınları.
- Brubaker, R. (1996). Rethinking nationhood: Nation as institutionalized form, practical category, contingent event. In R. Brubaker (Ed.), *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (pp. 13–22). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511558764.002>
- Brubaker, R. (2004). *Ethnicity Without Groups*. Harvard University Press.
- Brubaker, R., Feischmidt, M., Fox, J., & Grancea, L. (2006). *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity in a Transylvanian Town*. Princeton university press.
- Brubaker, R., & Laitin, D. D. (1998). Ethnic and Nationalist Violence. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 24, 423–452. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.24.1.423>
- Burg, S. L., & Shoup, P. S. (1999). *The War in Bosnia-Herzegovina: Ethnic Conflict and International Intervention*. M.E. Sharpe.
- Campbell, D. (1999). Apartheid cartography: The political anthropology and spatial effects of international diplomacy in Bosnia. *Political Geography*, 18(4), 395–435. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0962-6298\(98\)00110-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0962-6298(98)00110-3)
- Carment, D. (1994). The ethnic dimension in world politics: Theory, policy and early warning. *Third World Quarterly*, 15(4), 551–582. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436599408420398>
- Carmichael, C. (2002). *Ethnic Cleansing in the Balkans: Nationalism and the Destruction of Tradition*. Routledge.
- Çelik, A. B. (2009). Etnik Çatışmaların Çözümünde Siyaset Bilimi ve Uyuşmazlık Çözümü Yaklaşımları. In N. Beriker (Ed.), *Çatışmadan Uzlaşmaya: Kuramlar, Süreçler ve Uygulamalar* (pp. 163–188). İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları.
- Cigar, N. (1995). *Genocide in Bosnia: The Policy of "Ethnic Cleansing."* Texas A&M University Press.
- Çınar, K. (2019). Dismemberment of Yugoslavia: Lessons for the Ethnic Conflict Literature. *Balkan Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 8(15), 15–27.
- Cordell, K., & Wolff, S. (2010). *Ethnic Conflict: Causes, Consequences, and Responses*. Polity Press.
- Cordell, K., & Wolff, S. (2016). The Study of Ethnic Conflict: An Introduction. In K. Cordell & S. Wolff (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Ethnic Conflict* (pp. 1–11). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315720425>
- Doder, D. (1993). Yugoslavia: New War, Old Hatreds. *Foreign Policy*, 91, 3–23.
- Ekinci, M. U. (2014). *Bosna-Hersek Siyasetini Anlama Kılavuzu*. Siyaset, Ekonomi ve Toplum Araştırmaları Vakfı (SETA). http://file.setav.org/Files/Pdf/20141103175216_bosna-hersek-siyasetini-anlama-kilavuzu-pdf.pdf
- Eminoğlu, A., & Aydın, Y. (2021). Bosna-Hersek Bağlamında Antropolojinin Yeni Kullanım Alanı Olarak Barış Çalışmaları ve Barış İnşası. *Balkan Araştırma Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 10(1), 49–75. <https://doi.org/10.30903/Balkan.954231>
- Fearon, J. D., & Laitin, D. D. (1996). Explaining Interethnic Cooperation. *American Political Science Review*, 90(4), 715–735. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2945838>
- Fearon, J. D., & Laitin, D. D. (2000). Violence and the Social Construction of Ethnic Identity. *International Organization*, 54(4), 845–877. <https://doi.org/10.1162/002081800551398>
- Fearon, J. D., & Laitin, D. D. (2003). Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War. *American Political Science Review*, 97(01), 75–90. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055403000534>
- Forbes, H. D. (1997). *Ethnic Conflict: Commerce, Culture, and the Contact Hypothesis*. Yale University Press.
- Foroughi, P. (2002). Tajikistan: Nationalism, Ethnicity, Conflict, and Socio-economic Disparities—Sources and Solutions. *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 22(1), 39–61. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13602000220124827>
- Fox, J. E., & Jones, D. (2013). Migration, everyday life and the ethnicity bias. *Ethnicities*, 13(4), 385–400. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468796813483727>
- Fox, J. E., & Miller-Idriss, C. (2008). Everyday nationhood. *Ethnicities*, 8(4), 536–563. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468796808088925>
- Gagnon, V. P. (1995). Ethnic Nationalism and International Conflict: The Case of Serbia. *International Security*, 19(3), 130–166. <https://doi.org/10.1162/isec.19.3.130>
- Gagnon, V. P. (2004). *The Myth of Ethnic War: Serbia and Croatia in the 1990s*. Cornell University Press.
- Galtung, J. (1969). Violence, Peace, and Peace Research. *Journal of Peace Research*, 6(3), 167–191.
- Gilbert, A., & Mujanović, J. (2015). Dayton at twenty: Towards new politics in Bosnia-Herzegovina. *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, 15(4), 605–610. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14683857.2015.1130359>
- Gilley, B. (2004). Against the concept of ethnic conflict. *Third World Quarterly*, 25(6), 1155–1166. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0143659042000256959>



- Gil-White, F. J. (1999). How thick is blood? The plot thickens . . . : if ethnic actors are primordialists, what remains of the circumstantialist / primordialist controversy? *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 22(5), 789–820. <https://doi.org/10.1080/014198799329260>
- Glaurdić, J. (2011). *The Hour of Europe: Western Powers and the Breakup of Yugoslavia*. Yale University Press.
- Gurr, T. R. (1993). *Minorities at Risk: A Global View of Ethnopolitical Conflicts*. United States Institute of Peace Press.
- Güven, İ. F. (2023). *Bosna-Hersek'te Savaş, Güvenlikleştirme ve Siyasi Liderler*. Nobel Yayıncılık.
- Henderson, E. A., & Singer, J. D. (2000). Civil War in the Post-Colonial World, 1946–92. *Journal of Peace Research*, 37(3), 275–299. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343300037003001>
- Hierro, M. J., & Gallego, A. (2018). Identities in between: Political Conflict and Ethnonational Identities in Multicultural States. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 62(6), 1314–1339. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002716682593>
- Hirschman, A. O. (1970). The Search for Paradigms as a Hindrance to Understanding. *World Politics*, 22(3), 329–343. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2009600>
- Holbrooke, R. (1999). *To End a War: The Conflict in Yugoslavia—America's Inside Story—Negotiating with Milosevic*. Modern Library.
- Huntington, S. (1996). *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. Simon & Schuster.
- Jenne, E. K. (2012). When Will We Part with Partition Theory? Flawed Premises and Improbable Longevity of the Theory of Ethnic Partition. *Ethnopolitics*, 11(3), 255–267. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17449057.2011.587956>
- Jesse, N. G. (2014). Ethnicity and Identity Conflict. In E. Newman & K. DeRouen (Eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Civil Wars* (pp. 93–103). Routledge.
- Jesse, N. G., & Williams, K. P. (2011). *Ethnic Conflict: A Systematic Approach to Cases of Conflict* (1st edition). Congressional Quarterly Press.
- Kalyvas, S. N., & Sambanis, N. (2005). Bosnia's Civil War: Origins and Violence Dynamics. In P. Collier & N. Sambanis (Eds.), *Understanding Civil War: Evidence and Analysis, Volume 2: Europe, Central Asia, and Other Regions* (pp. 191–229). The World Bank. <https://doi.org/10.1596/978-0-8213-6049-1>
- Kaplan, R. (1993). *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey Through History*. St. Martin's Press.
- Karner, C. (2007). *Ethnicity and Everyday Life*. Routledge.
- Kaufman, S. J. (1996). Spiraling to Ethnic War: Elites, Masses, and Moscow in Moldova's Civil War. *International Security*, 21(2), 108–138. <https://doi.org/10.1162/isec.21.2.108>
- Kaufman, S. J. (2001). *Modern Hatreds: The Symbolic Politics of Ethnic War*. Cornell University Press.
- Kaufman, S. J. (2023). The roots of ethnopolitical conflict. In J. Senehi, I. M. Scott, S. Byrne, & T. G. Matyók (Eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Peacebuilding and Ethnic Conflict* (pp. 17–27). Routledge.
- Kaufmann, C. (1996a). Intervention in ethnic and ideological civil wars: Why one can be done and the other can't. *Security Studies*, 6(1), 62–101. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09636419608429300>
- Kaufmann, C. (1996b). Possible and Impossible Solutions to Ethnic Civil Wars. *International Security*, 20(4), 136–175. <https://doi.org/10.1162/isec.20.4.136>
- Kaufmann, C. (1998). When all else fails: Ethnic population transfers and partitions in the twentieth century. *International Security*, 23(2), 120–156.
- Kaufmann, C. (2003). Keeping the Peace: Lasting Solutions to Ethnic Conflicts.(Book Reviews). *Political Science Quarterly*, 118(1), 156–157. JSTOR.
- Kennan, G. F. (1993). *The Other Balkan Wars: A 1913 Carnegie Endowment Inquiry in Retrospect*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.
- Kennedy-Pipe, C., & Jones, C. (1998). An introduction to civil wars. *Civil Wars*, 1(1), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13698249808402364>
- King, C. (2001, November 1). The Myth of Ethnic Warfare. *Foreign Affairs*, 80(6), 165–170.
- Kissinger, H. (1997). Limits to What the US Can Do in Bosnia. *Washington Post*. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/1997/09/22/limits-to-what-the-us-can-do-in-bosnia/3457772b-5819-455e-81c9-00f41cbf30dd/>
- Kitromilides, P. M. (1996). 'Balkan Mentality': History, Legend, Imagination. *Nations and Nationalism*, 2(2), 163–191. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1354-5078.1996.00163.x>
- Kılavuz, İ. T. (2009). The Role of Networks in Tajikistan's Civil War: Network Activation and Violence Specialists. *Nationalities Papers*, 37(5), 693–717. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00905990903122909>
- Kuran, T. (1998a). Ethnic Dissimilation and Its International Diffusion. In D. A. Lake & D. S. Rothchild (Eds.), *The International Spread of Ethnic Conflict: Fear, Diffusion, and Escalation* (pp. 35–60). Princeton University Press.



- Kuran, T. (1998b). Ethnic Norms And Their Transformation Through Reputational Cascades. *The Journal of Legal Studies*, 27(S2), 623–659. <https://doi.org/10.1086/468038>
- Laitin, D. D. (1995a). Marginality: A Microperspective. *Rationality and Society*, 7(1), 31–57. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1043463195007001003>
- Laitin, D. D. (1995b). National revivals and violence. *European Journal of Sociology*, 36(1), 3–43. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003975600007098>
- Lemarchand, R. (2007). Consociationalism and Power Sharing in Africa: Rwanda, Burundi, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. *African Affairs*, 106(422), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1093/afraf/adl041>
- Lowe, R. D., & Muldoon, O. T. (2014). Shared national identification in Northern Ireland: An application of psychological models of group inclusion post conflict. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, 17(5), 602–616. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430214525808>
- Mac Ginty, R. (2012). Routine peace: Technocracy and peacebuilding. *Cooperation and Conflict*, 47(3), 287–308. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0010836712444825>
- Mac Ginty, R. (2014). Everyday peace: Bottom-up and local agency in conflict-affected societies. *Security Dialogue*, 45(6), 548–564. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010614550899>
- Mac Ginty, R. (2021). *Everyday Peace: How So-called Ordinary People Can Disrupt Violent Conflict*. Oxford University Press.
- Malcolm, N. (1999). *Kosova: Balkanları Anlamak İçin* (Ö. Arkan, Trans.). Sabah Kitapları.
- Malešević, S. (2004). *The Sociology of Ethnicity*. Sage Publications.
- Mayor, F. (1995). How psychology can contribute to a culture of peace. *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, 1(1), 3–9. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327949pac0101_2
- Mazower, M. (2014). *Balkanlar: Bizans'ın Çöküşünden Günümüze* (A. Ozil, Trans.). Alfa Yayıncılık.
- McKeown, S. (2014). Perceptions of a superordinate identity in Northern Ireland. *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, 20(4), 505–515. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pac0000051>
- Mearsheimer, J. J., & Pape, R. (1993). The answer: A three-way partition plan for Bosnia and how the US can enforce it. *The New Republic*, 22–27.
- Merton, R. K. (1948). The Self-Fulfilling Prophecy. *The Antioch Review*, 8(2), 193–210. <https://doi.org/10.2307/4609267>
- Mitchell, P., Evans, G., & O'Leary, B. (2009). Extremist Outbidding in Ethnic Party Systems is Not Inevitable: Tribune Parties in Northern Ireland. *Political Studies*, 57(2), 397–421. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9248.2008.00769.x>
- Mueller, J. (2000). The Banality of “Ethnic War.” *International Security*, 25(1), 42–70.
- Mueller, J. (2004). *The Remnants of War*. Cornell University Press.
- Mujanović, J. (2018). *Hunger and Fury: The crisis of Democracy in the Balkans*. Oxford University Press.
- Murtagh, C. (2016). Civic Mobilization in Divided Societies and the Perils of Political Engagement: Bosnia and Herzegovina's Protest and Plenum Movement. *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, 22(2), 149–171. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13537113.2016.1169060>
- Murtagh, C. (2020). The plight of civic parties in divided societies. *International Political Science Review*, 41(1), 73–88. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192512119859349>
- Oberschall, A. (2000). The manipulation of ethnicity: From ethnic cooperation to violence and war in Yugoslavia. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 23(6), 982–1001. <https://doi.org/10.1080/014198700750018388>
- Oliver, I. (2005). *War & Peace in the Balkans: The Diplomacy of Conflict in the Former Yugoslavia*. I.B. Tauris.
- Pfaffenberger, B. (1995). *Humboldt Journal of Social Relations*, 20(2), 121–147.
- Pickering, P. M. (2009). Explaining Support for Non-nationalist Parties in Post-conflict Societies in the Balkans. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 61(4), 565–591. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09668130902826121>
- Richmond, O. P. (2009a). A post-liberal peace: Eirenism and the everyday. *Review of International Studies*, 35(3), 557–580. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210509008651>
- Richmond, O. P. (2009b). Becoming Liberal, Unbecoming Liberalism: Liberal-Local Hybridity via the Everyday as a Response to the Paradoxes of Liberal Peacebuilding. *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, 3(3), 324–344. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17502970903086719>
- Rohner, D., Thoenig, M., & Zilibotti, F. (2013). Seeds of distrust: Conflict in Uganda. *Journal of Economic Growth*, 18(3), 217–252. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10887-013-9093-1>
- Roudometof, V. (2001). *Nationalism, Globalization, and Orthodoxy: The Social Origins of Ethnic Conflict in The Balkans*. Greenwood Publishing Group.



- Ruane, J., & Todd, J. (2004). The Roots of Intense Ethnic Conflict may not in fact be Ethnic: Categories, Communities and Path Dependence. *European Journal of Sociology*, 45(2), 209–232. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003975604001432>
- Rumelili, B. (2014). Kimlik. In Ş. Kardaş & A. Balcı (Eds.), *Uluslararası İlişkilere Giriş: Tarih, Teori, Kavram ve Konular* (pp. 377–385). Küre Yayınları.
- Sambanis, N. (2001). Do Ethnic and Nonethnic Civil Wars Have the Same Causes?: A Theoretical and Empirical Inquiry. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 45(3), 259–282. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002701045003001>
- Sandole, D. J. D. (2003). Virulent Ethnocentrism and Conflict Intractability: Puzzles and Challenges for 3rd Party Intervenors. *Peace and Conflict Studies*, 10(1), 72–86. <https://doi.org/10.46743/1082-7307/2003.1032>
- Sarkees, M. R., Wayman, F. W., & Singer, J. D. (2003). Inter-State, Intra-State, and Extra-State Wars: A Comprehensive Look at Their Distribution over Time, 1816-1997. *International Studies Quarterly*, 47(1), 49–70. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2478.4701003>
- Sells, M. A. (1996). *The Bridge Betrayed: Religion and Genocide in Bosnia*. University of California Press.
- Senehi, J., Scott, I. M., Byrne, S., & Matyók, T. G. (2023). Introduction: Peacebuilding and Ethnic Conflict. In J. Senehi, I. M. Scott, S. Byrne, & T. G. Matyók (Eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Peacebuilding and Ethnic Conflict* (pp. 1–13). Routledge.
- Sisk, T. D. (2022). Power Sharing After Civil Wars: Matching Problems to Solutions. In R. Mac Ginty & A. Wanis-St. John (Eds.), *Contemporary Peacemaking: Peace Processes, Peacebuilding and Conflict* (pp. 407–425). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-82962-9_20
- Smith, A. D. (2010). *Nationalism: Theory, Ideology, History* (2nd edition). Polity Press.
- Snyder, J. (1993). Nationalism and The Crisis of Post-Soviet State. In M. E. Brown (Ed.), *Ethnic Conflict and International Security* (pp. 79–101). Princeton University Press.
- Stroschein, S. (2005). Examining ethnic violence and partition in Bosnia-Herzegovina. *Ethnopolitics*, 4(1), 49–64. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17449050500072655>
- Taras, R., & Ganguly, R. (2016). *Understanding ethnic conflict* (Fourth edition). Routledge.
- Todorova, M. (2009). *Imagining the Balkans*. Oxford University Press.
- Touquet, H. (2015). Non-ethnic Mobilisation in Deeply Divided Societies, the Case of the Sarajevo Protests. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 67(3), 388–408. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09668136.2015.1019430>
- Tunçer-Kilavuz, I. (2011). Understanding Civil War: A Comparison of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 63(2), 263–290. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09668136.2011.547698>
- Vaughan, K. (2018). Who Benefits from Consociationalism? Religious Disparities in Lebanon's Political System. *Religions*, 9(51), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel9020051>
- Vulliamy, E. (1994). *Seasons in Hell: Understanding Bosnia's War* (First Edition). St Martin's Press.
- Waeber, O. (2008). Toplumsal Güvenliğin Değişen Gündemi. *Uluslararası İlişkiler Dergisi*, 5(18), 151–178.
- Weidmann, N. B. (2011). Violence “from above” or “from below”? The Role of Ethnicity in Bosnia's Civil War. *The Journal of Politics*, 73(4), 1178–1190. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022381611000831>
- Wimmer, A. (2013). *Waves of War: Nationalism, State Formation, and Ethnic Exclusion in the Modern World*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139198318>
- Wolff, S. (2006). *Ethnic Conflict: A Global Perspective*. Oxford University Press.
- Yılmaz, M. E. (2007). *Soğuk Savaş Sonrası Dönemde Etnik Çatışmalar: Etnik Çatışmaların Nedenleri ve Etnik Barışın Tesisi*. Nobel.



Journal of Humanity, Peace and Justice

Research Article

Open Access

“Crime of the Century”: Israel’s State Terrorism and International Law Violations in Gaza Strip



Gökhan Ak¹  

¹ Istanbul Topkapi University, Faculty of Economics, Administrative and Social Sciences, Department of Political Science and International Relations (English), Istanbul, Türkiye

Abstract


The military wing of the Hamas organization executed several assaults that had been planned for many years on different locations in the South-Israel territories on October 7, 2023 at 6:00 LT. Very swiftly and without hesitation, for the first time since the Yom Kippur war declaration in 1973, Israel officially declared war against not only Hamas, but also against all civilian people living in the Gaza Strip. Israel first violently attacked the Northern Gaza Strip in an unrelenting, unpredictable show of force that had not been seen before, carrying on with its violence at an increasing rate and effectiveness to the time of this writing. However, the Israel Defense Force (IDF), as the military of the State of Israel, demonstrated a large-scale disproportionate use of force in the fight against terrorism in the Gaza Strip. Thus, the State of Israel and its army surprised the entire world in their attacks against all of the non-combatants in the Gaza Strip without any target discrimination, not only intentionally, consciously, and unconstrained, but also violently, inhumanely, and without any recognizable pattern. All those wittingly and deliberately executed assaults on the civilians and non-combat infrastructure (such as hospitals, religious sites, schools, etc.) in the Gaza Strip proved that the main aim of Israel was not to fight against terrorism in the region, but to execute a purposeful ethnic cleansing in the whole Gaza territory. Since it can be seen that previous research into Israel’s crimes against humanity concerning brutal and unlawful assaults towards the Palestinian territories were not so extensive in the related literature, this study will likely contribute in that vein to the field of social science. The aim of this research is to explore and put forth Israel’s possible war crimes against non-combatants in the Gaza Strip in the context of state terrorism and make evaluations on their possible impact on international politics.

Keywords

Israel, Gaza Strip · War · War Crimes · State Terrorism · Crimes against Humanity.



“ Citation: Ak, G. (2024). “Crime of the Century”: Israel’s State terrorism and international law violations in Gaza strip. *Journal of Humanity, Peace and Justice*, 1(1), 65-95. <https://doi.org/10.26650/hupez.2024.10.1.1468793>

© This work is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License. 

© 2024. Ak, G.

✉ Corresponding author: Gökhan Ak gokhanak@topkapi.edu.tr



“Crime of the Century”: Israel’s State Terrorism and International Law Violations in Gaza Strip

“I cannot understand the passive response of the whole civilized world to this modern barbarism. Does the world not see that Hitler is aiming for war?”

Albert Einstein – 1933¹

Nature itself, including wildlife, wild animals, wild plants, and wild natural disasters, were never a direct threat to humanity since the beginning of our history as nature never purposely and intentionally harbors or fosters malicious actions and assaults against humans. However, humanity had been the victim of inhumane violence since the beginning of mankind (Lenta & Cormos, 2017). Nevertheless, this issue has caused a great dilemma for the thousands of years of our history because everything in nature is the outcome of something else, which presents the issue of human nature (Luban, 2004). It is thus difficult to say “in the history of civilization” because it is likely that the brutal nature of humanity has wiped out the history of civilization many times and for centuries.² What is even more painful and ironic about this issue is that neither the modern international law nor the supranational common institutions of humanity can prevent the consequences of this wild nature of mankind. Thus, armed conflicts, the best known of which is war, between societies has never ceased nor been prevented for centuries.

The notions of “conflict” and “war” is one of those oldest concepts of human life in our history. Even in the Prehistoric era (from 2.5 million B.C. to 600 B.C.), there were clashes, conflicts, and wars between early humans.³ Such a trend appears to be the unchangeable fate of mankind to many who work within the fields of political science and sociology, since politics has always been the symbolic origin of “power” and “rule” among human communities, giving an almost “divine” value to “race” and “nation” (Weitz, 2003). Thus, political issues, including state crimes, brutal violence, and crimes against humanity, have been directly related with human societies⁴ forever, as politics is namely a societal structure, as Luban (2004, pp. 90-91) emphasized:

Crimes against humanity assault one particular aspect of human being, namely our character as political animals. We are creatures whose nature compels us to live socially, but who cannot do so without artificial political organization that inevitably poses threats to our well-being, and, at the limit, to our very survival. Crimes against humanity represent the worst of those threats; they are the limiting case of politics gone cancerous. Precisely because we cannot live without politics, we exist under the permanent threat that politics will turn cancerous and the indispensable institutions of organized political life will destroy us. That is why all humankind shares an interest in repressing these crimes.

¹One of his amazing commentaries on Nazism; and for more information, see, (Pais, 1994)

²For a massive and admirably inclusive work, see, (Shelton, 2005)

³For more details, see, (Braudel, 1994; Bulliet et. al., 2005; Holton & Nasson, 2009; Quigley, 1979)

⁴Though an early and eclectic treatment, as a source still widely read and cited, see, (Chalk & Jonassohn, 1990) Also, for one of the best edited volumes on the issue, diverse and vigorously written throughout, see, (Gellately & Kiernan, 2003)



Therefore, being the best-organized political entity of our times, the states and their politicians should become responsible and rational while approaching to sort out both inter-societal and international issues which cause conflict. The state cannot act asymmetrically in coping with those conflicting issues and relations in society. If the state does so, then it will be the same as the origin of organized crime produced by an illegal organization, such as a terrorist organization, since terror is the best example of an asymmetric threat of our modern times. Herewith, the modern literature of political theory has added a new term into its toolbox in this manner, i.e. “state terrorism.”⁵ Thus, it should become a crystal-clear fact for the modern international community that a state could apply an official counter-terrorism procedure while dealing with a terrorist organization. In this context, it is ultimately vital to highlight that the main obstacles in constructing an indictment of terrorism against a state (Claridge, 1996) should dictate that the state is not a terrorist organization (Blakeley, 2009).

However, societies around the world have observed that state terrorism has been applied in one way or another at various cases over the history of mankind. This was a very common case during the discovery of new continents, such as Americas, or during the era of colonialism of the so-called great Powers of Europa, and many other cases that we could not recount here which have lasted for centuries.⁶ Therefore, it is possible to claim that state terrorism has been a systematic method of oppression for all those political entities ranging from ancient civilizations to empires and nation-states who seek hegemony, power, and rule. In this context, probably the most hateful, disgusting, and painful state crime against humanity (Bartov et. al., 2002; Jalloh, 2013), or namely, “state terrorism,” in world history relates to “genocide,” which is an outlawed act (Irvin-Erickson, 2017) which attempts the total annihilation of ethnic/national/disadvantageous groups. The term genocide comes from Raphaël Lemkin, while its official definition comes from international law with Article 2⁷ of the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (CPPCG) (Schabas, 2009) of 1948.⁸

In this vein, the term “genocide” invented by the Polish Jewish lawyer Raphaël Lemkin in 1943,⁹ was defined by the author as: “The practice of extermination of nations and ethnic groups as carried out by the invaders.” (Lemkin, 1944, pp. xi-xii) Lemkin devised the term genocide as a response to the organized, mechanized, and institutionalized killings that were part of the Nazi Regime during the Second World War (Hobson, 2019, p. 11). Even though we differentiate genocide from Holocaust, all the mass murders committed by the Nazis during the Second World War were open acts of ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity in

⁵For more details, see, (Stohl, 1984, pp. 37-52; Glover, 1991, pp. 256-275)

⁶As one of “the most comprehensive treatment of Western responsibility for mass atrocity yet published” (stated by Richard Falk), see, (Jones, 2004). Also see, (Mann, 2005)

⁷Article II - In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such: (a) Killing members of the group; (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group. See for detail, (United Nations, 1951, pp. 278-322)

⁸“Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide”, Approved and proposed for signature and ratification or accession by General Assembly resolution 260 A (III) of 9 December 1948 Entry into force: 12 January 1951, in accordance with article XIII, Available at https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocity-crimes/Doc1_ConventiononthePreventionandPunishmentoftheCrimeofGenocide.pdf accessed on Dec. 22, 2023.

⁹Raphael Lemkin published his famous book ‘Axis Rule in Occupied Europe’ in 1944. He coined the new word “genocide” in his book’s preface dated November 15, 1943.



the context of genocide; hence, according to Lemkin, techniques of genocide could occur in various fields of human and social life, comprising political, social, cultural, economic, biological, physical, religious, and moral categories (Lemkin, 1944, pp. 82-89).

It is thus possible to observe previous instances in history of targeted actions aimed at the destruction of particular groups of people, including acts of various genocidal violence and massacres against indigenous individuals, such as: the Native Americans (Stannard, 1993), Africans (Kutlu, 2021), in the Americas (including Brazil, Paraguay, and the United States), Australia, Africa, Southeast Asia, Middle East (Jones, 2006), or genocide against Jews, Romans, Gypsies, some other small ethnic folks, disabled people in Europa, as well as the “Holocaust” (Hewitt, 2004), the systematic mass extermination of European Jewry by the Hitler’s Nazi regime in Germany before and during the Second World War (1933-1941-1945) (Bauer, 1980, p. 44), or the mass annihilation acts in the Russian territory against varied ethnic folks before, during, and after the Second World War, the Cambodian Genocide of 1975-1979, the Rwandan Genocide of 1994, and the Genocide in Bosnia of 1992-1995 (Rosenbaum, 1998) after the Second Great War (Sadat, 2013). All of these genocidal acts are certainly and without doubt “crimes of the centuries” committed against humanity (See, Badar, 2004; Ambos, 2011; Tekin, 2015).

Thus, the world witnessed all types of crimes against humanity committed during the Second World War, especially towards those millions of Jews exposed to miscellaneous mass atrocities by Hitler’s Nazi regime, such as murder, extermination, enslavement, deportation, imprisonment, torture, rape (and other gender-based or sex crimes), group-based persecution, enforced disappearance, apartheid, and “other inhumane acts of a similar character intentionally causing great suffering or serious injury to body or to mental or physical health (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, no date). However, although Palestinians and Jews have been the common combative sides of a competing history since the founding of the State of Israel on the Palestine lands in 1948 (Berry & Philo, 2006), witnessing similar mass atrocities being committed by the State of Israel today against civilians residing in the Gaza Strip represents a truly frightening, devilishly horrific, and surprisingly ironic situation for many people around the world. That is the clear-cut case, because Jews were persecuted by Nazis who availed themselves of all means of genocidal atrocity, crime, tyranny, cruelty, and oppression between 1933-1945, and today Jews commit the same mass and genocidal persecutions, crimes, tyranny, cruelty, and oppression against the civilians of the Gaza Strip. This is a great and evilly ironic dilemma for the Jews and their state, since the State of Israel commits a “barbarization of warfare” (Jones, 2006, pp. 53-54) against the whole non-combatants residing in the Gaza Strip. Therefore, it is frightening to consider that the State of Israel has turned down a dark and sinister path on which there is no return.

Today, thousands of people living in the Gaza strip are ironically subjected to the same state oppression, terror and violent cruelty that the Jews were subjected to between 1933-1945 by the Nazis, but ironically, this time it is by the Jews themselves; hence, we witness a frightening similarity between state terrorism implemented by the Nazis against Jews for 12 years and ironically today, by the Jews against civilian residents of Gaza since October 7, 2023. Thus, the assaults of the Israel Defense Force which appear to be aiming at a total ethnic cleansing against the three million civilians of the Gaza Strip coincide with the brutal and



inhumanely violent Nazi war crimes that the Jews were subjected to during the Second World War, in terms of content, purpose and intention. In this line, it is possible to claim that those non-combatant civilians of the exclave-land of the Gaza Strip are currently pushed to their limits of existence in despair, destitute, and misery in front of the eyes of the international community, including its organizations and bodies of law.

In this context, after this introduction, the study will attempt to explore the conceptual basis of Israel’s “so-called” war on the Gaza Strip in the first chapter. After, the study will analyze some concepts, such as “State Terrorism,” “War Crimes,” and “Crimes against Humanity” in line with the Israel’s activities in the region. The study will conclude with the main findings, evaluations, views, and comments regarding the main analysis of the research problems.

Methodology and Literature Survey of the Research

The main problematic of this study will rest upon attempting to put forth Israel’s possible war crimes against non-combatants in the Gaza Strip in the context of state terrorism and make evaluations on their possible impact on international politics.

The content of this research includes Israel, Palestine, the Gaza Strip, Israel’s state terrorism towards Palestinians of the Gaza Strip and occupied lands, Israel’s policies towards the Palestinian territories, and Israel’s violent crimes against Palestine, including war crimes and ethnic cleansing.

The importance of this study rests upon three basic aspects. Firstly, the latest war in the Gaza Strip has no similarity with the previous Israeli attacks on Palestine in terms of military operational goals, aims, and dimension. Secondly, in this context, Israel has begun to commit a brutal and violent war against people residing in the Gaza Strip aiming at the total extermination of the local residents. Thirdly, the state terrorism, crimes against humanity, and war crimes of the IDF have peaked in their assaults against the civilians of the Gaza Strip. Thus, even though there has been a wide range of research about Israel’s state terrorism and crimes in the Palestine territories in the related literature of the past and present, this research will also contribute to the related field of the social sciences as being the first clear example of genocide acts perpetuated by Israel so far in one of the whole Palestine territory like the Gaza Strip.

This study adopted a qualitative research methodology which was based on a deductive approach. The study employs the concepts of: a “descriptive” explanation of the concepts and relationships while dealing with the subject within the conceptual framework of the research, “causal” when looking into the facts behind the events, “theoretical” when extracting principles from the events that have occurred, and “historical” when examining the effect of past events and the effects of the current situation. Scientific studies based on information obtained from sources, such as libraries, archives, and the internet research related to the problematic of the study have all been employed at various degrees. Such scientific research methods as document analysis, content analysis, discourse analysis, grouping, and comparison were also used. In addition, the advanced research methods of hermeneutics and dialectics were also utilized in the secondary methodological context.

Within the scope of the literature review of the research, which generally adopted qualitative research methodology, secondary data sources were mainly used in terms of resource use within the framework



of obtaining scientific data. In this context, scientific (e-)books, scientific (e-)articles, scientific (published e-)dissertations, scientific proceeding (e-)books, and scientific (e-)reports of international organizations, NGOs, and think-tanks that were obtained from public and university libraries and/or virtual environments related to the subject were given priority, and accordingly included in the research for the scientific data. The aforementioned sources were then scanned and analyzed. In this way, the main and secondary sources that would support the findings of the research were obtained and read; the information in the sources was classified in accordance with the tentative outlines of the research. Everything was subjected to an analytical review and was imported into the research in accordance with ethical publication rules.

The Conceptual Basis of Israel’s “So-Called” War on the Gaza Strip

The concept of “war” is probably the utmost serious and critical event in the history of human civilization (See Brownlie, 1963; Von Clausewitz, 1976; Smith, 2007; Van Creveld, 1991; Gal-Or & Giesen, 2007; Ören, 2022). We hereby use the term “the history of human civilization” instead of “world history” on purpose, since war is great dilemma due to the fact that it is one of the most contractionary events in human history that contains intense and multilateral contrasts. In this context, states sometimes experience the reality that on one hand, war destroys civilizations, but on the other hand, it boosts the progress of the civilizations by enabling new scientific and technologic inventions throughout every aspect of life. Nevertheless, it is critical to remember that war is still the last resort in international relations to resolve mutual conflicts or, on the contrary, to realize national targets.

However, it would be better to not forget before declaring war that there is no “winner,” since war represents the most destructive and darkest sides of the human spirit by making use of all of our invented acts of savagery, atrocity, and brutality:

War is the spectacular and bloody projection of our everyday life. [We] can see what creates wars, and if we are interested in stopping wars, then we can begin to transform ourselves, who are the causes of war. (...) (Krishnamurti, 1954, p. 182); and without a transformation in ourselves, there are bound to be national and racial antagonisms, the childish quarrelling over ideologies, the multiplication of soldiers, the saluting of flags, and all the many brutalities that go to create organized murder (Krishnamurti, 1981, p. 57). (...) [Thus], what causes war –religious, political or economic? Obviously belief, either in nationalism, in an ideology, or in a particular dogma. (...) Obviously what causes war is the desire for power, (...) also the disease called nationalism (...) All these are the causes of war; (...) if you are greedy for power, (...) you are bound to produce a society which will result in destruction (Krishnamurti, 1954, p. 183).

Beside all these, “declaring war” is a much more serious matter than “making war” or fighting, in terms of its consequences. It is due to the fact that the state, while declaring war, should also become ready as well as discreet about the rules of fighting. This is because declaring war also includes committing to comply with the rules of war, or, in other words, agreeing to undertake all the legal conditions of the law of war. Those rules mainly include the prohibition of state terrorism, war crimes, and crimes against humanity during the



fighting. Therefore, if the state does not comply with those rules or violates some of them, especially when those violations are committed on the non-combatants, namely civilians, then it would mean that the state is practicing terrorism; in other words, it becomes an act of state terrorism.

In addition, every action of a state contrary to international law requires the international responsibility of that state to accord with international law. In this vein, a state bears responsibility for its war crimes and crimes against humanity and other unjust acts against non-combatants. Thus, in the aftermath of a war declaration, no matter what its reason will be, the state could not apply state terrorism and commit war crimes and/or crimes against humanity during the war. However, this does not appear to be the case for the still-ongoing war which was declared by Israel against the Gaza Strip, in the context of fighting against Hamas (BBC News, 2024), the acronym for Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiya (Islamic Resistance Movement).¹⁰

As it is known, the conflict between the local Palestinians residents and the State of Israel¹¹ have been ongoing since the establishment of Israel on May 14, 1948 (Metz, 1990; Adelman, 2008). There have been many armed clashes, fights, and wars between the Arab States and Israel after this event (Ben-Yehuda & Sandler, 2002; Bickerton, 2009). Many diplomatic efforts have also been carried out to solve the deep-rooted and decades-ongoing controversies and disputes in the region. The Arab-Israeli conflict was also nourished by all sorts of international terrorism in the Middle East as well as Israel’s revisionist and expansionist policies, including constant and brutal assaults on Palestinians for decades. Thus, the Middle East region, and particularly Palestine and Israel, have never been able to achieve well-being, stability, and peace since 1948. For this reason, the outcome of the struggle has been the regular shifting of the political borders in favor of Israel.

Considering these conflicts in the Middle East that have been ongoing for decades, the world has sometimes been anxious about the societal strife and contention between Palestinians and the State of Israel, as the tactics and behavior of the Israeli military and police forces’ against civilians in the Palestinian territories and occupied Palestinian lands has mostly been brutal and violent. However, these occurrences are the clear outcome of the state policies adopted by Israel and its governments since 1948. Because Israel has been so eager in expanding its territories across Palestinian regions since its establishment, their state terrorism has become a normal attitude for Israel, resulting in the fact that there has not been an official, independent, and sovereign State of Palestine from then until now.¹²

However, with the declaration of war in the context of fighting against terrorism by the State of Israel against the Hamas organization located in the Gaza Strip on October 7, 2023, a new era has commenced in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Interestingly, Israel has officially declared war for the first time since the Yom Kippur war declaration of 1973. Besides this unique case, following the horrible attacks of Hamas, without hesitation, the war declared by the Israeli government on October 7, 2023 was against not only Hamas, but

¹⁰The US State Department designated HAMAS as a foreign terrorist organization in October 1997. See for detail, (National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC), 2022)

¹¹See for detail, (Tessler, 2009; Laqueur & Schueftan, 2016; Elmal, 2023)

¹²“Lebanon’s Ambassador to the Netherlands, Abdel Sattar Issa, stated in his speech at the International Court of Justice (ICJ); “Lebanon and more than 140 members of the UN recognized the state of Palestine and East Jerusalem as its capital.” For more details, see, (Haber7Com, 2024a)



also all the civilians residing in the Gaza Strip. They justified this because the Gaza Strip is the main location of the Hamas organization, with many of its members located in the area.

However, this situation is not a valid reason for the Israeli government to declare war on the whole Gaza Strip claiming justification that many members of reside in the area. The Gaza Strip is a tiny coastal enclave¹³ land in the Levant bordering the Mediterranean Sea (40 km coastline) as well as two countries: Egypt (13 km borderline) and Israel (59 km borderline) (The CIA World Factbook, 2024). However, the Gaza Strip is a region with a length of 40 km and a width of 11 km, with a very densely populated area, of 2.3 million people residing in a total land area of 360 km² (The Associated Press, 2023). Thus, all of these extreme attributes make the Gaza Strip one of the most unique territories of the world.

Decades ago, Malcolm X (1990, p. 149) stated: “(...) Now, you’re not supposed to be so blind with patriotism that you can’t face reality. Wrong is wrong, no matter who does it or who says it...” Therefore, when we strive to decipher the hidden-agenda behind why the State of Israel has been so violent in the Gaza Strip, or what the final goals of the State of Israel could be, we are likely to explore a dark state bigotry, a blind state fanaticism, and a wild fundamentalism in the name of a “fake patriotism.” On account of that, it is a crystal-clear fact that the State of Israel is clearly acting from a wrong basis, no matter how it is handled or how it is accepted. In this context, the research will currently follow on by exploring Israel’s war on Gaza Strip in terms of state terrorism, war crimes and crimes committed against humanity.

“State Terrorism” and Israel’s “So-Called” War on Gaza

Terrorism is one of the most heinous and despicable crimes in history. Unlike other horrible crimes and threats, terrorism is uniquely normless, unpredictable, and unconstrained as an asymmetric threat. Thus, terrorism can be found in the toolbox of asymmetric kinds of warfare (Stepanova, 2008). Terror is a disgusting course of action to apply “threat and violence” to enable oppression, fear, horror, and anxiety, on people, animals, plants, and nature, or, in short, all living bodies of the world. The aim of terrorist action could be defined as achieving social, political, military, or economic gains (Şimşek, 2016, pp. 320).

The term “terror” is derived from the Latin word “terrere,” which means “extreme fear and anxiety, terror felt in the face of an unknown and unpredictable danger” (Öktem, 2004, p. 133). However, interestingly there are approximately 200 different definitions of the concept of terrorism, which has occupied the agenda of societies, states, and relations between states for centuries. Thus, terrorism, as a crime against humanity, could be recounted in its simplest definition: “Terrorism is the act of using force or threatening people in order to intimidate, deter, appall, overawe and discourage them into adopting certain thoughts and behaviors.” (Yılmaz, 2011, p. 32). In this simple definition, terrorism is depicted as an asymmetric, but direct means of intimidating the society, and using force for this purpose. Wherewithal, the terms of “terror” and “terrorism” are different concepts. Terror includes all kinds of violent acts and can be defined as organized and unregulated violent acts; yet terrorism is comprised of activities that target the current political power and regime, based on the violent actions of more than one person organized around an ideology that include a

¹³Not enclave, because the Gaza Strip has been under the de facto governing authority of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) since 2007. For more details, see, (The CIA World Factbook, 2024)



political element, that is, has an ideology and is directed to destroy the existing system through violence. The concept of terrorism is used in a very general way to express a long-term state of fear and terror; thus, the concept of terrorism refers to the strategy that aims to bring about this situation (Caşın, 2008, pp. 37, 102). As seen, while terror is a form of action, terrorism is a system which includes organized, systematic, and long-term actions (Demir, 2017, p. 8).

While terrorism is one of the most disgusting criminal acts found in human societies (Newman, 2006), there is also a very significant and critical aspect of terrorism. At the same time, definitions of the terms terror, terrorism, terrorist organization, terrorist generally indicate meanings which depend on the side they are viewed from. Almost every country seeks to define terrorism in a context appropriate to both its national goals and interests and also its own internal dynamics and external relations. Thus, when we consider the relations between states in accordance with our topic, the fact that there is no common definition of terrorism in the international political world (Saul, 2005, pp. 57-58) as well as international law (Galicki, 2005), or that each state utilizes terrorism in its own way and has different approaches to different terrorist activities, is one of the most disgusting aspects of terrorism. Accordingly, terrorism has become one of the most controversial crimes in today’s modern world (Lawless, 2008).

The terrorist attacks that took place in the United States of America (USA) on September 11, 2001, as well as the subsequent terrorist attacks in Southeast Asia, the Caucasus, the Middle East, and Europe, showed that the threats to the international community could come not only from wars between states, but also to a significant extent, they can originate from non-state actors. The material resources, weapons, and propaganda opportunities that terrorist organizations have acquired through their ability to operate without any area restrictions have caused terrorist acts to increase in recent times, with this phenomenon becoming perceived as a significant threat to international peace and security. In this context, the international community has observed for the last 30 years that, while some states directly support international terrorism from time to time as a method of political struggle to achieve their national interests, some states provide indirect support to international terrorism by tolerating terrorist organizations that organize, shelter, and operate in their countries (Kedikli, 2011, pp. 1-4). However, one of the unpredictable cases in considering who commits or supports terrorism on the state-level becomes what should be done if that unpredictable actor was state itself? The acts of the state that constitute direct or indirect support to international terrorism cause the violation of some obligations of international law.

In the last a few decades, terrorism has emerged as an effective parameter in shaping nation states politically, socially, economically, and culturally. Thus, in the recent decade, we observed that the states that have been the dominant actors in the international system use terrorism to shape their domestic and foreign policies, fostering a sense of fear and panic among their own citizens or the people of another nation by both directing the mass media and also directly using hard-power, including all sorts of conventional weapons. It is seen that nation states, which are influential in the global system, have transitioned from the fight against terrorism to state terrorism, with international organizations such as the United Nations being used in favor of advocating those horrible acts of state terrorism acts. These states which commit terrorism against any other state or individuals claim that they are fighting against terrorism; thus, the permanent



members of the UN Security Council (UNSC), namely the USA, UK, France, RF, and PRC, support those state terrorism assaults from the aggressor state by refusing any cease-fire or armistice between combatants. Thus, the five permanent members of the UNSC disregard and ignore all those acts of state terrorism, war crimes, and crimes against humanity committed by the aggressor states. Eventually, this situation turns all of them, aggressor states and international organizations, into a ruthless terrorist organization. State terrorism, defined as acts of terrorism directly carried out, encouraged, financed, and/or committed by governments, is a kind of terrorism carried out by the government against its own citizens, the people of another state, or in support of international terrorism. State terrorism is similar to non-state terrorism in that it involves politically, ideologically, or religiously-inspired acts of violence against individuals or groups. The main difference between state terrorism and non-state terrorism is that violence is carried out by the agents of the state itself (Yetgin & Baştuğ, 2021, pp. 955-956).

State terrorism refers to acts of terrorism carried out by a state against another state or its own citizens. It has been defined as premeditated, politically-motivated violence carried out by undercover agents against non-combatant targets (Pillar, 2001). It is implied that an attack by a government’s officially uniformed or other identifiable armed forces or state security is not terrorism (Falk, 2002: 11). These views are based on the condition that attack and action plans are made by secret agents in order to define it as state terrorism. However, in today’s international relations and politics, it can be seen that uniformed units can be used in addition to the action and attack plans of secret agents in the execution of state terrorism (Yetgin & Baştuğ, 2021, p. 960). Thus, when a state commits terrorism against another state or people of a political entity, then that aggressor state is responsible for the violation of international law. Thereby, as the subject of international law, if a state acts in violation of its international obligations, the responsibility of that state within the framework of the institution of international responsibility also comes to the fore. The rules of international liability law are a means of ensuring that actors within the domain of international law respect these principles (See Jennings & Watts, 1992, p. 500; Shaw, 1997, p. 541; Pazarıcı, 1994, p. 151), and those actors should consider the possible legal consequences of their aggressive acts and implementations more seriously.

Despite this, it is observed that terrorism practiced by states in almost every region of the world is more deadly and destructive than terrorism practiced by non-state actors. The main reason for this is as follows: Terrorism practiced by states is relatively superior in terms of the number of weapons, equipment, intelligence information, and personnel, and thus cannot be compared with non-state actors. Hence, although the terror practiced by states may appear to be a legal or just war, it is actually a kind of terror perpetrated by states against civilians (non-combatants) or soldiers (combatants), and from this point, state terrorism is subject to the laws of war due to the responsibilities of states regarding international law (Koncagül, 2021, p. 325).

As known, the USA and the UK are the biggest supporters of the State of Israel in all aspects of global relations (Freedman, 2012; Kolander, 2020), with the whole of Europe also contributing in this regard (Greene & Rynhold, 2018). In this context, Chomsky (2002, pp. 224-226) draws attention to the fact that the United States, which he identified as a sponsor of state terrorism, does not give any state the right to defend against



itself American aggression, which has become a doctrine, especially since the 1980s. The message of the doctrine is clear: no one has the right to defend against US terrorist attacks, and the US is a terrorist state “by right.” Accordingly, the US is legitimizing the organization of a terrorist army of proxies to subjugate unsubmitive people (Yağciner, 2006, pp. 106-107). Therefore, interestingly, it is a crystal-clear fact that, since 1967, Israel had committed crimes of aggression by illegally occupying the Palestinian territories, including the Holy City of Jerusalem, before annexing those lands to its original sovereign state territory (Kişi, 2023). The strange, meaningful, and ironic part of this matter is that the State of Israel has never faced with legal consequences of its practices that can be certainly identified as “state terrorism” in the occupied Palestinian territories as well as Jerusalem and West Bank (Antolinez, 2021). However, all of the evidence points to the fact that Israeli actions against Palestinians over the last several decades make them the aggressor of state terrorism. Accordingly, the entire international community has also concluded that the State of Israel has continued the same state terrorism approach since October 7, 2023 in their attacks against the whole Gaza Strip.

In this vein, as a striking outcome of this series of analysis and evaluations, it is valid to claim that there are strong reasons to consider the current Israeli assaults against all of the people living in the Gaza Strip as state terrorism. This is because of their “state terror” or “politics of violence,” actions which can be comprehensively defined as the use of military units other than legal security forces to protect the security of the state and public order, which is a phenomenon that emerged within the framework of internal elements, such as revolutions and uprisings. Today, such a policy has become the conflict strategy in line with the interests of Israel (Yağciner, 2006, pp. 103-105). Therefore, all of the violent assaults of the State of Israel against the Gaza Strip can be considered state terrorism based on the following criteria.

(1) In its simplest sense, state terrorism is a strategy of violence used by a State to achieve political goals (Koncağül, 2021, p. 331), with such policies being openly depicted by Israeli media:

According to the news of the Hebrew newspaper Maariv, Netanyahu prepared a draft road map with a group of businessmen that he will follow after ending his attacks on the Gaza Strip, where the humanitarian disaster is taking place. According to the first phase of the plan shared by Netanyahu with US officials and relevant parties, a military administration to be established in the Gaza Strip after the attacks end will handle the administrative affairs of the humanitarian aid and civilian population that will enter there during the transition period. (...) According to the plan, although the military administration will end its mandate, Israel will retain the right to intervene in Gaza, as in the occupied West Bank, under security pretexts. (TRTNews, 2024)

(2) We observe from the official declarations of the Israeli government that the State of Israel’s national interests are in line with its final national aims towards the Gaza Strip, which overlap with the state strategy highlighted above in (1): *“In the statement made by the Israeli Prime Minister’s Office on February 9, it was noted that Netanyahu instructed the army and security organization to prepare the necessary plan to attack the south of the Gaza Strip and displace approximately 1.5 million Palestinians who have taken refuge there.”* (Dünya Gazetta, 2024).



(3) We then observe that in order to achieve their national goals and objectives by carrying out a conscious and mass ethnic cleansing against the people of Gaza, the State of Israel has perpetuated its violent, brutal, and unmerciful aggressions and invasions against all of the non-combatants, namely civilians, residing in Gaza Strip regardless of target:

According to the news of Israeli State Television KAN, Netanyahu gave information about the attacks on the Gaza Strip in his meeting with the ministers in his government. “It will take six months for the Israeli army to finish the third phase of the war that started in the north of the Gaza Strip.” Netanyahu said, “As we said before, we said that the air (attacks) part would take 3 weeks, and so it happened. We said that the second part, consisting of land maneuvers, would take 3 months, and so it happened. Now, the third part, ‘control and purification’, will take 6 months.” he said. (NTV News, 2024a)

Therefore, it is clear that what the State of Israel’s aggressive and violent attacks against the Gaza Strip since October 7, 2023 is an example of ruthless state terrorism. There are many legal grounds to recount related to the state terrorism carried out by the State of Israel in the airstrikes and bombings of the Gaza Strip, which have left at least 36,379 civilians killed and 82,407 wounded as of June 2024, according to the Palestinian Health Ministry (Marsi et al., 2024).

Likewise, the next section of this study will discuss the issue of how this state terrorism perpetuated by the State of Israel in the name of their “so-called” war against Hamas has turned into an ongoing sequence of war crimes committed in the Gaza Strip since October 7, 2023.

“War Crimes” and Israel’s “So-Called” War on Gaza

War crimes are one of the most disgusting criminal acts of international relations. However, considering that war itself relates to killing, the crimes committed during war are much more serious and become a form of inhumane behavior multiplied, like a ‘crime’ within a crime. Because of this nature of war, many people are left wondering who can charge a nation state with a criminal act. This is one of the greatest dilemmas faced by humanity, as people have been committing such crimes against others since the dawn of time.

Completely rejecting the horrors and mass destruction of war and wishing for their elimination is not enough to put an end to wars in the world. Against those who argue that there are some values that people fight for, Magee (2000, p. 65) gives the best possible answer: “(...) *all wars are immoral and evil, no matter how sublime the things they fight for are.*” However, even such humane feelings have not been able to end wars, and even will not be able to in the future. War is, in fact, perhaps a struggle that human beings wage with their own souls first. However, since wars have been an integral part of human history and will probably never end, humanity has a responsibility to ensure that wars are fought at the highest possible moral level, at least to reduce the brutality of war. In this case, one might ask how it is possible to wage war without causing harm. There are those who argue that there no such provision is necessary and that everything is permissible in war, and there are those who say that rules, limitations, or moral concerns cannot (or should not) be talked about during war. For them, the battlefield is too heavy and terrible for a soldier to consider moral concerns: “(...) *once one starts fighting, there are no moral rules.*” (Magee 2000, p. 65) Soldiers will



kill without questioning, without being held responsible, without any concern for the values they fight for. There is no room for morality in war. This view turns the war into a complete “hell” (Sönmez, 2019, p. 31). On the other hand, there are those who take a middle path and believe that war can be waged for the sake of some important values, but war cannot be waged independently of moral concerns. Therefore, making the decision to go to war, declaring war, the methods to be used in war, and the responsibility of each person who dies on the battlefield must be the humane and legal responsibility of someone or others. Thus, even wars have limitations, morality, and virtue (Hathaway et.al., 2019).

When significant changes to the approach, definition, and nature of war took place in the beginning of the 19th century, it was witnessed that with these changes, civilians, rather than soldiers, who were traditionally the primary actors of wars, began to become targets of severe human rights violations. The destructive effects of wars began to be felt in cities and other public spaces starting from the mid-19th century, necessitating the emergence of some regulations regarding wars for the first time in human history (Karabulut, 2022). That brutal applications of war reached a critical point that required an answer in the aftermath of the two great World Wars that incurred major crimes against humanity, including genocides (Aksoy Ercümen, 2016).

In this context, it can be said that the first contracts regarding the “law of war,” which can be examined within the general law of states, began to emerge in the mid-19th century (Karabulut, 2022). As a result of those two centuries of war, the need for an international regulation regarding the rules to be followed during armed conflict and the protection of the parties or civilians emerged. In line with this need, the Geneva Convention, the first of which was achieved in 1864, was developed by taking into account the changing and diversifying threat elements according to modern conditions, with four subsequent important agreements prepared in this context being signed by many countries. These conventions form the basis of international humanitarian law today (Aksar, 2004; Aksoy Ercümen, 2016). The Fourth Geneva Convention is a completely new agreement and was adopted as a result of the massacre of civilians during World War II. Although the underlying logic of the Fourth Geneva Convention is the protection of civilians in occupied territories, it generally aims to protect civilians during the conflict.

International humanitarian law consists of rules that attempt to limit the methods and tools of the war. Its main aim is to limit the suffering caused by war by providing as much protection and assistance as possible to war victims. International humanitarian law, also known as the law of armed conflict or the law of war, is the legal practice to be applied during war and is evaluated under two separate headings: (1) Geneva Law,¹⁴ which was established to protect people who do not actively participate in the war, such as military personnel and civilians who are not participating in the war or are out of war; and, (2) Hague Law,¹⁵ which not only determines the rights and obligations of combatants in the management of military operations, but also limits the methods of harming the enemy (De Mulinen, 1987; Jabre et. al., 2016, pp. 8-11).

¹⁴For more details, see, The Geneva Conventions of 1949 and Hague Convention No. IV of 1907, Headquarters Department of the Army, No. 27-1, Washington D.C., 29 August 1975. Available at https://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/Military_Law/pdf/ASubjScd-27-1_1975.pdf accessed on Dec. 25, 2023.

¹⁵For more details, see, Hague Conventions of 1907, Convention (IV) respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land and its annex: Regulations concerning the Laws and Customs of War on Land. The Hague, October 18, 1907, Geneva Conventions and Commentaries, International Committee of The Red Cross. Available at <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/ihl/INTRO/195> accessed on Dec. 25, 2023.



The law of war and international humanitarian law are directly related and connected with each other. By this, the first time that armed conflicts were generally included within the scope of international law was with the “Declaration of Paris” dated 1856, which introduced four rules regarding naval combats. However, during the Second World War, the international community witnessed major crimes against humanity including war crimes that reached to genocide, going through very painful experiences in this context. Therefore, until the 1949 Geneva Conventions, which are still valid today, the area of interest of international law was limited to “interstate and certain intensity of armed conflicts” which was referred to as “war.” For this reason, in international law, the rules regulating armed conflicts and the legal effects of these conflicts both between the warring states and on third states are discussed under the name called “the law of war” (Sav, 2015, pp. 17-25; Pazarcı, 2000, p. 127). Accordingly, the progress to regulate rules of war in international law as well as international humanitarian law had not paved a swift way until the end of Second World War. Until this Great War of the 20th century, which had been a real milestone in this regard, we follow the process in two main contexts: the period until the First World War and the period until the Second World War. However, the judicial codification studies on the prohibition and humanization of war after the Second Great War increased in a very short of time. In this context, it can be seen that serious steps were taken regarding the codification of the law of war, especially after the Second World War. Hence, it can be clearly stated that the year 1945 emerged as a turning point in terms of the prohibition of war. So much so that, after the Second World War, the “use of force,” which was considered a “right” in international law for a long time so far, was strictly banned in line with the serious approach and attitudes of the winners of the Second Great War in order to prevent new wars in Europa, and thus, the monopoly on the legitimate use of force was left to the United Nations Security Council (Aslan, 2008, pp. 242, 246).

The law of war, which aims to regulate war and all kinds of armed conflicts, has two different meanings, one narrow and the other broad. In a narrow sense, the law of war specifies the rules of international law that warring parties must comply with, including the protection of individuals during armed conflicts. In a broad sense, the law of war is not limited only to acts of armed conflict and the protection of individuals, but also covers the legal effects of armed conflicts, which are considered within the scope of traditional war law, on the relations of the warring parties and third states (Aslan, 2008, p. 262). However, it is also an obvious fact that, even if it is not expressly included in bilateral or multilateral agreements, the warring parties must comply with established practices, principles of humanity and other matters required by public conscience (Meray, 1965, pp. 457-573). This is because, regarding the binding power of the rules of the law of war, as a rule, the same issues as those regarding the binding power of other rules of international law are valid. Nonetheless, in practice, warring parties violate the rules of the law of war and such violations go unpunished. Still, it can be seen that most of these rules are followed. As a sanction against those who do not comply with the rules of war law, compensation is made after the war and war criminals are tried and punished (Meray, 1979, pp. 162-167). However, the more and more frequent use of criminal justice institutions to deal with serious violations of international humanitarian law reflects an increasingly shared commitment within the international community to address impunity for serious crimes. This development



can be seen as being part of a process that Gerry Simpson has called the “juridification” of war (Kastner, 2015, p. 47; Simpson, 2007, pp. 132-157).

The aim of the law of war is to reduce the brutality caused by war to the lowest level possible. In order to achieve this goal, a number of rules have been determined, both in international agreements and international custom. In this regard, the following three rules must be applied in all kinds of wars, battles and armed conflicts: (1) In war, actions that cause unnecessary pain and suffering will be avoided; (2) Prisoners, sick and wounded, and civilians captured by the enemy will be treated humanely; (3) The main goal will be to restore and maintain peace as imminent as possible (Anonymous, 1987, pp. 16-17; Meray, 1979, pp. 247-263). When the rules of war law are examined, it is seen that they are based on three basic principles. These are, respectively, the “military necessity,” “prevention of unnecessary pain and suffering,” and “proportionality” principles (Aslan, 2008, p. 266).

It is then plausible to emphasize that, in accordance with 1949 Geneva Protocols, Article 51, there is an attempt to apply three main principles in international law in terms of armed conflict tools and methods. These are: (1) Prohibition of unnecessary suffering and death in conflicts; (2) Prohibiting some behaviors that constitute abuse of trust during conflicts; (3) It is the principle that it is forbidden to target non-combatant people and civilian places during conflicts (Best, 1980; Geneva Protocols, 1989).

In this regard, it is also prohibited to attack cities, towns, and any settlements with any vehicle or to randomly bombard such places. It is also necessary to avoid bombing buildings devoted to worship, fine arts, scientific and charity work, historical monuments, hospitals, and places where the wounded and sick are collected. Additionally, plundering an occupied city is prohibited. It has also been accepted that cultural assets should be protected (Öktem, 1998, p. 140). As can be seen, attacking civilians, buildings, and property is prohibited and constitutes a war crime. In this context, it is essential that the war be fought within the framework of legal rules and that the sick, wounded, prisoners of war, and civilians are not harmed. This is because war should be fought among the armed forces within the framework of humane rules. It is not legally acceptable to torture and torment sick, wounded, war prisoners, and civilians who are not armed, and to subject such people to inhumane behavior such as killing. Such behavior is considered a war crime (Aslan, 2008, p. 271).

In this vein, in accordance with the 1949 Geneva Protocols, Article 3/1, the lives and physical and spiritual integrity of people who are outside the conflict or who do not directly participate in the conflict will be respected. These people will be protected in all situations and treated humanely, without any negative discrimination (Geneva Protocols, 1989). In accordance with 1907 Hague Convention (IV) on war on land, Annex-Articles 22 and 23 as well as 1949 Geneva Protocols, Article 35/1 and 48, 57 and 58, parties to a conflict and their armed forces do not have an unlimited choice of methods and means of warfare. It is prohibited to use combat methods and tools that will cause unnecessary losses or excessive damage. The parties of a conflict must always separate civilians from combatants in order to protect civilians and property. Civilians cannot be the target of attacks. Attacks must be directed only at military targets (Hague Conventions, 1907).

Beside all these aspects, particularly following September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in America, it is considered legal to fight a war for the purpose of defense or the order between states with the advice and



decision of an authorized body. The right determined by such laws and practices is called the “right of war,” (Ari, 1997, p. 419; Dinstein, 1995; 1996, p. 2), or in another naming, “just war.”¹⁶ However, the violent and brutal assaults perpetuated by the State of Israel against the Gaza Strip in the fight against terrorism has turned into a “so-called war,” or namely, a “fake war.” A better definition can be derived from the current unlawful armed conflicts observed in the Russia-Ukraine war for instance, a “beyond-war concept,” instead of campaigning an “unlawful” battle, or that is to say, an “unjust” war in the context of “right to war”, even though Russian leader Putin says he has the right to war because Ukraine becoming a NATO state would put Russia in a difficult position, and it would also break the prior agreements. It is due to the clear fact that there stands no validity and legal basis of Israeli attacks on Gaza since the State of Israel puts forth its clear intention of committing a total ethnic cleansing in the Gaza Strip against all people residing there, without any justification.

As can be clearly seen, both law of war and international humanitarian law put forth and dictate prohibitions and orders which aim to distinguish civilians and belligerents, and thus limit all probable effects of not only war, but also all sorts of armed conflicts. All parties of the conflict are obliged to fulfill the principles of unnecessary interference, guarantee of humanly treatment, and distinction between belligerent and non-belligerents during a conflict. It is always forbidden to target civilians. Armed forces are obliged to prevent civilian casualties. Therefore, in accordance with the mandatory provisions of international humanitarian law, states engaged in war must protect civilians (particularly women and children), journalists, civil defense personnel, foreign citizens, non-combat infrastructures, and such locations as hospitals, religious centers, school buildings, cultural assets, prisoner and refugee camps, martyrdoms, and natural environment during the war (Simpson, 1997, pp. 1-30; Hajizada, 2007).

However, those violent and brutal Israeli assaults on the Gaza Strip and against the civilians residing in this region are clearly proof of war crimes. Since October 7, 2023, the IDF has continuously bombed the whole Gaza territory without any care, attention, or concern for civilians; thus, the State of Israel has killed more than 35,000 non-combatant civilians including mainly children, women and elderly persons living in Gaza through an unjust war. The IDF also bombed hospitals, cemeteries, schools, religious sites, refugee camps, and even those migrating people who were travelling on the “so-called” secure deportation routes from their homelands to the southern part of the Gaza Strip. In this regard, for instance, Israeli Military Prosecutor Yifat Tomer-Yerushalmi openly stated that the IDF have committed war crimes in Gaza, adding that some of the practices of the Israeli soldiers in the Gaza Strip are criminal, with an investigation being launched into the issue (Haber7com, 2024b). Accordingly, information obtained by the *Haaretz* newspaper indicates that the Israeli Army occupies Gaza homes, before burning them down. *Haaretz* emphasized in this vein that the IDF commanders have ordered Israeli soldiers to set fire to abandoned Gaza homes without legal approval, and thus, several hundred have already been irreparably damaged in the Gaza Strip (*The Haaretz*, 2024).

In this regard, the Republic of Türkiye officially declared on February 24, 2024 that, since October 7, 2023, the State of Israel has increased its oppression many times over and committed one of the greatest massacres and genocides the world has ever seen in Gaza, namely within the Palestinian lands. The State of

¹⁶For differences between “just war” and “unjust war,” see, (Akehurst, 1987, pp. 256-280)



Israel continues to commit a wide range of war crimes. In this context, Israel has committed war crimes and crimes against humanity in its attacks the against people of Gaza. Thus, Israel, as can be clearly observed since October 7, by bombing ambulances and hospitals, have committed the crime of “deliberately attacking health and transportation units,” which is defined as a war crime in Article 8 of the Rome Statute. Israel also violated Article 25 of The Hague Convention by bombing civilians and civilian infrastructure. Hence, by bombing religious sites, places of worship, and architectural structures, Israel again violated Article 4 of The Hague Convention. International humanitarian law norms state that civilians’ access to basic needs such as water, food, and medicine should be ensured/not denied. In this vein, the State of Israel violated Article 23 of Geneva Convention No. 4 by cutting off the flow of food, electricity, and fuel to Gaza and blocking humanitarian aid to the region. This is a crime that is also included in Article 7 of the Rome Statute and is considered a “crime against humanity.” In addition, it is also known that Israel uses certain weapons that are prohibited by various conventions, such as phosphorus bombs, which are also considered war crimes in Article 8 of the Rome Statute. No matter the cost, Türkiye declared that it will continue to demonstrate, with evidence, Israeli war crimes and its state policy of genocide not only in Gaza but in all of Palestine, so far for decades (TRTHaber, 2024a).

South Africa filed a genocide case against Israel at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague in February 2024. In the Court, conventions to discuss the Israeli occupation at the request of the United Nations were also held in that manner. On the second day of the hearing at the International Court of Justice, delegations from South Africa, Saudi Arabia, the Netherlands, and Belgium spoke. Stating that forced displacement constitutes a “war crime” according to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, the Dutch delegation stated that the occupation is “temporary in nature,” and that if this situation is permanent, it can be described as “annexation.” Belgium stated that Israel wants to change the demographic structure of Palestinian lands (NTV News, 2024b). On his turn on February 26, 2024, Türkiye pointed out in the related convention of the Court that the reactions would increase exponentially if the injustices and double standards that Palestinians have been exposed to for decades continue, adding: *“Israel should be held responsible for all actions that violate human rights and international law.”* Subsequently, Türkiye stated that approximately two million Palestinians were forcibly displaced in Gaza, highlighting in this vein that Israel’s actions in Gaza have turned into collective punishment for those residing there (Haber7com, 2024c).

Last but not the least, in the coming section, we will continue with the same approach to explore the crimes against humanity committed in Gaza by highlighting those views of Norwegian Professor Mads Gilbert. Professor Gilbert has touched upon Israel’s trial at the ICJ on the grounds that the State of Israel violated the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (United Nations, 1951) in Gaza, and clarified by emphasizing that he has many arguments on this very critical matter (TRTHaber, 2024b):

For me, it is enough to see how the Israeli occupation army starves, dehydrates, freezes, bombs and maims the Palestinian people in Gaza. For me, this is a war crime and goes beyond any atrocity I have ever seen in my life. This is much more than just a military operation. This is the punishment of the



entire population, which makes collective punishment illegal. This is an attack on civilians, women, children, the elderly, anyone who does not carry weapons, and an all-out war against the Palestinian healthcare system, which is against international law. I must emphasize that starvation is a weapon of mass destruction, I must clearly outline that driving people to hunger and thirst is a pre-planned evil and the saddest way to attack the will of resistance of the Palestinian people. I must underline that the State of Israel is pursuing a colonialist attack policy against the Palestinian people, and thus Israeli government is forcing the people to leave Gaza by starving them. We must see and understand that the Palestine-Israel issue is not a difficult conflict, it is a difficult occupation. According to international law, Israel, which is responsible for the health care, education and security of the occupied population, has never met these responsibilities, always passing the bill to the international community, but Israel does not refrain from attacking the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), which works for Palestinian refugees for decades. I am appalled that Western governments have not stopped Israel with sanctions, boycotts and peaceful political means, as they did against Russia for the invasion of Ukraine. I am hence shocked and outraged. These double standards are deeply shameful for all those who call themselves friends of the human race, friends of humanity and defenders of international law. I should highlight that a new language is now being used in the international relations and politics, and in that vein, concepts such as “colonization”, “apartheid”, and “racism” should be used more frequently, because these concepts explain the policies of the USA and Israel. I think we are in a new era of neo-colonialism, which is very dangerous, an era where power, not right, defines right. We are going back to the law of the jungle, where the strongest can do whatever they want, without any restrictions, without respect for international law and basic human values.

“Crimes Against Humanity” and Israel’s “So-Called” War on Gaza

At first, it will not be wrong to claim that the Palestinian cause regarding recent Israeli Gaza assaults is a trickling genocide, slow but relentless. To put forth the possible evidence of this claim, we only need to highlight the related commentary and interpretive remarks expressed by a former Zionist Jew, Miko Peled, whose grandfather took part in the founding of Israel, and whose father was a general in the Army. Grew up as a believing Zionist Jew, he saw everything clearly when he joined the Israeli army, which raised questions in his mind. Israel’s invasion of Lebanon in 1982 was a turning point for him, with Peled stating openly, freely, and bravely that (Ertekin Yıldız, 2024):

...those who remain silent are also a part of the genocide committed by Israel in Gaza. I was influenced not only by Zionist propaganda, but also much more in this regard. Everyone always talked about the state, how we supported the state and how we made sacrifices. What is the Israeli army, it is a major terrorist organization. It’s not an army, I started to understand that while I was inside... What they did was terrorism... The 1982 invasion of Lebanon was a major terrorist act. The invasion of Lebanon and the killing of many civilians, that is, the massacres, happened while I was a soldier. A few years after that, I decided to become an activist. (...) There is a huge difference between what I was told in Israel and what I heard from the Palestinians. The fact that the story is completely opposite. The difference



between what I believe is real and what they believe is real is as big as night and day. I started investigating myself because not all Palestinians could be lying. I couldn’t continue as a Zionist after what I heard. Will I continue with racist, genocidal Israel or with my Palestinian friends who stand for justice, humanity and human rights? And so I made a choice. (...) In 2013, I visited the Gaza Strip. However, it took me 14 hours to get to Gaza, which is an hour away from Jerusalem. I had to go from Jerusalem to Sinai, from Rafa to Gaza... But I had to go through a tunnel. Rafah is a tunnel. There are Israeli settlements an hour, ten minutes away from Gaza. There is electricity, water, medicine and food, there are no problems and there are roads; But inside the Gaza Strip, it was worse than the prison because everything was destroyed.

Crimes against humanity are international crimes that concern all people, even humanity in its conceptual usage, rather than just a conflict between two people or between a person and a state. The “never again” discourse is both the expression of the international law’s desperation against ferocity, and the expression that the international law is the unique remedy. Humanity should remember the 20th century with the smell that comes before death. Here, in this period, “crimes against humanity” had become the later given name of the ferocity on the papers. Even if the historical usage dates back to old times, the tortures that Nazi Germany did to both its own people and the people of the lands it occupied would be recorded to Nuremberg Status as “crimes against humanity,” a type of crime type highlighted for the first time. A year later, “crimes against humanity” were also mentioned in the Tokyo Charter, which determined the judgment for the crimes the Japanese committed during the Second World War. From this point forward the public opinion against this crime type would become sharper. From 1950 until 1993, the term “crimes against humanity” was not used in a war crime judgement. However, in this period, the concept went through a maturation period. At the end of the 20th century, at the Status constituted for the crimes committed in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, the concept of “crimes against humanity” was evaluated broader based on the experiences of the former period. Afterwards, the term received its final shape in the Rome Status. War crimes and crimes against peace, which have lost their actuality with the decline of international war events, have given way to crimes against humanity, actions that states or groups can also commit against their own population. To understand such crimes which are committed today, and will unfortunately be committed in the future, it is necessary to go back to the historical origin of the concept (Arslan, 2020, p. ii; Bassiouni, 1993).

Acts that constitute crimes against humanity were first defined in the Nuremberg Charter, Control Council Law No. 10, in the Tokyo Charter, and in the statutes of ad hoc tribunals. Acts prohibited in the latest Rome Statute are defined in detail. Today, in order to determine the material elements of crimes against humanity, international criminal law first requires that these crimes be committed within a specific, general context; once these conditions are met, the individual material elements differ for all crimes (Cassese, 2008, p. 109). Therefore, legally defining the general context in which crimes against humanity are committed is more important than identifying individual crimes. The context of crimes against humanity as defined today includes: “Acts committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack against any civilian population.” (Günal, 2013, p. 51)



The deliberate and systematic destruction of an entire people or ethnic group has been called the “crime of all crimes.” One is not able to comprehend rampant mass violence against a group of defenseless civilians solely aimed at annihilating them. Yet, mass violence has always been a part of the history of mankind. The 20th and 21st centuries have even seen the worst episodes of mass violence, despite all pretensions of civilization (Have & Boender, 2012, p. 7). Thus, crimes against humanity could be handled by the international community as a persistent modern atrocity. Thus, we selected the wording “crime of the century” in place of the term “crimes against humanity,” depicting such an act as one of the most brutal and complex mass crimes of the circa two-century-long modern human history for it is really the most heinous, disgusting, wild, and conscious crime in recent history (Bassiouni, 2011). Accordingly, we highlight the last two centuries in modern civilization history in our attempts to shift attention to the most interesting political ideology, fascism, which had been in a symbiotic relationship with crimes against humanity for so long. Fascism as the root political ideology of crimes against humanity has nurtured the brutality in each of the political ideologies, ranging from communism to socialism, from conservatism to fundamentalism, even in the liberal democratic ideology. Our last claim could be verified in the thought of Hannah Arendt. According to Arendt (1993, p. 81):

A world ruled by a single sovereign who holds the monopoly of centralized power and violence in whatever form, and who is not controlled by other sovereigns, would not only be a frightening tyranny but also signify the end of all political life as we know it. (...) Such a structure that holds the means of violence will not be a hope for the future of our civilization, on the contrary, it will mean a frightening tyranny and thus political life as it is known will completely disappear.

This is the “post-truth” global politico-security (Fridlund, 2020; Barrera et. al., 2020; Dorosh et. al., 2021) situation that we witness in the various American, Russian, British, or French military-political interventions in various geographies of the world in the aftermath of Cold-War. “Post-truth politics” indicates a contemporary state of public distrust around the legitimacy of knowledge, shaped by the hybrid media and political-level landscape (Galpin & Vernon, 2023, p. 1).

In spite of the promises made after the Second World War to eliminate the commission of atrocities against the world’s people, crimes against humanity continue to persist. Indeed, they are perhaps the most ubiquitous and horrifying offenses committed in modern times. Notwithstanding, an understanding of both the theoretical basis and the application of crimes against humanity to particular cases has been rendered difficult by an absence of a consistent definition and uniform interpretation. In the 1990s and 2000s, several ad hoc international criminal tribunals were established to respond to the commission of atrocity crimes, including crimes against humanity, in specific regions of the world in conflict, such as the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, and Cambodia. Building upon this legacy, in 1998, a new institution — the International Criminal Court (ICC) — was established to take up the task of defining crimes against humanity and other atrocity crimes, and preventing and punishing their commission (Sadat, 2012, p. 3).

Thus, of all the problems confronting humankind during the last quarter of the 20th century, none is more significant or urgent than the mass killing of defenseless citizens by human beings acting as agents of,



or with the tolerance of, their governments. It is perhaps not surprising, then, that an unflinching review of past centuries — with their mounting death tolls from wars, revolutions, massacres, as well as famine and disease resulting from human malevolence and negligence — led William James (1970, p. 5), in his celebrated 1910 essay titled “The Moral Equivalent of War,” to conclude that “history is a bath of blood.” However, a number of analysts have concluded that the number of human beings deliberately killed by other human beings during the 20th century is far greater than for any other equivalent period of time in history. The “bath of blood” that James discovered in his study of many past centuries has become a veritable ocean of blood in just a few decades (Markusen, 2000, pp. 97-98).

In the context of the material elements of crimes against humanity, it is possible to briefly emphasize the following. First of all, it is essential to underline that crimes against humanity are not isolated and occasional acts, but widespread or systematic actions (Cassese, 2008, p. 98). The element of prevalence emphasizes the existence of a large number of victims harmed by crime or the geographical prevalence of victimization. It is about attacks that do not meet the conditions, but nevertheless constitute seriousness in terms of planning and organization. The other important problem in terms of determining the general context of crimes against humanity is the nature of the “attack.” It no longer makes any difference in terms of contemporary international criminal law whether the attack was made during wartime or peacetime. The act of crime against humanity must involve violence or can be considered a crime against humanity without needing to involve violence, as in the case of imposing the “Apartheid” regime of South Africa (deGuzman, 2011, pp. 130-131). Regarding the need for the existence of a general policy, it is also important in terms of the material element of crimes against humanity. Therefore, according to the Rome Statute, the existence of a state or institutional policy is necessary for crimes against humanity to be considered committed (Güna, 2013, p. 53; Cassese, 2008, pp. 123-126).

Again, a belief that the attack on civilians, in other words non-combatants, is against a “civilian population” rather than against randomly selected individuals is sufficient for the crime to constitute a crime against humanity. Therefore, it is found in all definitions of crimes against humanity that the targeted population must be “civilian” (Delmas-Marty et. al., 2009). Therefore, it does not seem possible to extend these rules to those who fight during an armed conflict (deGuzman, 2011, p. 132). According to the Convention: “(a) Killing of members of the group; (b) Causing serious harm to the physical or mental integrity of group members; (c) Intentionally subjecting the group to conditions of life likely to result in its partial or total destruction of its physical existence; (d) taking measures aimed at preventing births within the group; (e) Forcibly transferring the children of this group to another group” is sufficient to constitute the crime of genocide (Güna, 2013, pp. 51-55, 58).

Although the nature of the groups protected in the crime of genocide is controversial, the material elements of the crime are quite clear. The victims of acts prohibited by the crime of genocide mostly consist of individuals. However, the main value that the norm protects is religious, racial, national, and ethnic groups. Therefore, the individuals chosen by the perpetrator of genocide while committing the crime must have been chosen because they belonged to one of the groups mentioned above (Gaeta, 2011, p. 110; Güna, 2013, pp. 58-59). Evaluating the elements of the crime of genocide, Larry May states that there are two ways in



which an individual’s actions can be attributed to the crime of genocide, the first of which is that the individual’s actions involve deliberate participation in a group’s plan to destroy another group, the other way is that the individual’s actions involve a plan by one group to destroy another group and being aware that one could have prevented this plan but not doing anything about it. According to May, in both cases, the element that enables the defendant’s actions to be defined as genocide is intent (May, 2010, p. 167). Indeed, when the material elements that constitute genocide are evaluated on their own, it is not possible for the perpetrator’s actions to be characterized as genocide. However, if there is a special intention that produces the crime of genocide, it is possible to qualify the committed act as genocide. Therefore, defining the moral element in the crime of genocide is more important than defining the material element, with it not being possible to conceptually separate the material element from the moral element (May, 2010, p. 166; Günal, 2013, p. 60).

After all this information, while we can put forth the findings that prove that the State of Israel has been committing crimes against humanity, amounting to genocide, because of its violent and brutal assaults on the whole civilians residing in Gaza Strip since October 7, 2023, we can surely claim that the State of Israel is committing serious crimes against humanity, including genocide and urbancide in the Gaza Strip by deliberately, purposely, planned, and willingly trying to exterminate the whole people residing in Gaza through all means of ethnic cleansing. In this respect, the IDF kills all people living in the Gaza Strip regardless of target. Additionally, Israel has targeted settlements, hospitals, schools, mosques, and churches in its attacks on Gaza (Anatolian Agency, 2024). Thus, it is crystal-clear that nearly all those people are non-combatants, namely civilians. The IDF is not fighting against an army of another state in the Gaza Strip, but are committing an ethnic cleansing against the people of Gaza in the “fake” name of counter-terrorism. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu claimed that they would “change the Middle East” with their attacks on Gaza. In his statement on October 9, Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant announced that the Gaza Strip would be under full siege and that electricity, food, and fuel would not be allowed into the region. Israeli forces prevented humanitarian aid from entering Gaza in the following days, cutting off the flow of electricity, food, and fuel. In his statement on October 10, Gallant announced that Israeli forces “lifted all restrictions and launched a full attack” on Gaza (Anatolian Agency, 2024).

This factual situation of a “fake,” “beyond-war,” or “post-truth” concept of war in Gaza had been recently highlighted by the Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva when he attended the African Union summit held in Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia. In his speech there, he compared Israel’s attacks in Gaza to those of Adolf Hitler. Arguing that what happened to the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip has never happened at any time in history, he claimed, and added; “In fact, it happened when Hitler decided to kill the Jews.” Lula said that there was no war between soldiers in Gaza; thus, this was not a war, but a genocide. After Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva accused the Israeli government of committing genocide in Gaza, Israel declared Lula “persona non grata” (BBC News Turkish, 2024).

What the State of Israel is doing in Gaza against the people living there by overseeing the civilians and taking civilian lives is unquestionably a genocide against the people of Gaza since these residents are being killed by the IDF in an unconstrained, normless, and disproportionate manner which resembles an ethnic



cleansing. Thus, all of the Israeli actions, deeds, and implementations in Gaza should be assessed as a crime against humanity as well as a modern tragedy of genocide. Therefore, there is a need to prosecute Israel for state terrorism against the Palestinians in Gaza (Ari, 2023).

Eventually, a critical development at the beginning of 2024 has paved the way for the global acceptance and legal sanctions against Israel’s genocidal actions in Gaza. In this context, the first hearing in the case filed by the Republic of South Africa at the International Court of Justice on charges of genocide against Israel was held on January 10, 2024. While the South African lawyers defending the claim made their presentations to the court, the Israeli legal committee made its defense on January 12, 2024. After Hamas’s October 7 raid, Israel’s attacks on the Gaza Strip, which had continued for months, came to the world’s agenda in a different way on January 11, 2024. The first hearing in the genocide case filed by the Republic of South Africa against Israel at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) took place on January 11, 2024. Israel, which killed more than 35,000 civilians in its attacks on Gaza, sat in the defendant’s chair for the first time. On the first day of the hearing in The Hague, the South African legal panel shared its allegations with the judges along with their justifications, saying about Israel “that its conscious actions against Gaza residents carry genocidal intent” (Hürriyet, 2024). As of the time of this writing, the case against Israel for committing genocide is still ongoing at the International Criminal Court.

Conclusion

Before starting conclusion part of this study, after witnessing, all the actions of state terrorism, war crimes, and crimes against humanity committed by the State of Israel, before an international community which has been blind, deaf, and dumb regarding Israel’s actions, one cannot help but ask whether humanity has died.

In the history of the world, the geography where the concepts of “religion,” “war,” and “peace” have come together most frequently has been the Middle East region. Although all religious beliefs of the past normally foresee and suggest absolute “peace,” in the ancient Middle East region, which was the starting point of the three monotheistic religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, this has been even more important since 1948 when the modern state of Israel emerged onto the political stage. It has been seen that the new nation has become the subject of much more violence, blood, and injustice. The main reason for this is that this new state of Israel, established by England, France, and the US in the Middle East, did not accept its initial political borders and adopted and implemented expansionist policies in its region with a fascist and racist ideological understanding. In this sense, the Israeli state system, starting from May 14, 1948, began to occupy the lands of the indigenous Palestinian people, who had existed for centuries in the lands where it was founded, by taking away their lands at every opportunity. As a matter of fact, these unjust and unlawful acts of Israeli aggression and occupations have continued to increase every year along with the endless Israeli state terrorism, before reaching its highest and bloodiest level with the Israeli military operations launched on the Gaza Strip on October 7, 2023. Therefore, it is likely to put forward the first main findings affecting the issue of this international problem that has been going on actively for nearly 75 years between Palestinians, the State of Israel, and the Arabs in the Palestinian lands in the Middle East:



1. It is evaluated that the definition of the international problem, which had been existed in the Middle East since 1948, and has been generally defined as the “Palestine Problem” in the literature since then, is erroneous, and that it will be more appropriate to call this problem as the “Aggressive Israel Problem.”
2. The main reason for this is that the conflicts, clashes, and even wars that have been taking place between Palestinians, Israel, and the Arab states in the Middle East since 1948 are actually a doctrine of geopolitical state terrorism with expansionist purposes, which includes the unilateral and unlawful policies and initiatives implemented by the State of Israel in the region.
3. For this reason, within the scope of the expansionist and aggressive policies that it has implemented in its region at every opportunity since 1948, the State of Israel has adopted a general “national goal” and made it a “state policy” to deny Palestinians the right to live in their own lands.

Hence, it will be more accurate to read the all-out war that the State of Israel launched on October 7, 2023, against the 365 km² Gaza Strip and the approximately 2.5 million people living there, in the context of the detailed analysis and main evaluations presented above. The Gaza Strip, where a very dense Palestinian population lives, is one of the primary target geographies of the expansionist Israeli state policies. In this respect, behind this state oppression, torment, and terror that the State of Israel has inflicted on people in Gaza since October 7: (1) “The Problem of Aggressive Israel;” (2) Israel’s aim to completely annex the Gaza Strip to its existing state territory, as appropriate and if possible; (3) Thus, Israel’s strategy to realize its expansionist goals in its region; (4) Ultimately, there is a desire to continue aggressive military operations and deport all people from Gaza until there are no people left living in Gaza — regardless of their identity.

Therefore, we can put forth the following critical and analytical evaluations about the Israeli attacks on the Gaza Strip that began on October 7, 2023:

1. Israel’s all-out war against the people living in Gaza and its unlimited attacks have been frequently called in the literature as the “2023 Hamas-Israel War” or the “2023 Israel-Palestine War.” It is certainly emphasized that defining the issue in different ways is quite wrong, as such definitions may hinder both the understanding of the main historical, political, and legal issues affecting the issue, as well as failing to capture the essence of the issue.
2. Israel’s brutal and merciless attacks on the Gaza Strip and its civilian inhabitants since October 7, 2023 are considered to be the result of the Israeli state’s expansionist, Zionist-based, and unlawful racist-nationalist and fascistic state policies.
3. Therefore, when the all-out war waged by Israel on Gaza is evaluated in terms of international law of war and humanitarian law, it is seen that the Israeli army attacks carried out without limitation, proportion and international law norms against the civilian population living in Gaza. In other words, the treatment of non-combatants places the State of Israel in the position of a “terrorist country” that practices “state terrorism.”
4. When considering Israel’s (state) support of terrorism, its possession of weapons of mass destruction (such as nuclear bombs), and Israeli officials’ threats to use these weapons against civilians in Gaza, it is evaluated that all of these combined with factors such as Israeli tyranny, when necessary, on its own



territory and even Israeli citizens following the Hamas attacks of October 7, 2023 against Israel territories, put the State of Israel in a “rouge state” situation.

5. In addition, it is evaluated that the Israeli state’s violent and brutal military attacks against all civilians in Gaza regardless of target, contrary to the laws of war, and its policies of denying any right to life for the residents of Gaza in this region, put Israel in a “fascist state” situation.
6. With an all-out war mentality, the Israel Defense Force is waging an unlimited, unpredictable, and disproportionate war in the Gaza Strip, contrary to the principles and imperative provisions of the international law of war, and contrary to the principle that “even war has a virtue, morality, and humane method.” In the context of military operations carried out by the IDF, it is evaluated that the relevant Israeli civil-military bureaucrats who are responsible for all of these actions, and the murder of the civilian population, namely non-combatants, with monstrous feelings should be investigated and tried for their crimes by the Israeli courts in terms of National Criminal Law regarding the charge of “first degree premeditated murder.”
7. Since the IDF’s military operations against non-combatants (civilians) as well as non-combat locations, including hospitals, religious centers, and schools, in the Gaza Strip have caused large-scale civilian deaths and material losses by carrying out brutally direct, systematic, and purposeful military attacks on civilian facilities that are obliged to be protected in war in accordance with the strict articles of the Law of War, it is evaluated that the relevant Israeli civil-military bureaucrats who are responsible for these crimes should be investigated and tried immediately at the International Criminal Court within the scope of “war crimes” committed against non-combatants in Gaza in the context of international Law of War.
8. The IDF’s direct, ruthless, and violent military attacks against all the people living in the Gaza region, with a understanding of conscious and mass extermination, without regard to living or non-living targets, can be evaluated as not only an “ethnic cleansing operation,” but also an “ethno-crime” as well as “urban-cide” in the Gaza Strip. For this reason, it is evaluated that the State of Israel and the relevant Israeli civil-military bureaucrats should be immediately brought in front of the International Criminal Court, and should be investigated and tried in this Court as state officials who have “committed crimes against humanity” in the context of global criminal law crimes, such as intentional killing, intentional injury, psychological and physical torture, and torment or enslavement against the Gaza Strip and the people living in this region.

Thus, if the above analyses regarding the “Aggressive Israel Problem” are realized as predicted in the coming period, it will be very useful in getting rid of the “desperation syndrome” that the international community, politics, and organizations are in today, helping them to regain their lost prestige. On the other hand, it is evaluated that another benefit of the realization of the mentioned proposals to the international community may be the increase in cooperative, consensual, and just attitudes and understandings on a global scale, which will enable international politics and law to operate in a much better and fairer manner in the coming periods.



Last but not the least, even though some pain is so great that it takes the breath away, we wish to recount that even the worst darkness disappears in dim light, while the suffering in Gaza grows, the world continues to remain silent. However, if the international community refrains from describing all those brutally and violently inhumane military assaults committed by the State of Israel against the Gaza Strip as state terrorism, war crimes, and crimes against humanity, then this approach and attitude may mean that all these crimes and terrorism perpetuated by Israel against Gaza never happened, at least in the eyes of Western politicians and the United Nations. This is a very critical outcome since this situation will most probably provide a very suitable basis for the same people to claim that solutions to the international problems cannot be found and peace agreements cannot be drawn up.



Peer Review	Externally peer-reviewed.
Conflict of Interest	The author have no conflict of interest to declare.
Grant Support	The author declared that this study has received no financial support.

Author Details

Gökhan Ak (Asst. Prof. Dr.)

¹ Istanbul Topkapi University, Faculty of Economics, Administrative and Social Sciences, Department of Political Science and International Relations (English), Istanbul, Türkiye

 0000-0003-0674-9699  gokhanak@topkapi.edu.tr

References

- Adelman, J. (Ed.). (2008). *The Rise of Israel: A History of a Revolutionary State*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Aksar, Y. (2004). *Implementing International Humanitarian Law*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Akehurst, M.A. (1987). *A Modern Introduction to International Law*. 6th ed. London: Unwin Hyman Ltd.
- Aksoy Ercümen, M. (2016). Savaşın Değişen Doğası ve Cenevre Sözleşmeleri (The Changing Nature of War and the Geneva Conventions). 22 August, INSAMER Food-for-thought Paper. Available at https://insamer.com/tr/savasin-degisgen-dogasi-ve-cenevre-sozlesmeleri_346.html accessed on Jan. 10, 2024.
- Ambos, K. (2011). Crimes against Humanity and the International Criminal Court. In L.N. Sadat (Ed.), *Forging a Convention for Crimes against Humanity* (pp. 279-304), New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Anatolian Agency (AA). (2024). İsrail’in Gazze’deki 100 günlük yıkımına savaş suçları ve soykırım davası damga vurdu (War crimes and genocide trial marked Israel’s 100-day destruction in Gaza). 14 January 2024. Available at <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/dunya/israilin-gazzedeki-100-gunluk-yikimina-savas-suclari-ve-soykirim-davasi-damga-vurdu/3108408#> accessed on Jan. 10, 2024.
- Anonymous. (1987). Silahlı Kuvvetler İçin Savaş Hukuku Bilgisi (Information on the Laws of War for Armed Forces). Ankara: Genel Kurmay Başkanlığı Basımevi.
- Antolinez, D.S. (2021). ‘Israel’s attacks on Palestinians qualify as state terrorism’. Anatolian Agency (AA), Americas, Middle East, 13 May 2021. Available at <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/americas/-israel-s-attacks-on-palestinians-qualify-as-state-terrorism-/2239676#> accessed on Jan. 24, 2024.
- Arendt, H. (1993). *Men in Dark Times*. New York: A Harvest Book Harcourt Brace & Company.
- Arı, T. (1997). *Uluslararası İlişkiler* (International Relations). 2nd ed. İstanbul: Alfa Basım Yayım Dağıtım.
- Arı, Y. (2023). Bir İnsanlık Suçu ve Soykırım Trajedisi: İsrail’in Filistinlilere Uyguladığı Devlet Terörü Nedeniyle Yargılanması Gerektiğine Dair Bir Değerlendirme (A Crime against Humanity and the Tragedy of Genocide: An Assessment on the Need to Prosecute Israel for State Terrorism against the Palestinians). *Darulhadis İslami Araştırmalar Dergisi*, 5, Aralık, 16-38.
- Arslan, E. (2020). *Uluslararası Hukukta İnsanlığa Karşı Suçlar* (Crimes against Humanity in International Law). Published MA Thesis. T.C. Hatay Mustafa Kemal Üniversitesi, Institute of Social Sciences, Hatay.



- Aslan, M.Y. (2008). Savaş Hukukunun Temel Prensipleri (Basic Principles of the Law of War). *TBB Dergisi* (Journal of TBB), (79), 235-274.
- Badar, M.E. (2004). From the Nuremberg Charter to the Rome Statute: Defining the Elements of Crimes against Humanity. *San Diego International Law Journal*, 5(73), 73-144.
- Bartov, O., Grossmann, A., & Nolan, M. (Eds.). (2002). *Crimes of War: Guilt and Denial in the Twentieth Century*. New York: New Press.
- Bassiouni, M.C. (1993). The History of the Draft Code of Crimes against the Peace and Security of Mankind. *Israel Law Review*, 27(1), 247-267.
- Bassiouni, M.C. (2011). *Crimes Against Humanity: Historical Evolution and Contemporary Application*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Bauer, Y. (1980). Genocide: Was It the Nazis’ Original Plan?. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, (Reflections on the Holocaust: Historical, Philosophical, and Educational Dimensions), (450), July, 35-45.
- BBC News. (2024). What is Hamas and Why Is It Fighting with Israel in Gaza?. 13 February 2024. Available at <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-67039975> accessed on Feb. 14, 2024.
- BBC News Turkish (2024). İsrail, Gazze’de soykırım yapıldığını söyleyen Brezilya lideri Lula’yı ‘istenmeyen kişi’ ilan etti (Israel declared Brazilian leader Lula, who said there was genocide in Gaza, as ‘persona non grata’). 19 February 2024. Available at <https://www.bbc.com/turkce/articles/cd18p8p29jqo> accessed on Feb. 24, 2024.
- Ben-Yehuda, H., & Sandler, S. (2002). *The Arab–Israel Conflict Transformed: Fifty Years of Interstate and Ethnic Crises*, Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Berry, M., & Philo, G. (2006). *Israel and Palestine: Competing Histories*. London: Pluto Press
- Best, G. (1980). *Humanity in Warfare*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Bickerton, I.J. (2009). *The Arab–Israeli Conflict: A History*. London: Reaktion Books.
- Blakeley, R. (2009). State Terrorism in the Social Sciences: Theories, Methods and Concepts. In R. Jackson, E. Murphy, and S. Poynting (Eds.), *Contemporary State Terrorism: Theory and Practice* (pp. 12-27). Abingdon, UK: Routledge.
- Barrera, O., Guriev, S., Henry, E., & Zhuravskaya, E. (2020). Facts, Alternative Facts, And Fact Checking in Times Of Post-Truth Politics. *Journal of Public Economics*, 182, February, 1-19.
- Braudel, F. (1994). *A History of Civilizations*. Trans. Richard Mayne. New York: The Penguin Press.
- Brownlie, I. (1963). *International Law and the Use of Force by States*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Bulliet, R.W., Crossley, P.K., Headrick, D.R., Hirsch, S.W., Johnson, L.L., & Northrup, D. (2005). *The Earth and Its Peoples: A Global History*. 3rd ed. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Cassese, A. (2008). *International Criminal Law*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Çaşın, M.H. (2008). *Uluslararası Terörizm (International Terrorism)*. Ankara: Nobel.
- Chalk, F., & Jonassohn, K. (1990). *The History and Sociology of Genocide*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Chomsky, N. (2002). Uluslararası Terörizm: Görünüş ile Gerçek (International Terrorism: Appearance vs. Reality). C. Güzel (ed.), *Silinen Yüzler Karşısında Terör (Terror in the Face of Erased Faces)*. (pp. 217-228). Ankara: Ayraç Yayınevi.
- Claridge, D. (1996). State Terrorism? Applying a Definitional Model. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 8(3), 47-63. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546559608427363>
- deGuzman, M.M. (2011). Crimes Against Humanity. In W.A. Schabas and N. Bernaz (Eds.). *Routledge Handbook of International Criminal Law* (pp. 121-137). New York: Routledge.
- De Mulinen, F. (1987). *Handbook on the Law of War for Armed Forces*. Geneva: ICRC Pubs.
- Demir, C.K. (2017). *Ayaklanmalar ve Ayaklanmalara Karşı Koyma: Kavramlar, Stratejiler ve Ülke Tecrübeleri* (Uprisings and Countering Uprisings: Concepts, Strategies and Country Experiences). Ankara: Nobel.
- Delmas-Marty, M., Fouchard, I., Fronza, E., & Neyret, L. (2009). *Le crime contre l’humanité*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
- Dinstein, Y. (1995). *War, Aggression and Self Defence*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dinstein, Y. (1996). The Distinctions between War Crimes and Crimes against Peace. In Y. Dinstein, and M. Tabory (Eds.). *War Crimes in International Law* (pp. 1-18). The Hague/Boston/London: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers.
- Dorosh, L., Astramowicz-Leyk, T., & Turchyn, Y. (2021). The Impact of Post-Truth Politics as a Hybrid Information Influence on the Status of International and National Security: The Attributes of Interpretation and the Search for Counteraction Mechanisms. *European Politics and Society*, 23(3), 1-24.

- Dünya Gazetta.A (2024). ‘Refah’a saldırı’ planı İsrail kabinesinin önünde (‘Attack on Rafah’ plan is before the Israeli cabinet). 26 February 2024. Available at <https://www.dunya.com/dunya/refaha-saldiri-plani-israil-kabinesinin-onunde-haberi-718808> accessed on Feb. 27, 2024.
- “Elmalı, B. (2023). *From Past to Present: The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*. İstanbul: TRT WORLD Research Centre Publishing.”
- Ertekin Yıldız, S. (2024). Eski Siyonist Yahudi: İsrail’in Gazze’de yaptığı soykırım, sessiz kalanlar da bir parçası (Former Zionist Jew: Israel’s genocide in Gaza, those who remain silent are also a part of it). TRT Haber (Dünya), 06 March 2024. Available at <https://www.trthaber.com/haber/dunya/eski-siyonist-yahudi-israilin-gazgede-yaptigi-soykirim-sessiz-kalanlar-da-bir-parcasi-842410.html> accessed on Mar. 10, 2024.
- Falk, R. (2002). Ending The Death Dance. *The Nation*, 29 April, 11-13.
- Freedman, R.O. (ed.). (2012). *Israel and the United States: Six Decades of US-Israeli Relations*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Fridlund, P. (2020). Post-truth Politics, Performatives and the Force. *Jus Cogens*, 2, 215-235.
- Gaeta, P. (2011). Genocide. In W.A. Schabas and Nadia Bernaz (Eds.). *Routledge Handbook of International Criminal Law* (109-119). New York: Routledge.
- Galicki, Z. (2005). International Law and Terrorism. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 48(6), 743-757.
- Gal-Or, N., & Giesen, K-G. (2007). The Concept of War. *Peace Review*, 19(2), 149-156. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10402650701353240>
- Galpin, C., & Vernon, P. (2023). Post-truth politics as discursive violence: Online abuse, the public sphere and the figure of ‘the expert’. *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, October, 1-21. Available at <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/13691481231202641> accessed on 23.02.2024.
- Gellately, R., & Kiernan, B. (Eds.). (2003). *The Specter of Genocide: Mass Murder in Historical Perspective*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Geneva Protocols. (1989). *International Law Concerning the Conduct of Hostilities, Collection of Hague Conventions and Some Other International Instruments*. Geneva: ICRC Pubs.
- Glover, J. (1991). Chap. 10 - State Terrorism. In R.G. Frey and C.W. Morris (Eds.), *Violence, Terrorism and Justice* (pp. 256-275). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Greene, T., & Rynhold, J. (2018). Europe and Israel: Between Conflict and Cooperation. *Survival*, 60(4), July, 91-112. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00396338.2018.1495432>
- Günel, H. (2013). *Hannah Arendt Düşüncesinde İnsanlığa Karşı Suçların Temellendirilmesi* (Basis for Crimes Against Humanity in the Thoughts of Hannah Arendt). Published Doctorate Thesis, T.C. İstanbul University İnstitute of Social Sciences, İstanbul.
- Haber7Com. (2024a). More than 140 members of the UN have recognized the state of Palestine and East Jerusalem as its capital. 22 February 2024. Available at <https://m.haber7.com/dunya/haber/3393293-bmmin-140tan-fazla-uyesi-filistin-devletini-ve-dogukudusu-baskenti-olarak-tanidi> accessed on Feb. 24, 2024.
- Haber7Com. (2024b). Israeli Military Prosecutor: Our army committed war crimes in Gaza. 22 February 2024. Available at <https://m.haber7.com/dunya/haber/3393060-israilli-askeri-savci-ordumuz-gazgede-savas-suclari-iledi> accessed on Feb. 24, 2024.
- Haber7Com. (2024c). It’s Turkey’s turn to speak at the International Court of Justice!. 26 February 2024. Available at <https://m.haber7.com/dunya/haber/3394087-uluslararası-adalet-divanında-soz-sirasi-turkiyede> on Feb. 27, 2024.
- Hague Conventions. (1907). Convention (IV) respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land and its Annex: Regulations Concerning the Laws and Customs of War on Land. The Hague, 18 October 1907. Geneva: ICRC Pubs.
- Hajizada, M. (2007). *Uluslararası İnsancıl Hukukta Sivillerin Korunması* (Protection of Civilians in International Humanitarian Law). Published MA Thesis. T.C. İstanbul University İnstitute of Social Sciences, İstanbul.
- Hathaway, O.A., Strauch, P.K., Walton, B.A., & Weinberg, Z.A.Y. (2019). What is a War Crime?. *The Yale Journal of International Law*, 44(1), 53-113.
- Have, t-W, & Boender, B. (2012). Introduction. In B. Boender and W. ten Have (Eds.). *The Holocaust and Other Genocides: An Introduction* (pp. 7-13). Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
- Hewitt, W.L. (Ed.). (2004). *Defining the Horrific: Readings on Genocide and Holocaust in the Twentieth Century*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education.
- Hobson, J. (2019). Three Theoretical Approaches to Lemkin’s Definition of Genocide. *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal*, 13(1), 11-18. <https://doi.org/10.5038/1911-9933.13.1.1592>
- Holton, R., & Nasson, W.R. (Eds.). (2009). *World Civilizations and History of Human Development*. Oxford: EOLSS Publishers/UNESCO.



- https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocity-crimes/Doc1_ConventiononthePreventionandPunishmentoftheCrimeofGenocide.pdf accessed on Dec. 22, 2023.
- Hürriyet. (2024). ‘Soykırım’ davası başladı... İsrail Gazze’de çizgiyi aştı (‘Genocide’ trial has begun... Israel crossed the line in Gaza). 12 January 2024. Available at <https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/dunya/soykirim-davasi-basladi-israil-gazgede-cizgiyi-asti-42389518> accessed on Jan. 22, 2024.
- Irvin-Erickson, D. (2017). *Raphaël Lemkin and the Concept of Genocide*. Philadelphia, PE: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Jabre, K., Babic, N., & Bouvier, A. (2016). *International Humanitarian Law*. Handbook for Parliamentarians N° 25 Prepared by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Geneva: ICRC Pubs.
- Jalloh, C.C. (2013). What Makes a Crime against Humanity a Crime against Humanity?. *American University International Law Review*, 28(2), 381-442.
- James, W. (1970). The Moral Equivalent of War. In R.A. Wasserstrom (Ed.). *War and Morality* (pp. 4-14). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Co.
- Jennings, R., & Watts, A. (eds.). (1992). *Oppenheim’s International Law*, Vol. 1. 9th ed. London: Longman.
- Jones, A. (Ed.). (2004). *Genocide, War Crimes and the West: History and Complicity*. London: Zed Books.
- Jones, A. (2006). *Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Jones, A. (2006). Chapter 3: Genocides of Indigenous Peoples. In *Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction* (pp. 67-100). London and New York: Routledge.
- Karabulut, U. (2022). Kudüs’te Savaş Hukuku ve Toplumlararası Yeni Düzenin Oluşumu (1914-1920). (Law of War and the Formation of the New Intercommunal Order in Jerusalem (1914-1920)). XVIII. Türk Tarih Kongresi. VIII. Cilt: Hukuk ve Diplomasi, Türk-Ermeni İlişkileri. (pp. 203-214). Ankara: TTK Yayınları.
- Kastner, P. (2015). Domestic War Crimes Trials: Only for Others - Bridging national and International Criminal Law. *University of Western Australia Law Review*, 39(1), 29-50.
- Kedikli, U. (2011). *Devlet Destekli Terörizm Nedeniyle Devletin Uluslararası Sorumluluğu* (International Responsibility of the State for State-Sponsored Terrorism). Published Doctorate Thesis, T.C. Ankara University Institute of Social Sciences, Ankara.
- Kiş, E. (2023). 1948’den Bugüne, Tarihi ve Siyasi Yönleri ile “İsrail-Filistin Sorunu” (Historical and Political Aspects Of The "Israel- Palestine Conflict" From 1948 To Today). *MTU Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 3(1), 262-274.
- Kolander, K. (2020). *America’s Israel: The US Congress and American-Israeli Relations, 1967-1975*. Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky.
- Krishnamurti, J. (1954). On War. *First and Last Freedom* (pp. 182-185). New York: Harper & Brothers.
- Krishnamurti, J. (1981). Education and World Peace. In *Education and Significance of Life* (pp. 49-61). San Francisco, CA: HarperOne.
- Kutlu, O. (2021). US history riddled with massacres, genocide. *Anatolian Agent (Anadolu Ajansı)*, World-Americas, 02 June 2021. Available at <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/americas/us-history-riddled-with-massacres-genocide/2261696#> accessed on Dec. 08, 2023.
- Laqueur, W., & Schueftan, D. (2016). *The Israel-Arab Reader: A Documentary History of the Middle East Conflict*. New York: Penguin Books.
- Lawless, M. (2008). Terrorism: An International Crime. *Canadian Military Journal*, 9(2), 27-39.
- Lemkin, R. (1944). *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation, Analysis of Government, Proposals for Redress*. New York: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (also, New York: Columbia University Press).
- Lemkin, R. (1944). Chapter IX: Genocide. In *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Analysis, Proposals for Redress* (pp. 79-95). Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.
- Lenta, O., & Cormos, V-C. (2017). Aggression and Violence, Corrosive Factors of Humanity. *Postmodern Openings*, 8(1), June, 57-65. <https://doi.org/10.18662/po/2017.0801.05>
- Luban, D. (2004). A Theory of Crimes Against Humanity. *The Yale Journal of International Law*, 29(85), 85-167.
- Magee, B. (2009). *Büyük Filozoflar: Platon’dan Wittgenstein’a Batı Felsefesi*. (The Great Philosophers: An Introduction to Western Philosophy). Çev.(Trans.) A. Cevizci. İstanbul: Paradigma Yayınları.
- Malcolm X. (1990). Prospects for Freedom in 1965. In G. Breietman (Ed.), *Malcolm X Speaks: Selected Speeches and Statements* (pp. 147-156). New York: Grove Press.
- Mann, M. (2005). *The Dark Side of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Markusen, E. (2000). Genocide and Total War: A Preliminary Comparison. In I. Wallimann and M.N. Dobkowski (Eds.). *Genocide and the Modern Age: Etiology and Case Studies of Mass Death* (pp. 97-123). Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.



- Marsi, F., Siddiqui, U., Harb, A., & Osgood, B. (2024). Israel’s war on Gaza updates: ‘Life draining out of Gaza’-UN on aid attack. *Aljazeera*, 29 February 2024. Available at <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/liveblog/2024/2/29/israels-war-on-gaza-live-mass-killing-of-children-in-slow-motion-ngo> accessed on Mar. 01, 2024.
- May, L. (2010). *Genocide: A Normative Account*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Meray, S.L. (1965). *Devletler Hukukuna Giriş* (2 Cilt) (Introduction to International Law) (2 Vols). Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi SBF Yayını.
- Meray, S.L. (1979). *Uluslararası Hukuk ve Örgütler* (International Law and Organizations). 2nd ed. Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi SBF Yayını.
- Metz, H.C. (Ed.). (1990). *Israel: A Country Study*. 3rd ed. Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army (Federal Research Division, Library of Congress) Publications.
- National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC). (2022). Hamas. Foreign Terrorist Organizations, Counter-Terrorism Guide. As of September 2022. Available at https://www.dni.gov/nctc/ftos/hamas_fto.html accessed on Jan. 04, 2024.
- Newman, E. (2006). Exploring the “Root Causes” of Terrorism. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 29(8), 749-772.
- NTV News. (2024a). Statement from Netanyahu on Gaza: The 3rd phase of the war will last 6 months. 23 January 2024. Available at <https://www.ntv.com.tr/dunya/netanyahudan-gazze-aciklamasi-savasin-3uncu-asamasi-6-ay-surecek,9ldVJA8pdUeijKDgGMfpQg> on Jan. 24, 2024.
- NTV News. (2024b). Israeli occupation hearing in The Hague: Forced displacement is a war crime. 20 February 2024. Available at https://www.ntv.com.tr/dunya/laheyde-israil-igali-durusmasizorla-yerinden-etme-savas-sucudur,PRT5Fp_jA0WtRyZuWGu5zw on Feb. 21, 2024.
- Öktem, E. (1998). Silahlı Çatışma Halinde Kültür Varlıklarının Korunması: Bosna Hersek Örneği (Protection of Cultural Heritage in Case of Armed Conflict: The Example of Bosnia and Herzegovina). In F. Sönmezoğlu (Ed.). *Uluslararası Politikada Yeni Alanlar, Yeni Bakışlar* (New Areas, New Perspectives in International Politics) (pp. 129-166). İstanbul: Der Yayınları.
- Öktem, E. (2004). *Uluslararası Hukukta Terörizm: Tanım Sorunu ve Milli Bağımsızlık Hareketleri* (Terrorism in International Law: Definition Problem and National Independence Movements). *İstanbul Ticaret Üniversitesi Dergisi* (Journal of İstanbul Ticaret University), (5), 133-147.
- Ören, E. (2022). The Just War in Political Thought: from Cicero to Grotius. *Cankırı Karatekin University Journal of the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences*, 12(3), 88-204.
- Pais, A. (1994). *Einstein Lived Here*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Pazarcı, H. (1994). *Uluslararası Hukuk Dersleri* (Courses of International Law), III. Kitap (III. Book). Ankara: Turhan Kitabevi.
- Pazarcı, H. (2000). *Uluslararası Hukuk Dersleri* (Courses of International Law), IV. Cilt (Vol. IV). Ankara: Turhan Kitabevi.
- Pillar, P. (2001). *Terrorism and US Foreign Policy*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Rosenbaum, A.S. (Ed.). (1998). *Is the Holocaust Unique? Perspectives on Comparative Genocide*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Sadat, L.N. (2012). Crimes Against Humanity in the Modern Age. Legal Studies Research Paper Series, Paper No. 11-11-04. Washington, D.C.: Washington University in St. Louis.
- Sadat, L.N. (2013). Crimes Against Humanity in the Modern Age. *American Journal of international Law*, 107(334), 334-377.
- Saul, B. (2005). Attempts to Define ‘Terrorism’ in International Law. *Netherlands International Law Review*, 52(1), 57-58.
- Sav, Ö. (2015). *Uluslararası İnsancıl Hukuk Açısından Savaş ve Barış Hukuku* (War and Peace in terms of International Humanitarian Law). Ankara: Türkiye Barolar Birliği Yayınları.
- Schabas, W.A. (2009). *Genocide in International Law: The Crime of Crimes*. 2nd ed. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Shaw, M.N. (1997). *International Law*. 4th ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Shelton, D. (Ed.). (2005). *Encyclopedia of Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity* (3 vols). Detroit, MI: Macmillan Reference.
- Simpson, G.J. (1997). War Crimes: A Critical Introduction. In T.L.H. McCormack, and G.J. Simpson (Eds.). *The Law of War Crimes: National and International Approaches* (pp. 1-30). The Hague, London, Boston: Kluwer Law International.
- Simpson, G.J. (2007). *Law, War and Crime: War Crimes, Trials and the Reinvention of International Law*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Smith, R. (2007). *The Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World*. New York: Vintage.
- Sönmez, S. (2019). *Michael Walzer ve Haklı Savaş Problemi* (Michael Walzer and Just War Problem). Published MA Thesis. T.C. Hacettepe University Institute of Social Sciences, Ankara.
- Stannard, D.E. (1993). *American Holocaust: The Conquest of the New World*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Stepanova, E. (2008). *Terrorism in Asymmetrical Conflict: Ideological and Structural Aspects*. SIPRI Research Report No. 23. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

- Stohl, M. (1984). National Interests and State Terrorism in International Affairs. *Political Science*, 36(1), 37-52. <https://doi.org/10.1177/003231878403600104>
- Şimşek, M. (2016). Terörizm: Kavramsal Bir Çalışma (Terrorism: A Conceptual Study). *Academic Sight International Refereed Online Journal*, (54), March-April, 319-335.
- Tekin, S. (2015). The Origins of Crimes against Humanity: From Nuremberg To Rome. *Erciyes University Faculty of Law Journal (ERÜHFD)*, 10(2), 149-171.
- Tessler, M. (2009). *A History of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*. 2nd ed. Indiana: Indiana University Press.
- The Associated Press (AP). (2023). The Gaza Strip: Tiny, Cramped and as Densely Populated as London. World News, 6 December 2023. Available at <https://apnews.com/article/israel-gaza-hamas-war-90e02d26420b8fe3157f73c256f9ed6a> accessed on Dec. 23, 2023.
- The CIA World Factbook. (2024). Gaza Strip. Explore All Countries, Middle East, 20 February 2024. Available at <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/gaza-strip/#geography> accessed on Jan. 05, 2024.
- The Haaretz*. (2024). Haaretz Exclusive | Israeli Army Occupies Gaza Homes – Then Burns Them Down. By Yaniv Kubovich in Haaretz | Israel News. 31 January 2024. Available at <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2024-01-31/ty-article/.premium/israeli-army-occupies-gaza-homes-then-burns-them-down/0000018d-6021-d16e-a39f-7f3f01e30000> accessed on Feb. 01, 2024.
- TRTHaber. (2024a). Fahrettin Altun: Israel continues to commit war crimes. 24 February 2024. Available at <https://www.trthaber.com/haber/gundem/fahrettin-altun-israil-savas-suclari-islemeye-devam-ediyor-839867.html> accessed on Feb. 25, 2024.
- TRTHaber. (2024b). Norwegian professor: What happened in Gaza is beyond all the cruelty I have seen in my life. 27 February 2024. Available at <https://www.trthaber.com/haber/dunya/norvecli-profesor-gazgede-yasananlar-hayatimda-gordugum-tum-zulumlerin-otesinde-840447.html> accessed on Feb. 28, 2024.
- TRTNews. (2024). İsrail basınına göre Netanyahu, Gazze saldırıları sonrası için aşamalı bir plan üzerinde çalışıyor (According to the Israeli press, Netanyahu is working on a phased plan for the aftermath of the Gaza attacks). 31 January 2024. Available at <https://www.trthaber.com/haber/dunya/israil-basinina-gore-netanyahu-gazze-saldirilari-sonrasi-icin-asamali-bir-plan-uzerinde-calisiyor-833508.html> accessed on Feb. 02, 2024.
- United Nations (UN). (1951). Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 9 December 1948. In UN Treaty Series 1951 No. 1021. (pp. 278-322). New York: United Nations Publications. Available at <https://treaties.un.org/doc/publication/unts/volume78/volume-78-i-1021-english.pdf> accessed on Dec. 22, 2023.
- United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Definitions: Types of Mass Atrocities. Washington, D.C. Available at <https://www.ushmm.org/genocide-prevention/learn-about-genocide-and-other-mass-atrocities/definitions> accessed on Dec. 07, 2023.
- Quigley, C. (1979). *The Evolution of Civilizations: An Introduction to Historical Analysis*. Indianapolis: Liberty Press.
- Van Creveld, M. (1991). *The Transformation of War*. New York: The Free Press.
- Von Clausewitz, C. (1976). *On War*. Eds. and Tr. M. Howard and P. Paret. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Weitz, E.D. (2003). *A Century of Genocide: Utopias of Race and Nation*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Yalçın, S. (2006). Soğuk Savaş Sonrası Uluslararası Terörizmin Dönüşümü ve Terörizmle Mücadele (The Transformation of International Terrorism and the Struggle against Terrorism in the Post-Cold War Era). *T.C. Süleyman Demirel University Journal of Social Sciences Institute*, 2(4), 98-119.
- Yetgin, M. A., & Baştuğ, M. (2021). Devlet Terörizmi Bağlamında Tarihsel Vakaların İç ve Dış Etkilerinin Analizi: BM Güvenlik Konseyi Üyeleri Örneği (Analysis of Internal and External Effects of Historical Cases in the Context of State Terrorism: Case of UN Security Council Members). *İstanbul Aydın University Journal of Social Sciences*, 13(4), 955-980.
- Yılmaz, S. (2011). *Terör ve Türkiye: Düşünce, Strateji, Eylem* (Terrorism and Türkiye: Thought, Strategy, Action). İstanbul: Kum Saati.



Aims and Scope

The Journal focuses on issues and debates that encourage a more peaceful and just world. Indeed, the world continues to witness increasing restrictions on the dignity of millions of people through conflicts, violence, massacres, injustices and crimes against humanity. This makes supporting “humanity, peace and justice” one of the urgent agendas of our time. In this context, Journal of Humanity, Peace and Justice (HUPEJ) aims to create a platform for sharing scientific studies and exchanging information in the fields of humanity, peace and justice. The main function of the journal is to present inclusive thought and research in accessible original articles and to create a scientific discussion area on humanity, peace and justice. Therefore, the journal focuses on the axis of humanity, justice and peace; It invites academics, practitioners and researchers from other related fields in anthropology, sociology, history, political science, international relations, law studies, social studies, social sciences and humanities to contribute their original empirical and theoretical work.

The journal is open to all scientific methods and disciplines focused on the perspective of humanity, justice and peace; scientific study of related phenomena such as genocide and crimes against humanity, mass murder, atrocities, war crimes and violence against civilians; original academic studies that combine empirical research with conceptual thinking on processes, policies and practices, humanitarian intervention, military sociology, post-genocide and gender, trauma and memory issues before/after massacres and genocide, forced displacement, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity These are the areas that the journal especially aims to focus on. However, without compromising the requirements of theoretical rigor and methodological sophistication, studies focusing on the causes of violence and conflict resolution, articles on peace means and tools are preferred.

Policies

Publication Policy

The journal is committed to upholding the highest standards of publication ethics and pays regard to Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing published by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), the Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association (OASPA), and the World Association of Medical Editors (WAME) on <https://publicationethics.org/resources/guidelines-new/principles-transparency-and-best-practice-scholarly-publishing>

The subjects covered in the manuscripts submitted to the Journal for publication must be in accordance with the aim and scope of the Journal. Only those manuscripts approved by every individual author and that were not published before in or sent to another journal, are accepted for evaluation.

Changing the name of an author (omission, addition or order) in papers submitted to the Journal requires written permission of all declared authors.

Plagiarism, duplication, fraud authorship/denied authorship, research/data fabrication, salami slicing/salami publication, breaching of copyrights, prevailing conflict of interest are unethical behaviors. All manuscripts not in accordance with the accepted ethical standards will be removed from the publication. This also contains any possible malpractice discovered after the publication.

Plagiarism

Submitted manuscripts that pass preliminary control are scanned for plagiarism using iThenticate software. If plagiarism/self-plagiarism will be found authors will be informed. Editors may resubmit manuscript for similarity check at any peer-review or production stage if required. High similarity scores may lead to rejection of a manuscript before and even after acceptance. Depending on the type of article and the percentage of similarity score taken from each article, the overall similarity score is generally expected to be less than 15 or 20%.

Double Blind Peer-Review

After plagiarism check, the eligible ones are evaluated by the editors-in-chief for their originality, methodology, the importance of the subject covered and compliance with the journal scope. The editor provides a fair double-blind peer review of the submitted articles and hands over the papers matching the formal rules to at least two national/international referees for evaluation and gives green light for publication upon modification by the authors in accordance with the referees' claims

Open Access Statement

The journal is an open access journal and all content is freely available without charge to the user or his/her institution. Except for commercial purposes, users are allowed to read, download, copy, print, search, or link to the full texts of the articles in this journal without asking prior permission from the publisher or the author. This is in accordance with the BOAI definition of open access.

The open access articles in the journal are licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0) license.

Article Processing Charge

All expenses of the journal are covered by the Istanbul University. Processing and publication are free of charge with the journal. There is no article processing charges or submission fees for any submitted or accepted articles.

Copyright Notice

Authors publishing with the journal retain the copyright to their work licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International license (CC BY-NC 4.0) (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>) and grant the Publisher non-exclusive commercial right to publish the work. CC BY-NC 4.0 license permits unrestricted, non-commercial use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

Correction, Retraction, Expression of Concern

Editor should consider publishing correction if minor errors that do not effect the results, interpretations and conclusions of the published paper are detected. Editor should consider retraction if major errors and/or misconduct that invalidate results and conclusions are detected.

Editor should consider issuing an expression of concern if there is evidence of research or publication misconduct by the authors; there is evidence that the findings are not reliable and institutions of the authors do not investigate the case or the possible investigation seems to be unfair or nonconclusive.

The guidelines of COPE and ICJME are taken into consideration regarding correction, retractions or expression of concern.

Archiving Policy

To guarantee that all papers published in the journal are maintained and permanently accessible, articles are stored in Dergipark which serves as a national archival web site and at the same time permits LOCKSS to collect, preserve, and serve the content.

Additionally, authors are encouraged to self-archive the final PDF version of their articles in open electronic archives with that conform to standards of Open Archives Initiative (<https://www.openarchives.org/>). Authors should provide a link from the deposited version to the URL of IUPress journal website.

Ethics

Publication Ethics and Malpractice Statement

Journal of Humanity, Peace and Justice (HUPEJ) is committed to upholding the highest standards of publication ethics and pays regard to Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing published by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), the Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association (OASPA), and the World Association of Medical Editors (WAME) on <https://publicationethics.org/resources/guidelines-new/principles-transparency-and-best-practice-scholarly-publishing>

All submissions must be original, unpublished (including as full text in conference proceedings), and not under the review of any other publication synchronously. Authors must ensure that submitted work is original. They must certify that the manuscript has not previously been published elsewhere or is not currently being considered for publication elsewhere, in any language. Applicable copyright laws and conventions must be followed. Copyright material (e.g. tables, figures or extensive quotations) must be reproduced only with appropriate permission and acknowledgement. Any work or words of other authors, contributors, or sources must be appropriately credited and referenced.

Each manuscript is reviewed at least two referees under double-blind peer review process. Plagiarism, duplication, fraud authorship/denied authorship, research/data fabrication, salami slicing/salami publication, breaching of copyrights, prevailing conflict of interest are unethical behaviors.

All manuscripts not in accordance with the accepted ethical standards will be removed from the publication. This also contains any possible malpractice discovered after the publication. In accordance with the code of conduct we will report any cases of suspected plagiarism or duplicate publishing.

Research Ethics

Journal of Humanity, Peace and Justice (HUPEJ) adheres to the highest standards in research ethics and follows the principles of international research ethics as defined below. The authors are responsible for the compliance of the manuscripts with the ethical rules.

- Principles of integrity, quality and transparency should be sustained in designing the research, reviewing the design and conducting the research.
- The research team and participants should be fully informed about the aim, methods, possible uses and requirements of the research and risks of participation in research.
- The confidentiality of the information provided by the research participants and the confidentiality of the respondents should be ensured. The research should be designed to protect the autonomy and dignity of the participants.
- Research participants should participate in the research voluntarily, not under any coercion.
- Any possible harm to participants must be avoided. The research should be planned in such a way that the participants are not at risk.
- The independence of research must be clear; and any conflict of interest or must be disclosed.
- In experimental studies with human subjects, written informed consent of the participants who decide to participate in the research must be obtained. In the case of children and those under wardship or with confirmed insanity, legal custodian's assent must be obtained.
- If the study is to be carried out in any institution or organization, approval must be obtained from this institution or organization.
- In studies with human subject, it must be noted in the method's section of the manuscript that the informed consent of the participants and ethics committee approval from the institution where the study has been conducted have been obtained.

Author's Responsibilities

It is authors' responsibility to ensure that the article is in accordance with scientific and ethical standards and rules. And authors must ensure that submitted work is original. They must certify that the manuscript has not previously been published elsewhere or is not currently being considered for publication elsewhere, in any language. Applicable copyright laws and conventions must be followed. Copyright material (e.g. tables, figures or extensive quotations) must be reproduced only with appropriate permission and acknowledgement. Any work or words of other authors, contributors, or sources must be appropriately credited and referenced.

All the authors of a submitted manuscript must have direct scientific and academic contribution to the manuscript. The author(s) of the original research articles is defined as a person who is significantly involved in "conceptualization and design of the study", "collecting the data", "analyzing the data", "writing the manuscript", "reviewing the manuscript with a critical perspective" and "planning/conducting the study of the manuscript and/or revising it". Fund raising, data collection or supervision of the research group are not sufficient roles to be accepted as an author. The author(s) must meet all these criteria described above. The order of names in the author list of an article must be a co-decision and it must be indicated in the Copyright Agreement Form.

The individuals who do not meet the authorship criteria but contributed to the study must take place in the acknowledgement section. Individuals providing technical support, assisting writing, providing a general support, providing material or financial support are examples to be indicated in acknowledgement section.

All authors must disclose all issues concerning financial relationship, conflict of interest, and competing interest that may potentially influence the results of the research or scientific judgment. When an author discovers a significant error or inaccuracy in his/her own published paper, it is the author's obligation to promptly cooperate with the Editor-in-Chief to provide retractions or corrections of mistakes.

Responsibility for the Editor and Reviewers

Editor-in-Chief evaluates manuscripts for their scientific content without regard to ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, citizenship, religious belief or political philosophy of the authors. He/She provides a fair double-blind peer review of the submitted articles for publication and ensures that all the information related to submitted manuscripts is kept as confidential before publishing.

Editor-in-Chief is responsible for the contents and overall quality of the publication. He/She must publish errata pages or make corrections when needed.

Editor-in-Chief does not allow any conflicts of interest between the authors, editors and reviewers. Only he has the full authority to assign a reviewer and is responsible for final decision for publication of the manuscripts in the Journal.

Reviewers must have no conflict of interest with respect to the research, the authors and/or the research funders. Their judgments must be objective.

Reviewers must ensure that all the information related to submitted manuscripts is kept as confidential and must report to the editor if they are aware of copyright infringement and plagiarism on the author's side.

A reviewer who feels unqualified to review the topic of a manuscript or knows that its prompt review will be impossible should notify the editor and excuse himself from the review process.

The editor informs the reviewers that the manuscripts are confidential information and that this is a privileged interaction. The reviewers and editorial board cannot discuss the manuscripts with other persons. The anonymity of the referees must be ensured. In particular situations, the editor may share the review of one reviewer with other reviewers to clarify a particular point.

Peer Review

Peer Review Policies

Only those manuscripts approved by its every individual author and that were not published before in or sent to another journal, are accepted for evaluation.

Submitted manuscripts that pass preliminary control are scanned for plagiarism using iThenticate software. After plagiarism check, the eligible ones are evaluated by editor-in-chief for their originality, methodology, the importance of the subject covered and compliance with the journal scope.

The editor hands over the papers matching the formal rules to at least two national/international referees for double-blind peer review evaluation and gives green light for publication upon modification by the authors in accordance with the referees' claims.

Responsibility for the Editor and Reviewers

Editor-in-Chief evaluates manuscripts for their scientific content without regard to ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, citizenship, religious belief or political philosophy of the authors. He/She provides a fair double-blind peer review of the submitted articles for publication and ensures that all the information related to submitted manuscripts is kept as confidential before publishing.

Editor-in-Chief is responsible for the contents and overall quality of the publication. He/She must publish errata pages or make corrections when needed.

Editor-in-Chief does not allow any conflicts of interest between the authors, editors and reviewers. Only he has the full authority to assign a reviewer and is responsible for final decision for publication of the manuscripts in the Journal.

Reviewers must have no conflict of interest with respect to the research, the authors and/or the research funders. Their judgments must be objective.

Reviewers must ensure that all the information related to submitted manuscripts is kept as confidential and must report to the editor if they are aware of copyright infringement and plagiarism on the author's side.

A reviewer who feels unqualified to review the topic of a manuscript or knows that its prompt review will be impossible should notify the editor and excuse himself from the review process.

The editor informs the reviewers that the manuscripts are confidential information and that this is a privileged interaction. The reviewers and editorial board cannot discuss the manuscripts with other persons. The anonymity of the referees must be ensured. In particular situations, the editor may share the review of one reviewer with other reviewers to clarify a particular point.

Peer Review Process

Only those manuscripts approved by its every individual author and that were not published before in or sent to another journal, are accepted for evaluation.

Submitted manuscripts that pass preliminary control are scanned for plagiarism using iThenticate software. After plagiarism check, the eligible ones are evaluated by editor-in-chief for their originality, methodology, the importance of the subject covered and compliance with the journal scope. Editor-in-chief evaluates manuscripts for their scientific content without regard to ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, citizenship, religious belief or political philosophy of the authors and ensures a fair double-blind peer review of the selected manuscripts.

The selected manuscripts are sent to at least two national/international external referees for evaluation and publication decision is given by editor-in-chief upon modification by the authors in accordance with the referees' claims.

Editor in chief does not allow any conflicts of interest between the authors, editors and reviewers and is responsible for final decision for publication of the manuscripts in the Journal.

Reviewers' judgments must be objective. Reviewers' comments on the following aspects are expected while conducting the review.

- Does the manuscript contain new and significant information?
- Does the abstract clearly and accurately describe the content of the manuscript?
- Is the problem significant and concisely stated?
- Are the methods described comprehensively?

- Are the interpretations and conclusions justified by the results?
- Is adequate references made to other Works in the field?
- Is the language acceptable?

Reviewers must ensure that all the information related to submitted manuscripts is kept as confidential and must report to the editor if they are aware of copyright infringement and plagiarism on the author's side.

A reviewer who feels unqualified to review the topic of a manuscript or knows that its prompt review will be impossible should notify the editor and excuse himself from the review process.

The editor informs the reviewers that the manuscripts are confidential information and that this is a privileged interaction. The reviewers and editorial board cannot discuss the manuscripts with other persons. The anonymity of the referees is important.

Author Guidelines

Manuscript Organization and Submission

Manuscript is to be submitted to journal's e-mail: hupej@istanbul.edu.tr and it must be accompanied by a cover letter indicating that the manuscript is intended for publication, specifying the article category (i.e. research article, review etc.) and including information about the manuscript (see the Submission Checklist), title page, author form, and Copyright Agreement Form that has to be signed by all authors.

1. The manuscripts should be in A4 paper standards: having 2.5 cm margins from right, left, bottom and top, Times New Roman font style in 11 font size and line spacing of 1.5.
2. A title page including author information must be submitted together with the manuscript. The title page is to include fully descriptive title of the manuscript and, affiliation, title, e-mail address, postal address, phone, and fax number of the author(s) (see The Submission Checklist).
3. Before the introduction part, there should be an abstract between 200 and 300 words in English, summarizing the scope, the purpose, the results of the study and the method used. Underneath the abstracts, 5 keywords that inform the reader about the content of the study should be specified in Turkish and in English. Extended abstract in English is mandatory only for manuscripts in Turkish.
4. The manuscripts should contain mainly these components: title, abstract and keywords in English, sections, end notes and references.
5. Tables, graphs, and figures should be given with a number and a defining title.
6. The 7th version of the APA 7 (American Psychological Association) reference style should be used for in-text citation and references list.
7. Authors are responsible for all statements made in their study submitted to the Journal for publication.

References

- Author(s) are expected to cite primary sources in their studies.
- References to articles published as Early View should be given as "publication in preparation".
- The author(s) are responsible for the accuracy of the references. All sources should be cited in the text and listed alphabetically.

Reference Style and Format

Journal of Humanity Peace and Justice, adopts 7th edition of APA (American Psychological Association) style for in-text citation and references. The rules for this style can be found at the link below:

<https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/references/examples/>

References should be cited as indicated in the examples below.

In-Text Citation.

Sources should be indicated in the text by writing the surnames of the authors and the publication date in parentheses. If more than one source is to be shown, a semicolon (;) should be inserted between the sources. References should be listed alphabetically.

Citations in the Text.

Citations must be indicated with the author surname and publication year and page number within the parenthesis. If more than one citation is made within the same parenthesis, separate them with (;). References should be listed alphabetically

Samples.

Citation with one author	(Carpentier, 2011) Carpentier (2011)
Citation with two authors	(Deleuze & Guattari, p. 1992) Deleuze and Guattari (1992) aim to explain schizophrenia in a positive manner (p. 45).
Citation with three or more authors	(Curran et al., 2009)
Citation with abbreviation	First Citation: (World Health Organisation [WHO], 2020) Next Citations: (WHO, 2020) First Citation: World Health Organisation (WHO, 2020) Next Citations: WHO (2020)
To avoid ambiguity in in-text citations	If the same author published more than one study in the same year: (Fiske, 2010a) (Fiske, 2010b) If the first authors of multiple references share the same surname but have different initials, include the first authors' initials in all in-text citations, even if the year of publication differs. (A. A. Berger, 2010; J. Berger, 2010) If the authors of the same publication have the same surname, there is no need to include the first letters of their names. (Chen & Chen, 2019)
Direct quotations	When citing directly, sentence(s) are enclosed in quotation marks and page numbers are also indicated in in-text quotations. According to Luhmann (1982), "Subjectivity is an abstract term invented by philosophers which does not refer to human beings. The real subject of social action is the social system" (p. 324). If more than one citation is made within the same parenthesis, separate them with (;). References should be listed alphabetically. (Mulvey, 2012; Ryan & Kellner, 2012, p. 152).

Citations in the Reference.

All the citations done in the text should be listed in the References section in alphabetical order of author surname without numbering. Below given examples should be considered in citing the references.

Book	a) Citation with one author	Berger, A. A. (2017). <i>Media analysis techniques</i> . Sage Publications. Kamien R., & Kamien A. (2014). <i>Music: An appreciation</i> . McGraw-Hill Education.
	b) Translated book	Foucault, M. (1977). <i>Discipline and punishment: The birth of the prison</i> . (A. Sheridan, Trans.). Vintage Books.
	c) Book with Multiple Authors	Bordwell, D. & Thompson, K. (2010). <i>Film Art: An Introduction</i> . McGraw-Hill.
	d) Edited book	Miller, T., & Stam, R. (Eds.). (2004). <i>A companion to film theory</i> (Vol. 18). John Wiley & Sons.
	e) Chapter in an Edited Book	Jenkins, H. (2004). The work of theory in the age of digital transformation. T. Miller & R. Stam (Eds.), <i>A Companion to Film Theory</i> (pp. 234-261). Blackwell.
	f) Chapter in the translation book	Schmeder, G. (2015). İşbölümü dinamiğinde kopmalar ve kesintiler. C. Vercellone (Ed.) ve D. Kundakçı (Trans.). <i>Bilişsel kapitalizm</i> . (1st ed., 61-75). Otonom Yayıncılık. Piaget, J. (1988). Extracts from Piaget's theory (G. Gellerier & J. Langer, Trans.). In K. Richardson & S. Sheldon (Eds.) <i>Cognitive de-</i>

- velopment to adolescence: A reader (pp. 3-18). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum. (Reprinted from Manual of child psychology, pp. 703-732, by P.H. Myssen, Ed., 1970. Wiley)
- g) Book Review
Gül Ünlü, D. (2018). Kitap incelemesi [Şeffaflık toplumu: Şeffaflık toplumun eleştirisi üzerine bir okuma]. Galatasaray Üniversitesi İletişim Dergisi, 28, 279-290. <http://iletisimdergisi.gsu.edu.tr/pub/issue/37677/436058>
Seo, S. (2016). [Review of the book *Journalism and Human Rights: How Demographics Drive Media Coverage* by John C. Pollock]. Journal of Communication, 66 (6), E-15-E-17. <https://academic.oup.com/joc/article-abstract/66/6/E15/4082402?redirectedFrom=fulltext>
- h) Book with Organization as Author
American Psychological Association. (2009). Crediting sources: Citing references in text. Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th ed., p. 177).
- Article**
- a) Article
Seyidov, I. (2020). On conceptual and methodological deficiencies of data journalism-related studies in Turkey. *Connectist: Istanbul University Journal of Communication Sciences*, 58, 273-289. <https://doi.org/10.26650/CONNECTIST2020-0070>
- b) Online article without DOI
Grist, L. (2007). Masculinity, violence, resistance: A new psychoanalytic reading of Raging Bull. *Atlantis*, 29(1), 11-27. Retrieved from <https://go.gale.com/>
- c) Popular magazine article
Salmon, C. (2016, Oct). Ken Loach is right: British film and TV has become too cosy and conservative. *Little White Lies*. <https://lwlies.com/articles/ken-loach-fake-nostalgia-tv-period-dramas/>
- Thesis, Symposium**
- a) Thesis
Kendrick, J. (2005). *Screen violence and the new Hollywood* [Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation]. Indiana University. <https://www.proquest.com/openview/433bbaa0b9973dad53d0aa735d1f941a/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750&diss=y>
- b) Symposium contribution
Gündüz, U. & Pembecioğlu N. (2021, October, 26-27). Covid-19. H. Adıyaman (Chairs), *The health agenda of media in the lights of information ethics and the Covid-19 sentiment analysis of garlic news* [Symposium]. 18. International Communication in the Millennium Symposium, Erzurum, Turkey.
- Other Sources**
- a) Newspaper Article
Lee, E. (2019, February 1). Digital Media: What Went Wrong. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/01/business/media/buzzfeed-digital-media-wrong.html>
- b) İnternet sayfası kaynakları
Bordwell, D. (2013, June 18). David Koepp: Making the world movie-sized. <http://www.davidbordwell.net/blog/page/27/> adresinden 15 Eylül 2020 tarihinde alınmıştır.
- c) Official publications and press release
Turkish Statistical Institute (2022). Foreign Trade Statistics (Publication number: 45536). <https://data.tuik.gov.tr/Bulten/Index?p=Foreign-Trade-Statistics-January-2022-45536&dil=2>
The White House, Office of the Press Secretary. (2010, August 4). Administration officials continue travel across the country holding "Recovery Summer" events [Press release]. <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/realitycheck/the-press-office/administration-officials-continue-travel-across-country-holding-recovery-summer-eve>

d) Dictionary	Oxford University Press. (n.d.). <i>Communication</i> . In Oxford English Dictionary. Oxford University Press. Retrieved January 1, 2022, from https://www.lexico.com/definition/communication
e) Podcast	West, S. (2020, December). On Media pt. 1- Manufacturing Consent (Episode 148) [Audio podcast]. In Philosophize this!. https://open.spotify.com/episode/04YIh1REL6KOxlnaJWlvfh?si=86782f420d744114
f) Video/Film	Zizek, S. (2008). <i>Violence</i> [Video]. Youtube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_x0eyNkNpL0 Scorsese, M. (Director). (1976). <i>Taxi Driver</i> [Film]. Columbia Pictures.
g) TV series	Chase, D. (Producer). (1999-2007). <i>The Sopranos</i> [TV Series]. HBO.
h) Social Media	Manovich, L. [@manovich]. In the late 1990s South Korea became the leader in Internet connections, and they launched one of the first social networks Cyworld. Next, they used YouTube to create k-pop global popularity. Can they repeat their success in metaverse? [Tweet]. Twitter. https://twitter.com/manovich/status/1462405978356207626 [Tweet] for Twitter, [Twitter profile] etc., [Facebook status] for Facebook, [Timeline] etc., [Picture] for Instagram, [Highlight] can be used.

Forms

Copyright Agreement Form	https://cdn.istanbul.edu.tr/file/JTA6CLJ8T5/31D821E5DC0540B988F664B795CCBED1
Author Form	https://cdn.istanbul.edu.tr/file/JTA6CLJ8T5/2DD4920A802C416CBEA6E5A8B589B014
Title page	https://cdn.istanbul.edu.tr/file/JTA6CLJ8T5/676A3AF2283C4A949A7CC99D314B8FCF

Submission Checklist

Ensure that the following items are present:

- Cover letter to the editor
 - The category of the manuscript
 - Confirming that “the paper is not under consideration for publication in another journal”.
 - Including disclosure of any commercial or financial involvement.
 - Confirming that last control for fluent English was done.
 - Confirming that journal policies detailed in Information for Authors have been reviewed.
 - Confirming that the references cited in the text and listed in the references section are in line with APA 7.
- Copyright Agreement Form
- Permission of previous published material if used in the present manuscript
- Author Form
- Title page
 - The category of the manuscript
 - The title of the manuscript in English
 - All authors’ names and affiliations (institution, faculty/department, city, country), e-mail addresses
 - Corresponding author’s email address, full postal address, telephone and fax number
 - ORCIDs of all authors
 - Grant support, Conflict of interest, and Acknowledgement (if exists)
- Main Manuscript Document
 - **Important:** Please avoid mentioning the author (s) names in the manuscript.
 - The title of the manuscript in English
 - Abstracts: 200-300 words in English

- Keywords: 5 words in English
- Body text
- References
- All tables, illustrations (figures) (including title, description, footnotes)